

Militarism & Anti-Militarism



Karl Liebknecht

MILITARISM & ANTI-MILITARISM

with special regard to the International Young
Socialist Movement

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“[Modern militarism] wants neither more nor less than the squaring of the circle; it arms the people against the people itself; it is insolent enough to force the workers ... to become oppressors, enemies and murderers of their own class comrades and friends, of their parents, brothers, sisters and children, murderers of their own past and future. It wants to be at the same time democratic and despotic, enlightened and machine-like, at the same time to serve the nation and to be its enemy.”

Karl Liebknecht

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PREFACE

A few weeks ago **Die Grenzboten** reported a conversation between Bismarck [\[1*\]](#) and Professor Dr Otto Kämmel which took place in October 1892, and in which Bismarck, the “Hero of the Century”, himself tore off the mask of constitutionalism in his very own cynical style. Among other things, he said:

In Rome, whoever put himself outside of the law was banished, *aqua et igne interdictus*; in the Middle Ages he was said to be outlawed. Social-Democracy ought to be treated in a similar way: it should be deprived of its political rights, of its right to participate in elections. I would have gone that *far*. The Social-Democratic problem is in fact a military problem. Social-Democracy is being treated with an extraordinary lack of serious attention at present. It is now attempting – with success – to win over the non-commissioned officers. In Hamburg a large part of the troops already consists of Social-Democrats, since the local people have the right to join only the local battalions. What if these troops should one day refuse to obey the Kaiser and to fire on their fathers and brothers? Would we then be forced to mobilize the Hanover and Mecklenburg regiments against Hamburg? In that case we should have something like the Paris Commune on our hands. The Kaiser then took fright. He told me that he did not want one day to be called the “Kartätschenprinz” – the shrapnel prince – like his grandfather, and did not want to wade up to his ankles in blood’ at the very beginning of his reign. At the time I told him: “Your Majesty will have to go in much deeper if you draw back now!”

“The Social-Democratic problem is a military problem.” This is the whole point; it says more and goes much deeper than von Massow’s cry of distress: “Our only hope is the bayonets and cannons of our soldiers.” [\[1\]](#) “The Social-Democratic problem is a military problem. That is the keynote of all the tunes sung by the firebrands. Anyone

who had not yet been convinced by the earlier indiscretions of Bismarck and Puttkamer, by the speech to the Alexander regiment, [2*] by the **Hamburger Nachrichten** and the thoroughbred Junker, von Oldenburg-Januschau, would have had his eyes opened by the Hohenlohe-Delbruck revelations which were corroborated around the end of the year through the county court judge Kulemann, and by the cruel words of Bismarck cited above.

The Social-Democratic problem – in so far as it is a political problem – is in the last resort a military problem. This should be a constant reminder to Social-Democracy and a tactical principle of the first rank.

The enemy at home, Social-Democracy, is “more dangerous than the enemy abroad, because it poisons the soul of our people and wrests the weapons from our hands before we have even lifted them.” This is how the **Kreuz-Zeitung** of January 21, 1907, proclaimed the sovereignty of class interests over national interests in an electoral struggle which was waged “under the banner of nationalism”! And this electoral struggle was carried on in the face of an ever-increasing menace to electoral and trade-union rights, and of “Bonaparte’s sword”, which Prince Bülow [3*] waved around the heads of the German Social-Democrats in his New Year’s Eve letter in order to frighten them; it was carried on in the face of a class struggle raised to white heat. [2] Only someone who was blind and deaf could deny that these signs, as well as many others, indicate the approach of a storm or even of a hurricane.

The problem of the struggle against “militarism at home” has therefore taken on an importance of a most pressing kind.

The elections of 1907 were, however, also fought on the national question, on the colonial question, and over chauvinism and imperialism. And they showed how miserably weak, in spite of all this, was the resistance of the German people to the pseudo-patriotic rat-traps laid by these contemptible business patriots. They taught us what pompous demagoguery can be pressed into use by the

government, by the ruling classes and by the whole howling pack of “patriots” whenever “things most holy” are concerned. These elections provided the proletariat with some necessary enlightenment, causing it to question its own role and teaching it about the relation of social and political forces. They educated it, and freed it from the unfortunate “habit of victory”; and they excited a welcome force resulting in a deepening of the proletarian movement and of our understanding of the psychology of the masses with regard to national campaigns. Certainly the causes of our so-called setback, which was actually not a setback and puzzled the victors more than the vanquished, were manifold; but there is no doubt that precisely those sections of the proletariat which are contaminated and influenced by militarism, which are already at the mercy of government terrorism – for example, the state workers and junior officials – have formed an especially firm obstacle to the extension of Social-Democratic influence.

This also raises sharply, as far as the German labour movement is concerned, the question of anti-militarism and the question of the youth movement and of the education of young people, and ensures that these points will receive more attention in future.

The following work is the elaboration of a paper read by the author on September 30, 1906, to the first conference of the German Young Socialist League in Mannheim. It does not pretend to offer something new; it is simply intended to be a compilation of material which is already known or even commonplace. Nor does it claim to be exhaustive. The author has attempted, as far as he is able, to collect the disconnected material scattered throughout the newspapers and periodicals. Thanks above all to our Belgian comrade de Man it has been possible to provide at least a brief account of the anti-militarist and youth movement in the most important countries.

If here and there errors have crept in, they should be excused on account of the difficulty of coping with the material, but also on

account of the frequent unreliability of the sources, which are often even contradictory.

In the realm of militarism things are in constant flux at the present time, so that, for example, the information given below on the French and English military reforms will certainly soon be overtaken by events.

That is even more true of anti-militarism and the proletarian youth movement, the newest manifestations of the proletarian struggle for freedom, which are everywhere developing quickly, and making pleasing headway in spite of setbacks. Since this work was set up in type it has been learned that the Finnish Young Socialist Societies held their first congress in Tammerfors on December 8 and 9, 1906, where a Young Workers' League was founded which will be attached to the Finnish Labour Party and whose special task, apart from the education of the young workers in class-consciousness, will be the struggle against militarism in all its aspects.

People will be inclined to complain that the theoretical basis of our work is too slight and the historical depth not sufficient. Against this it ought to be said that the pamphlet has a topical political task, that of promoting anti-militarist thought.

Many people again will be unhappy with the accumulation of countless, often apparently unimportant details, especially in connection with the history of the Young Socialist movement and of anti-militarism. This dissatisfaction may be justified. The author, however, stoned from the assumption that it is first of all through details that one is able to gain a living insight into the upward and downward movement in organizational development and into the invention and modification of tactical principles, and to put them to use in the desired manner – the more so since it is precisely details which present the main difficulty in anti-militarist agitation and organization.

Dr Karl Liebknecht
Berlin

February 11, 1907

FOOTNOTES

[1.](#) See Arendt's **Deutsches Wochenblatt**, middle of November 1896, and the **Sozialdemokratische Partei-Correspondenz**, year II, no.4.

[2.](#) On the evening of the second ballot (February 5, 1907) troops of the Berlin garrison were provided with live cartridges and held ready to march. It is known that on June 25, 1905, the last time the second ballot was held, the Pioneers appeared in Spandau in the Schönwalder Strasse in order to "bring to their senses" the workers excited by the election result.

ADDITIONAL NOTES BY THE TRANSLATOR

[1*](#). BISMARCK, GRAF VON (1815-1898). Minister President of Prussia from 1862, he was responsible for the political direction of the creation of the German Empire, of which he was effectively founder and first Chancellor. Based his strength for many years on the National Liberal Party, during which period he initiated the so-called Kulturkampf against the Catholic Centre. Later moved away from and attacked the National Liberals, without being able to replace them as a political support. Fell in 1896, soon after the accession of the new Kaiser, Wilhelm II.

[2*](#). ALEXANDER REGIMENT SPEECH. The speech of Wilhelm II to the Kaiser Alexander Regiment on March 28, 1901, containing the words: "You are ... so to speak the bodyguard of the King of Prussia, and you must always be ready, day and night, to put your life at risk, to spill your blood for your king! ... If it should happen that the city rises up against its rulers, the regiment must punish this improper conduct of the people towards its king with the bayonet."

3*. BÜLOW, PRINCE VON (1849-1929). Imperial Chancellor from 1900 to 1909, succeeding Hohenlohe. Resigned in 1909 after pressure from Conservative and Centre Parties, and was replaced by Bethmann-Hollweg.

I. MILITARISM

1. GENERAL

1. ON THE ESSENCE AND MEANING OF MILITARISM

Militarism! Few slogans have been so frequently used in our time, and few denote a phenomenon so complicated, multiform, many-sided, and at the same time so interesting and significant in its origin and nature, its methods and *effects*. It is a phenomenon which is deeply rooted in the structure of class-divided social orders, yet can take on within the same type of social order, according to the special natural, political, social and economic circumstances of individual states and territories, an extraordinary variety of forms.

Militarism is one of the most important and powerful signs of life of most social orders, because it is the strongest, most concentrated and exclusive expression of the national, cultural and class instinct for self-preservation, the most elementary of all instincts.

A history of militarism in the deepest sense discloses the very essence of human development and of its motive force, and a dissection of capitalist militarism involves the disclosure of the most secret and least obvious roots of capitalism. The history of militarism is at the same time the history of the political, social, economic and, in general, the cultural relations of tension between states and nations, as well as the history of the class struggles within individual ante and national units.

There can of course be no question here of even attempting such a history, but we will indicate a few general aspects.

2. ORIGIN AND BASIS OF SOCIAL RELATIONS OF POWER

In the last resort the basis of every social relation of power is the superiority of physical force [1], which as a social phenomenon does not appear in the form of the greater physical strength of individuals, since as far as this relation is concerned, one human being is worth as much as any other, and a purely numerical majority is decisive. The relation of numbers with which we are concerned does not simply correspond to the numerical relation between groups of persons with contradictory interests, but is determined – since not everyone is conscious of his own real interests, especially not of his fundamental interests, and above all since not everyone recognizes or acknowledges the interests of his class as his own interests – essentially by the level of intellectual and moral development of each class, by which is decided the extensive and intensive degree of class-consciousness. This intellectual and moral level is itself determined by the economic position of the individual interest groups (classes), while the social and political position represents rather a consequence, though of course one which is very strongly retroactive, and an expression of the relation of power.

Purely economic superiority also contributes directly to the displacement and confusion of the numerical ratio, since economic pressure not only influences the height of the intellectual and moral level and thus the consciousness of class interest, but also produces a tendency to act in accordance with this more or less understood class interest. The fact that the political machinery of the class in control lends it increased means of power to “correct” the numerical relation in favour of the ruling interest group is taught us by all the well-known institutions: police, law courts, schools, together with the church, which must also be included here – institutions which are created by the political and legislative machinery and used as an executive, administrative instrument. The first two work chiefly by means of threats, intimidation and violence, the school chiefly by blocking up as far as possible all those channels through which class-consciousness can travel to the brain and heart. The church on the other hand works most effectively by awakening a passion for the make-believe delights of heaven and a fear of the tortures of hell.

But even the numerical ratio so determined does not decide absolutely the relation of power. An armed man increases his physical strength by many times through his possession of a weapon. The degree of the increase depends upon the development of the technique of arms, including fortification and strategy (whose form is essentially a consequence of the technique of arms). The intellectual and economic superiority of one interest group over another is turned into a simple physical superiority through the possession of arms, or of better arms, on the part of the ruling class. The possibility is thus created of the complete domination of the class-conscious majority by a class-conscious minority.

Even when the division into classes is decided by the economic position, the political relation of power between the classes is determined by the economic position of individuals only in the first place; in the second place it is determined by the countless intellectual, moral and physical means of power at the disposal of the economically dominant class through its economic class position. The fact that these instruments of power exist cannot affect class divisions, since these are created by a quite independent set of conditions which, with a power like that of nature, forces certain classes, which may well represent a majority, into economic dependence on other classes, which may represent a tiny minority – a dependence which neither the class struggle nor any means of political power is capable of eliminating. [2] The class struggle can therefore only be a struggle to develop class-consciousness among class comrades – which embraces a readiness for the performance of revolutionary deeds and for sacrifice in the interest of one's class – and a struggle to capture those means of power which are of importance with regard either to the creation or to the suppression of class-consciousness, as well as those physical and intellectual means of power whose possession means the multiplication of physical strength.

This demonstrates what an important role the technique of arms plays in social struggles. It depends on this technique whether, in the case where it is no longer economically necessary, a minority

remains in a position to dominate a majority against its will by military action, the “most concentrated form of political action” – at least for a certain length of time. Leaving aside the divisions between the classes, the development of the relations of power is in reality closely tied to the development of the technique of arms. As long as more or less everyone – even the person in the worst economic situation – can produce arms under essentially similar conditions of essentially similar efficacy, the majority principle, democracy, will be the normal political form of society. This must be true even in a situation of economic class division, in so far as the above condition holds. The natural process of development is of course that the division into classes, which is the consequence of economic-technical development, runs parallel with the cultivation of the technique of arms (including fortification and strategy). The production of arms therefore becomes to an ever greater degree a professional skill. Further, since class domination as a rule is constituted precisely by the economic superiority of one class over another, and since the improvement of the technique of arms leads to the production of arms [3] becoming ever more difficult and expensive, this production gradually becomes the monopoly of the economically dominant class. The physical basis of democracy is thus removed. The rule then is: whoever is in possession is in the right. A class which has once been in possession of the political means of power may be able temporarily to retain its political domination even when it loses its economic superiority.

After what has already been said, it ought not to need further demonstration that not only the form and character of the political relations of power but also the form and character of the class struggles of a given period are determined by the technique of arms.

It is not enough that all citizens are equally armed and in possession of their weapons to safeguard permanently the rule of democracy. The equal distribution of arms in itself as events in Switzerland have shown, does not rule out the possibility that this distribution may be done away with by a majority which is about to become a minority, or even by a minority which is better organized and ready to strike. The

general and equal arming of the population can only become a permanent and irreversible characteristic when the production of arms itself is in the hands of the people.

The role of democratization which the technique of arms can play has been very clearly depicted by Bulwer in one of his less known works, the remarkable utopia entitled **The Coming Race**. In this work he presupposes such a high technical development that every citizen can at any moment produce the most destructive results by the use of a small stick, easy to get hold of and loaded with a mysterious force similar to that of electricity. And indeed we can suppose that the time will come – even if it is far in the future – when technique and the easy domination by men of the most powerful forces of nature will reach a stage which makes the application of the technique of murder quite impossible, since it would mean the self-destruction of the human race. The exploitation of technical progress will then take on a new character; from a basically plutocratic activity it will to a certain extent become a democratic, general human possibility.

3. SOME ITEMS FROM THE HISTORY OF MILITARISM

In the lower cultures which know no division into classes the weapon serves as a rule also as a tool for work. It is at the same time a means of acquiring food (by hunting, by cultivation, etc.) and a means of protection against wild beasts and of defence against hostile tribes, as well as a means of attacking them. The weapon has such a primitive character that anyone can easily acquire it at any time (stones and sticks, spears with stone tips, bows, etc.). This is also true of means of defence. Since no division of labour worthy of the name (if we except the most primitive of all such divisions, that between man and wife) yet exists, since all members of the community, at least within each division of sex, perform more or less the same function, and since there are as yet no relations of political or economic power, it follows that the weapon cannot be used inside the community to support such relations of power. It could not be used as a support in this way even if relations of power did exist,

since only democratic relations are possible in conjunction with a primitive technique of arms.

If in this lowest form of culture the weapon is used inside the community at most to settle individual conflicts, the situation changes when a division between classes appears together with a higher development in the technique of arms. The primitive communism of the lower agricultural peoples in which women were dominant knows no social and therefore normally also no political relation of class domination. Generally speaking militarism does not appear. External complications compel these peoples to prepare themselves for war and even, for certain periods, produce military despotisms which are very commonly found among the nomadic peoples, owing to the constant threat of war and the division into classes which as a rule has already come into being.

Let us recall the organization of the Greek and Roman armies, in which, in accordance with the division into classes, there existed a purely military hierarchy, organized according to the class position of the individual, which position determined the quality of his armament. Let us further think back to the feudal armies of knights, with their troops of squires mostly on foot and always much worse armed and equipped, who, according to Patrice Laroque, played rather the role of assistants to the combatants than that of combatants themselves. The fact that at this time the arming of the lower classes was permitted and even encouraged is to be explained not so much by the lack of general security offered by the state to the acknowledged interests of the individual, which in a sense made it necessary that everyone should be armed, as by the need for a possible mobilization of the nation or state for attack on or defence against the external enemy. The differences in the armament of the different social classes always made it possible, however, that the technique of arms might be used to maintain or establish the relation of power. The Roman slave wars throw light in a most remarkable way on this side of the question.

The German Peasant War and the Wars of the German Towns are also important in this respect. Among the direct causes of the unfavourable outcome of the German Peasant War was above all the military-technical superiority of the feudal armies of the Church. But the fourteenth century Wars of the Towns directed against these very same armies turned out successfully, not only because at this time the technique of arms and especially that of firearms was exceptionally backward, the opposite of the position in the Peasant War of 1525, but above all in consequence of the great economic power of the towns. These, as localities in which social spheres of interest came into relation, brought together in close community the representatives of these spheres, without any notable admixture of contradictory elements. Further, owing to the manner in which they were built, the towns from the first held a tactical position of the same importance as that of the feudal lords and of the Church and Emperor in their castles and fortresses; this is similarly a military-technical element (fortification). Finally, it was important that the production of arms was in the hands of the towns; and as their citizens were quite superior in terms of technical preparedness, they overcame the army of the knights. [4]

As an examination of the Peasant and Town Wars in particular demonstrates, it is necessary to bear in mind the important role played by the different social classes, whether each class is united in one locality or mixed with other classes. When the class division coincides with the division of locality, it is simpler to wage the class struggle, not only because of the way in which class-consciousness is thereby developed, but also because of the way in which, speaking from a purely technical point of view, the military organizational unity of the class comrades as well as the production and supply of arms is facilitated. This favourable local grouping of the classes has been of aid to all bourgeois revolutions [5], but in the proletarian revolution is almost entirely lacking. [6]

Economic power is also found directly transformed into physical power in the mercenary armies of our day (just as it is where the distribution of armament in general is concerned), according to the

Mephistophelian maxim: “If I can pay for six steeds, is their strength not mine? I drive away and am a real man, just as if I had twenty-four legs”, and according to the maxim: *divide et impera!* – “divide and rule!” These two maxims are applied to the so-called elite troops. The Italian *condottieri* on the other hand show in a striking manner – as the Praetorians once did – what political power is conferred on those who possess weapons, military training and the art of strategy. The mercenary sought boldly for the crowns of princes, played ball with them, and became the natural heir to the supreme power of the state – a phenomenon which we see repeated down to our day in times of excitement and war when the mobilized military power rests in the hands of individuals: Napoleon and his generals are an example, Boulanger another! [7]

The history of the German “Wars of Liberation” teaches us important lessons about the influence of the external political situation on the form of military organization and of militarism in general. When in the disastrous Coalition Wars of 1806 against the French Revolution the feudal standing army of Frederick II was crushed as in a mortar by the citizen army of France, the helpless German governments were faced with the alternative: either to submit permanently to the pleasure or displeasure of the Corsican conqueror, or to defeat him with his own weapon, with a citizen army based on a general arming of the people. Their instinct for self-preservation and the spontaneous impulse of the people compelled them to take the latter course. The great period of the democratization of Germany and especially of Prussia then began, impelled by external pressures which for a time alleviated the political, social and economic tension at home. Money and enthusiastic freedom fighters were required. The value of man increased. His social quality as a creator of wealth and a prospective taxpayer, together with his natural-physical quality as a bearer of physical power, as a bearer of intelligence and enthusiasm, took on decisive significance and raised his rate of exchange, as always happens in times of general danger; but the influence of class distinction went down. The “Prussian people” had, to use the jargon of the military weeklies, “learned to suppress their quarrels during the long years of foreign rule”. As so often is the

case, financial and military questions played a revolutionizing role. Various economic, social and political obstacles were removed. Industry and trade, which were financially of the first importance, were promoted as far as the petty-bureaucratic spirit of Prussia-Germany would allow it. Even political freedoms were introduced, or at least – promised. The people rose, the storm broke. The Scharnhorst-Gneisenau [1*] army based on universal military service drove the “hereditary enemy” back over the Rhine in the great Wars of Liberation, and set up a model to shame him who had shaken the world, who had undermined the France of the Great Revolution, though as an army it was not the kind of democratic organization that Scharnhorst and Gneisenau had wanted to create. After the “moor” – the German people – had thus done his duty, he received suitable “thanks from the House of Hapsburg”. The Karlsbad resolutions followed the Battle of the Nations at Leipzig; and one of the most important acts of the futile Metternich period of perfidious and accursed memory, when the external pressure had been removed and all the reactionary devils at home had been let loose again, was the abolition of the democratic army of the Wars of Liberation. The culturally developed areas of Germany might have been ready for such an army, but it was abruptly destroyed, together with all the glories of the great popular rising, under the dead weight of the East Elbean-Borussian lack of culture.

A superficial glance at the development of the military organization finally demonstrates how closely dependent is the construction and size of the army not only on the social structure, but even more on the technique of arms. The revolutionizing effect of the discovery of firearms is one of the most remarkable facts in the history of war.

FOOTNOTES

1. And also of course of intellectual force, which is the inseparable regulator of physical force in so far as it effects the best possible use of that force and makes the physical force of others serve its purpose, which it actually does through the use of the physical force available to it and acquired. The extent to which this use of physical

force exists as a social phenomenon, that is to say, the extent to which it contributes to the determination of the structure of the social relation of power in virtue of the scale and regularity of its occurrence in the relations between individual interest groups, depends as a rule essentially on the economic position of those groups. Some of the more important aspects of this question will be discussed later.

2. “In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces.” – Karl Marx, Preface to **A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy**.

3. To the category of arms proper belongs for example – apart from munitions and weapons of all kinds, including the system of searchlighting, and the fortresses and warships – the military communications system (horses, waggons, bicycles, the building of roads and bridges, ships in inland waters, railways, automobiles, telegraphs, wireless telegraphy, telephone, etc.). Nor should the telescope, airship, photography and spy dogs be forgotten.

4. The development of Italy in the fifteenth century is of the greatest interest here, directly tempting one to make a more thorough investigation. It strengthens our fundamental thesis throughout. See Burckhardt, **Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien**, ninth edition, vol.I, pp.103ff.

5. Also to the Russian Revolution in its early stages. Especially characteristic, among the numerous other proofs, is the armed uprising in Moscow in December 1905, the astonishing tenacity of which is explained by the fact that the main body of the population of the town co-operated with the revolutionaries in the firing line, who were after all not very numerous. The tactics of urban guerrilla warfare, brilliantly developed in Moscow, will become epoch-making.

6. The fact of men working together in factories, etc., and living together in “working class quarters” must, however, be taken into consideration.

[7.](#) See Burckhardt, **Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien**, vol.I, pp.22ff.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

[1*](#). SCHARNHORST, GERHARD VON (1755-1813). Appointed head of the Army Reform Commission after the Peace of Tilsit (1807). Collaborated in this field with Gneisenau, with the aim of introducing conscription coupled with political reform. Chief of Staff to Blücher in 1813, he died the same year after receiving a wound in the Battle of Lutzen. – GNEISENAU, GRAF VON (1760-1830). Prussian Field Marshal. In 1813 became First General Staff Officer to Scharnhorst, then Chief of Staff. Attempted to convert the mercenary Prussian army into a so-called citizen army.

2. CAPITALIST MILITARISM

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Militarism is not specific to capitalism. It is moreover normal and necessary in every class-divided social order, of which the capitalist system is the last. Capitalism, of course, like every other class-divided social order, develops its own special variety of militarism [1]; for militarism is by its very essence a means to an end, or to several ends, which differ according to the kind of social order in question and which can be attained according to this difference in different ways. This comes out not only in military organization, but also in the other features of militarism which manifest themselves when it carries out its tasks.

The capitalist stage of development is best met with an army based on universal military service, an army which, though it is based on the people, is not a people's army but an army hostile to the people, or at least one which is being built up in that direction.

Sometimes it appears as a standing army, sometimes as a militia force. The standing army, which is not peculiar to capitalism [2] appears as its most developed, even as its normal form. This will be demonstrated below.

1. "MILITARISM AGAINST THE EXTERNAL ENEMY", NAVALISM AND COLONIAL MILITARISM.

POSSIBILITIES OF WAR AND DISARMAMENT

The army of the capitalist social order, like the army of any other class-divided social order, fulfils a double role.

It is first of all a national institution, designed for external aggression or for protection against an external danger; in short designed for use in cases of international complication or, to use a military phrase, for use "against the external enemy".

This function of the army is in no sense eliminated by the latest developments. For capitalism war is in fact, to use the words of Moltke [2*], “a link in God’s world order”. [3] In Europe itself there is admittedly something of a tendency for certain causes of war to be eliminated: the probability of war breaking out in Europe is decreasing, in spite of Alsace-Lorraine and the anxiety caused by the French trinity of Clemenceau [3*], Pichon and Picquart, in spite of the Eastern question, in spite of Pan-Islamism and in spite of the revolution taking place in Russia. On the other hand new and highly dangerous sources of tension have arisen in consequence of the aims of commercial and political expansion [4] pursued by the so-called civilized states, sources which have been handed down to us by the Eastern question and Pan-Islamism in the first instance, and as a consequence of world policy, and especially colonial policy, which – as Billow himself unreservedly acknowledged in the German Reichstag on November 14, 1906 [5] – conceals countless possibilities of conflict. [6] This policy has at the same time pushed forward ever more energetically two other forms of militarism: naval militarism and colonial militarism. We Germans know a few things about this development!

Navalism, naval militarism, is the twin brother of militarism on land and bears all its repulsive and virulent features. It is at present, to a still higher degree than militarism on land, not only the consequence but also the cause of international dangers, of the danger of a world war.

If some people, whether honest or deceitful, want to make us believe for example that the tension between Germany and England [7] is due to misunderstandings, to the inflammatory words of malicious journalists, to the boastful expressions of bad musicians in the concert of diplomacy, we know different. We know that this tension is a necessary consequence of the sharpening economic competition between England and Germany on the world market, therefore a direct consequence of unrestrained capitalist development and international competition. The Spanish-American war over Cuba, Italy’s Abyssinian war, England’s war in the Transvaal, the Sino-

Japanese war, the adventure of the Great Powers in China, the Russo-Japanese war: all, though their particular causes and conditions are manifold, possess one great common feature, that they are of expansion. And if we recall the Anglo-Russian tension in Tibet, Persia and Afghanistan, the Japanese-American disagreements of the winter of 1906, and finally the glorious and memorable Morocco conflict of December 1906 with its Franco-Spanish co-operation [8], we recognize that the capitalist policy of expansion and its colonial policy have placed countless mines under the edifice of world peace. The fuses lie in the most varied hands, and the mines may easily and unexpectedly explode. [9] A time may of course come when the division of the world is so far advanced that one may expect the formation of a trust governing all possible colonial possessions by the colony-owning states, that is to say, the elimination of colonial competition between the states, just as has been achieved within certain limits through cartels and trusts in the field of private competition between capitalists. But that will take a good while, and may be postponed to the quite remote future by the economic and national rise of China alone.

Thus all the alleged plans for disarmament appear for the moment to be simple folly, empty talk, attempts to cheat. The stamp of the Tsar as the author of the comedy of the Hague [4*] can be found throughout.

Recently the soap bubble of England's alleged disarmament has burst in a ludicrous manner: Haldane, the Minister of War, the alleged promoter of such intentions, has come out in the sharpest words against any reduction of the active armed forces, and has been revealed and shown up as a militaristic agitator [10], while at the same time the Anglo-French military convention rises above the horizon. And at the very same hour at which the second "Peace conference" is being prepared, Sweden is enlarging its navy, the military budget is growing ever larger in America [11] and Japan, and in France the Clemenceau ministry is stressing the need for a strong army and navy by demanding an increase in spending of 208 million Marks. [12] The **Hamburger Nachrichten** meanwhile suggests that

belief in military armament as the only salvation is the quintessence of the outlook of the ruling class of Germany, and the German people are favoured by the government with demands for further increases in the military budget [13], for which even our Liberals stretch out their hands. [14] Thus we can judge the naïvety of the French senator d'Estournelles de Constant, a member of court of the Hague, displayed in his latest essay on the limitation of armaments. [15] In fact, for this political dreamer it does not even take one swallow to make the summer of disarmament – a sparrow is enough for him. It is almost refreshing after this to see the honest brutality with which the Great Powers taking part in the conference let Stead's proposal fall, and even resisted the disarmament question being put on the agenda of the second conference.

The third offshoot of capitalism in the military field, colonial militarism, deserves a few words. The colonial army – that is to say, the standing colonial army, not the colonial militia force allegedly “planned” for German South-West Africa [16], and even less the quite different militia of the almost independent British colonies – plays an extremely important role for Britain; its importance is also increasing for the other civilized states. For Britain such an army fulfils not only the task of the suppression or checking of the “internal colonial enemy” (that is, the natives of the colonies), but also that of providing a means of force against the external colonial enemy (Russia, for example). For the other states with colonies, especially America and Germany [17], the first and almost exclusive task of the colonial army, often under the name of a “defensive formation or of a “foreign legion” [18], is to drive the luckless natives into slavery, to turn them into forced labourers for the capitalists, and – when they wish to defend their native land against the foreign robbers and blood-suckers – to shoot them down mercilessly, to cut them down with the sword and to starve them out. The colonial army, which is often made up of the scum of the European population [19], is the most bestial, the most abominable of all the tools used by our capitalist states. There is hardly a crime which colonial militarism and the tropical frenzy bred of it has not committed. [20] Men like

Tippelslurch, Woermann, Podbielski, Leist, Wehlan, Peters, Ahrenberg & Co. are evidence and proof of this for Germany. They are the fruits by which we recognize the essence of colonial policy, of that colonial policy which – under the deceptive mask [21] of spreading Christianity and civilization or of defending the national honour – profits and deceives with pious gaze in the service of the colonial interests of the capitalists, murders and assaults the defenceless, burns up their property, robs and plunders their goods and possessions, and scorns and shames Christianity and civilization. [22] The events in India and Tonkin, in the Congo State, in German South-West Africa and in the Philippines eclipse even the stars of a Cortez or a Pizarro.

2. PROLETARIAT AND WAR

Even if the function of militarism against the external enemy is described as a national function, that does not mean that it is a function which conforms to the interests, welfare and will of the peoples ruled and exploited by capitalism. The proletariat of the whole world can expect no advantage from the policy which makes it necessary that militarism against the external enemy should exist; indeed, its interests are in the sharpest contradiction to militarism, which directly or indirectly serves the ruling classes of capitalism in their exploitation. It is a policy whose function is more or less skilfully to pave the way into the world for the disordered chaotic production and senseless murderous competition of capitalism, in the process of which it tramples underfoot all civilized duties towards the less developed peoples. And actually it attains nothing, except for the fact that it insanely endangers the whole framework of our civilization by bringing into existence the threat of world war.

The proletariat too welcomes the mighty industrial progress of our time. But it knows that this economic progress could have come about without the armed hand, without militarism and naval militarism, without the trident in our fist, and without the bestialities of our colonial economic policy, if only it were served by sensibly directed communities working according to international agreement

and in conformity with the duties and interests of civilization. The proletariat knows that our world policy is to a large extent a policy of forcible and clumsy attempts to overcome and confuse the social and political difficulties which the ruling classes see themselves faced with at home; in short, a Bonapartist policy of attempts at deception and deceit. The proletariat knows that the enemies of the workers prefer to cook their soup over the fire of narrow-minded chauvinism, that the fear of war carefully fostered by Bismarck [5*] in 1887 aided precisely the most dangerous forces of reaction, and that a recently exposed neat little plan of very important persons was intended to snatch away from the German people, in a confused period of war jingoism “after the return of a victorious army”, its right to elect the Reichstag. [23] The proletariat knows that this policy is an attempt to exploit economic progress for its own ends, and especially that all the benefit from our colonial policy flows only into the capacious pockets of the class of employers, of capitalism, the sworn enemy of the proletariat itself. It knows that the wars waged by the ruling classes inflict on it the most scandalous sacrifices of property and blood [24], for which, after its work is complete, it is rewarded with miserable disablement pensions, veterans’ aid funds, barrel-organs and kicks of all kinds. It knows that in every war a volcano of hun-like brutality and baseness erupts among the peoples involved, and that for years civilization is set back and barbarism reigns. [25] It knows that the fatherland, for which it must fight, is not its own fatherland, that the proletariat of every land has only one real enemy: the capitalist class which oppresses and exploits it; that because of its special interests the proletariat of every land is closely united with the proletariat of every other land; that all national interests recede before the common interests of the international proletariat; and that the international coalition of exploitation and slavery must be opposed by the international coalition of the exploited, the enslaved. It knows that, in so far as it is used in a war, it is led to fight against its own brothers and class comrades and so to fight against its own interests.

The class-conscious proletariat does not simply remain cool towards the international task of the army, as well as towards the whole

capitalist policy of expansion, but takes up a serious and clear-sighted position of opposition to this task and policy. Faced with the important task of struggling against this aspect of militarism too, it is becoming ever more conscious of its mission. This is shown by the international congresses, and by the exchange of demonstrations of solidarity between German and French socialists at the time of the outbreak of the Franco-German war, between the Spanish and American socialists when the Cuban war broke out, and between the Russian and Japanese socialists when the East Asian war broke out in 1904. It is also shown by the decision of the Swedish Social-Democrats in 1905 to call a general strike in the case of a war between Sweden and Norway, and by the parliamentary position taken up by the German Social-Democrats with regard to war credits in 1870 as well as in the Morocco conflict; and it is shown by the attitude of the class-conscious proletariat towards intervention in Russia.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF "MILITARISM AGAINST THE INTERNAL ENEMY" AND ITS TASK

Militarism is, however, not only a means of defence and a weapon against the external enemy; it has a second task [\[26\]](#), which comes more and more into prominence with the sharpening of class contradictions and the growth of proletarian class-consciousness. Thus the outer form of militarism and its inner character are more and more precisely determined: it has the task of protecting the prevailing social order, of supporting capitalism and all reaction against the struggle of the working class for freedom. Here militarism manifests itself as a pure tool in the hands of the ruling classes, designed to hinder the development of class-consciousness by its alliance with the police and the system of justice, with the school and church, and further to secure for a minority at any cost, even against the conscious will of the majority of the people, its dominant position in the state and its freedom to exploit.

This is how modern militarism stands before us. It wants neither more nor less than the squaring of the circle; it arms the people against the people itself; it is insolent enough to force the workers –

by artificial but ruthless attempts to introduce into our social organization a principle of division according to age – to become oppressors, enemies and murderers of their own class comrades and friends, of their parents, brothers, sisters and children, murderers of their own past and future. It wants to be at the same time democratic and despotic, enlightened and machine-like, at the same time to serve the nation and to be its enemy.

It must not, however, be forgotten that militarism is also directed against the nationalist and even the religious enemy [27] at home – in Germany for example against the Poles [28], Alsatians and Danes – and even finds employment in conflicts between the non-proletarian classes [29]; that it is a phenomenon which takes many forms and often changes its character [30]; and that Prussian-German militarism has blossomed into a very special flower owing to the peculiar semi-absolutist, feudal-bureaucratic conditions in Germany. This Prussian-German militarism possesses all the evil and dangerous qualities of every form of capitalist militarism, so that it is well qualified to stand as a paradigm of contemporary militarism, in its forms, methods and effects. Just as it is said, to use the words of Bismarck, that no one has been able to imitate the Prussian lieutenant, so indeed no one has been able to imitate Prussian-German militarism, which has become not simply a state within the state, but actually a state above the state.

Let us next consider the way in which the army is constituted in other countries. Here we must take into account not only the army proper but also the *gendarmerie* and police, which often have the character of special military organizations designed for everyday service against the internal enemy, and in their rough and violent nature bear the mark of military origin.

4. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ARMY IN SOME FOREIGN COUNTRIES

We find special forms of army constitution for example in Britain and America, in Switzerland and Belgium.

Great Britain has a hired army (a “regular army”) and a militia force, together with the Yeomanry. It also has the so-called Volunteers, a mostly unpaid force which in 1905 numbered 245,000 men. The standing army, including the militia – in which substitution is permitted – numbered in the same year around 444,000 men, of which, however, only about 162,000 were stationed in England. Further, a militarily organized police corps has been prepared for Ireland (about 12,000 men). The standing army is for the most part used outside the home country, especially in India, where the army of about 230,000 men [\[31\]](#) is two-thirds composed of natives. The colonies as a rule have their own militia and volunteer corps. The relation between Britain’s home and colonial militarism is marked by the military budget, which for example in 1897 amounted to about 360 million Marks at home and about 500 millions for India. There is also the immense navy with a complement of around 200,000 men together with marine troops.

The constitution of the army in the United States of America is a mixture of standing army and militia. The standing army, based on conscription [\[32\]](#) and constitutionally limited to a maximum of 100,000 men, actually numbered in peace time according to an estimate of 1905 around 61,000 men (on October 15, 1906, including the Philippine Scouts, 67,253 men), of which 3,800 were officers, most of whom had passed through West Point Military Academy. In the same year the militia numbered about 111,000 men. It is organized in a fairly democratic way. In times of peace it is under the Governor, and is not highly armed or trained. The often militarily organized police forces also play an important role. Quite peculiar is another organization which, formally speaking, does not belong here, but which cannot be ignored because of the function it performs. In all capitalist countries we find “black hundreds”, gangs organized by the bosses, even if only in the sense that the capitalists arm their strikebreakers (something which is not rare for example in Switzerland and France, and was seen in Germany in last year’s shipyard strike in Hamburg and in the Nuremberg events of 1906). But in the armed Pinkerton detectives [\[6*\]](#) the American capitalists have a “black hundred” of first quality permanently at their disposal.

If we finally take note of the roughly 30,000 men who formed the navy in 1905, we see that the United States offers good examples of the most important forms of armed state power.

In Switzerland there existed until recently a real popular army, a general arming of the people. Every Swiss citizen capable of bearing arms possessed a gun and ammunition permanently at home. This was the army of democracy, with which Gaston Moch deals in his well-known book. Since Switzerland has a multi-national citizenry, as does Belgium, it was natural that “external militarism” could take on and preserve a particularly mild character here, to the success of which numerous other factors have contributed. But with the sharpening of class contradictions, “militarism at home” changed its character. The need of the capitalist section of the population to consolidate its power caused the possession of arms and ammunition in the hands of the proletariat to be felt as a hindrance to the freedom to exploit and oppress, even as a danger to the existence of the capitalist class. Thus in September 1899 the disarming of the people began with the withdrawal of ammunition, while at the same time there was an attempt to extend existing militaristic tendencies according to the pattern of the great military states. Thus even in the famous Swiss militia the frightening traits which have made every standing army into a disgrace to civilization are more and more evident. The resolution of the National Council of December 21, 1906, concerning the law on military reorganization, which dealt with the use of soldiers in strikes, changes nothing in this respect. [\[33\]](#)

Belgium’s need of soldiers for the standing army is, because of its neutrality, considerably less than the “supply” of soldiers (about half). The system of general military service is therefore complemented by the system of exemptions and finally by the system of buying oneself out, of substitution, which has cut deeply into the character of the army. Of course, only the wealthy are in a position to pay for someone to take their place, and equally naturally they make full use of the system. If this already well developed system of substitution was not in itself especially significant politically, it did lead – in a

country which was heavily composed of proletarians and where a great percentage of workers were to be found among those liable for military service as well those excused from it – to an extremely dangerous situation for the ruling class. The army, proletarian through and through, was – in so far as it was not already composed in and for itself of class-conscious and determined proletarians – so rapidly convinced of the anti-militarist propaganda that for years the possibility of using it as a tool of the ruling class against the internal enemy has been ruled out, and it is no longer so used. But an answer was at hand. For a long time there had existed the organization of the so-called Civil Guard. To the Civil Guard belong those who have been lucky in the draw and those who have bought themselves out of the army; but only those can join who provide their own uniform and weapon, an arrangement (a kind of weeding-out system) whose effect is that the poorer part of the population more or less excludes itself. Earlier it was nothing more than a great masquerade, its members were mostly liberal and the organization democratic. The Civil Guards kept their weapons at home, chose their officers themselves, etc. But with the increasing unreliability of the standing army a change came about. The administration and direction of the Civil Guard were taken out of the hands of the municipalities and put into those of the government, while the democratic arrangements were abolished, and the weapons taken away from individuals and locked up in the stores of the military administration. A rather tighter form of military duty was introduced and the training of the Civil Guards transferred to the worst of the ex-officers of the standing army. The age group between 20 and 30 must now exercise no less than three evenings in the week and half a Sunday every fortnight. And whereas previously in relation to the organization of these exercises the old method – or lack of method – recalling the days of our “old-time town soldiers” was used, now everything is much more sharply controlled and punctuality enforced on pain of punishment. It is worth noting that this new organization of the Civil Guard only took place in communities of over 20,000 inhabitants, while elsewhere the Civil Guard has remained an absurd shadow. This fact too brands the organization with the mark of its true goal, which is to be a special defensive Force of the government

in the struggle against the “internal enemy”. In 1905 the standing army, excluding the *gendarmérie*, numbered around 46,000 men, the active Civil Guard around 44,000, almost exactly as many!

Belgium thus possesses one army directed against the external enemy and one directed against the internal enemy, a very cunning arrangement which, as the use of the Civil Guard in the recent strikes and struggles over voting rights proves, has performed and will perform good service for the capitalist régime of Belgium.

The country also has a *gendarmérie*, which in strikes and disturbances as well as in war takes on a simple military role. It is very numerous and distributed over the whole country; of great mobility, it can at any time be concentrated, moved and mobilized. In Tervueren near Brussels it has a general barracks for its flying squad, from which in the case of strikes and the like it swarms out as if from a wasps’ nest. It is made up for the most part of former non-commissioned officers, is excellently armed and well paid; in short, an elite force. The Civil Guard was created simply for its task in the class struggle, so that it represents nothing but a special military mobilization of the capitalist class itself, which is quite conscious of its own interests; but the “watchdogs of capital” organized in the *gendarmérie* play their role no less well, according to the saying: “Whoever pays me, I’ll sing to his tune”.

Japan, which stands on about the same capitalist-feudal level of development as Germany, has also in recent years – in spite of its land position similar to that of Britain, and indeed in consequence of the tension in its external position – become a true counterpart of Germany in relation to militarism, apart perhaps from the better military training of its forces.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Russia

From all this it follows that the size and special organizational character of the army is essentially determined by the international

situation, by the function of the army against the external enemy. International tension is as a rule very high today and – even in the non-capitalist states, because of competition with and the need for protection against the capitalist states – necessitates the use of all citizens capable of bearing arms, as well as of the toughest forms of organization: the standing army and universal military service. This tension may, however, either through natural causes – for example, England’s island position, and even in a sense that of the United States of America – or through cultural-political causes – for example, Switzerland’s and the Netherlands’ declaration of neutrality – be subject to a very considerable relaxation.

“Militarism at home”, on the other hand, which faces the internal enemy, is a phenomenon which always necessarily accompanies capitalist development; Gaston Moch himself describes “the restoration of order” as “a legitimate function of a popular army”. And if militarism exhibits very different forms in regard to this function, this is simply explained by the fact that its fulfilment does not depend so much on international competition, so that it can take on very different forms and many more national peculiarities. Britain, incidentally, and also America (where for example from 1896 to 1906 the standing army was strengthened from about 27,000 to about 61,000 men, the number of naval personnel doubled, the budget of the department of war increased by two and a half times, and that of the department of the navy by more than three times, while for 1907 Taft has again demanded an extra 100 millions) are driven more and more along the path of European-Continental militarism, a fact which is certainly determined in the first place by the change in the international situation and the requirements of jingoistic-imperialist world policy, but in the second place without doubt by the change in internal relations of tension, by the increase in the danger of class war. The militaristic attacks of the British War Minister Haldane in September 1906 are hardly coincidental with the energetic independent appearance of the organized British working class on the political stage. ^[34] The tendency to introduce general conscription according to the Swiss model, which has still not been passed in England in spite of the important public agitation for it

which has been carried on, but which has found significant expression in the United States in Roosevelt's message of December 4, 1906, is no symptom of progress. It means in spite of everything a strengthening of militarism in relation to the present position, and lies after all on the steep path to the standing army, about which the example of Switzerland can teach us something.

Militarism undoubtedly possesses, with respect to the manifold combination of factors determined by the extent and character of the special requirements of external and internal defence, a plurality of aspects and a flexibility which is most clearly seen in army organization. This flexibility, however, comes into play everywhere within the boundaries which are set by that goal which is absolutely essential to militarism, the protection of capitalism. The development of militarism can nevertheless take quite different paths. While for example France under Picquart was seriously engaged in shortening considerably the training time of the Reserve and Territorial forces [35], in the reform of the *biribi* and in the abolition of the special military jurisdiction [36], the President of the German military court of the Reich, von Massow, was resigning his post in autumn, 1906, because the military command (the Prussian War Ministry) had by means of legal interpretations formally and directly interfered in the independence of the military courts (circular of spring, 1905), an independence which of course had taken on a peculiar character in the action against the judges in the Bilse case. These "French concessions" were almost exclusively based on anti-clericalism. Clericalism had important support in the army; the government needed the proletariat in the "struggle for culture". This combination is of course neither permanent, nor does it arise from an essential, lasting tendency of development. It depends, as far as its nature is concerned, on the passing conjuncture, and goes hand in hand with an energetic struggle against militarism, as we have shown.

Russia is interesting from this point of view. The high state of tension in its international position has forced it to introduce universal military service, while as an Asiatic-Despotic state it is faced with an unequalled internal conflict. The internal enemy of Tsarism is not

only the proletariat, but also the great mass of the peasantry and bourgeoisie, even indeed a large part of the nobility. Ninety-nine per cent of Russian soldiers are by class position bitter enemies of Tsarist despotism. A low level of culture, national and religious conflicts, and also contradictions in economic and social interests, together with the more or less subtle pressure exercised by the extensive bureaucratic apparatus as well as the unfavourable local organization, the inadequately developed transport system and other things: all these represent an important check on the development of class-consciousness. There exists a much attacked system of elite troops, who are provided with every facility: the *gendarmerie*, for example, and especially the Cossacks, which effectively constitute a special social class on account of their good pay and other material provision, of their extensive political privileges, and of the arrangement by which they live in a semi-socialist community; they are thus closely bound in an artificial way to the ruling classes. In this way Tsarism tries to secure a sufficient number of loyal supporters to offset the ferment which has penetrated deep into the ranks of the army. And to all this, to these “watchdogs of Tsarism”, there must be added the Circassians [\[37\]](#), and other barbarian peoples living in the empire of the fist, who were loosed over the land like a pack of wolves in the Baltic counter-revolution, together with all the other numberless parasites on Tsarism, the police and their accomplices, and the hooligans and black hundreds.

But if in the bourgeois-capitalist states the army based on universal military service and designed as a weapon against the proletariat represents a frightful and bizarre contradiction, the army based on the same system under the despotic Tsarist system of government is a weapon which is necessarily turned more and more with crushing weight against the Tsarist despotism itself. The experiences of the anti-militarist movement in Russia can therefore only be applied to the bourgeois-capitalist states with the greatest of care. And if the efforts of the ruling classes of capitalism in the bourgeois-capitalist states to bribe the people to fight against itself – to a great extent indeed with money actually taken from the people – are finally doomed to failure, we already see before our very eyes how the

desperate and pitiable attempts of Tsarism to buy off the revolution by bribery are suffering a rapid and wretched fiasco in the tragic world of Russian finance, in spite of all the attempts of unscrupulous international capital to save the régime. The question of financial loans is certainly an important one, at least for the tempo of the revolution. But if the revolutions cannot easily be made, it is even less easy to buy them off [38], even with the means available to the big capitalists of the world.

FOOTNOTES

1. Bernstein [1*] wrongly says in **La Vie Socialiste** of June 5, 1905, that the present-day militarist institutions are only an inheritance from the more or less feudal monarchy.

2. Cf. Russia, where quite special circumstances, which did not grow out of internal conditions, helped to bring about this result. The hired armies are for instance standing armies on a basis different from that of universal military service. The Italian towns of the fifteenth century also had a militia force. (Burckhardt, **Die Kultur der Renaissance**, vol.I, p.327.)

3. In his well-known letter to Bluntschli (December 1880) he writes: "Eternal peace is a dream, and not a nice one, and war is a link in God's world order. In war are expressed the noblest virtues of man: courage and renunciation, loyalty and willingness for sacrifice of life. Without war the world would sink into the morass of materialism." A few months earlier Moltke had written: "Every war is a national disaster" (**Gesammelte Schriften und Denkwürdigkeiten**, Berlin n.d., vol.11, pp.195 and 200), and in 1841 he had written in an article in the **Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung**: "We openly associate ourselves with the much derided idea of a general European peace."

4. The total value of the world's export trade, according to Hübner's tables, rose from 75,224 million marks in 1891 to almost 109,000 millions in 1905.

5. “What today complicates our situation and makes it difficult are our overseas aims and interests.”

6. Moltke’s opinions on this subject were very unsettled. According to him the time of cabinet wars is past; but on the other hand he considers the party leaders as criminal and dangerous provokers of war. The party leaders and – the stock exchange! It is true that now and then he has more profound insight. (**Gesammelte Schriften und Denkwürdigkeiten**, vol.III, pp.1ff., 126, 135, 138.)

7. Which is characterized after all by that fantastic abortion of English jingoism entitled “The Invasion of 1910”.

8. France spent more than 100 millions in 1906, as a result of the Morocco dispute, to secure its eastern border from a military standpoint!

9. On the question of the alleged but never fully explained plan of Semler, the representative of the Hamburg shipping firms to capture Fernando Po à la Jameson, see the debates of the budget commission at the beginning (December 1906)

10. It is irrelevant that he remains opposed to universal military service – a fact which the **Kreuz-Zeitung** of November 29, 1906, regrets, on the ground that universal military service would educate the British people to a better appreciation of the seriousness of war! In Germany indeed, according to the wish of the knights of the **Kreuz-Zeitung**, the only purpose of universal military service is to force sacrifice of blood and property on the people, while the decision as to war and peace remains for those to gamble with who least understand the seriousness of war. They quite understand the value of democracy abroad, of course! With regard to the strong tendency to a universal militia force which is manifesting itself in England and America, see part 1, chapter 2.5.

11. See this chapter 2, section 5, part 1, chapter 4.2 *Another dilemma*, and Roosevelt’s message of December 4, 1906.

12. Mainly based on the Morocco conflict.

13. 24¾ millions for the navy, 51 millions for the army, 7 millions interest – total: an increase of about 83 million Marks as against the budget of 1906-7! Rosy prospects of further “limitless” naval armament expenditure are given in an obviously inspired article in the **Reichsboten** of December 21, 1906. There is also the vast colonial war expenditure (the China expedition: 454 million marks; the South-West African rising: 490 millions so far; the East African rising: 2 millions, etc.). The question of the ratification of all this expenditure has now, on December 13, 1906, caused a conflict and the dissolution of the Reichstag.

14. See for instance the **Berliner Tageblatt** of October 27, 1906, and above all the notorious bill introduced by Ablass on December 13, 1906, as well as the Liberal electoral slogan of January 25, 1907.

15. **La Revue** of October 1, 1906. The “results actually achieved” by the disarmament movement, prophesied by the editor of the **Revue**, remain his own deep secret.

16. Dernburg in the Reichstag sitting of November 29, 1906.

17. Whose colonial expenditure, even according to Dernburg’s memorandum of October 1906, is of an overwhelmingly military character, in spite of all attempts to conceal the fact in the balance sheet.

18. Since December 31, 1900, France has possessed a regular colonial army, with which the most evil experiments are being carried out. See the **Hamburgischer Correspondent**, no.621, December 7, 1906, and also footnotes 29, 6i. In Germany the formation of such an army is being busily worked on, and the progress is rapid.

19. See Péroz, **France et Japon en Indochine**; Famin, **L’armée coloniale**; E. Reclus in **Patriotisme et colonisation**; Däumig, **Schlachtopfer des Militarismus**; **Die Neue Zeit**, year XVIII (1899-1900), 2nd vol., p.365; on the *bataillons d’Afrique*, p.369. See also,

for Germany, the Deputy Roeren in the Reichstag on December 3, 1906.

[20.](#) The disciplinary system also assumes an especially sharp form of brutality. On the question of the French Foreign Legion and the *battillons d'Afrique*, see Däumig, **Schlachtopfer des Militarismus**; on the elimination of the *biribi*, see pp.27-8, 34.

[21.](#) This hypocritical and shameful cloak is now thrown off with all the cynicism one could wish for. See the article of G.B. in the monthly journal **Die deutschen Kolonien** (October 1906), and the remarks of Strantz at the conference of the Pan-German Society (September 1906): "We do not want to make Christians of the people in the colonies, but to make them work for us. This dizzy talk about humaneness is quite ludicrous. German sentimentality has robbed us of a man like Peters." Further, Heinrich Hartert writes in **Der Tag** of December 21, 1906 It is "the duty of the mission ... to adjust itself to given conditions"; but it has "often made itself directly troublesome to the trader". This constitutes the main point of dispute in colonial policy between the Centre Party and the government, and only in this context can one understand the unrestrained and fierce attack made by the "trader Dernburg against the so-called shadow government of the Centre. In this respect too the divine "answer of Alexander" applies to foreign countries. For America the **Kreuz-Zeitung** preaches the following (September 29, 1906): "The simple extermination of whole tribes of Indians is so inhuman and un-Christian that it cannot under any circumstances be justified – especially since for the Americans it is in no way a question of to be or not to be". Where that is the question, therefore, according to the conception of the colony-owning Christians, be who professes love for his neighbours may even "exterminate whole tribes"!

[22.](#) See the memorable debates in the German Reichstag between November 28 and December 4, 1906, in which the abscess was lanced.

[23.](#) See the **Hamburger Nachrichten** of November 3, 1906.

[24.](#) The sacrifice of human life in war between 1799 and 1904 (excluding the Russo-Japanese war) is estimated at about 15 millions.

[25.](#) See [footnote 3](#), and Moltke, **Gesammelte Schriften und Denkwürdigkeiten**, vol.II, p.288. Here war is supposed to raise the level of morality and efficiency, and especially to produce moral energy.

[26.](#) The task of bolstering up the existing internal order falls to militarism not only in the capitalist system but in all class-divided social orders.

[27.](#) Cf. the French “struggle for culture” during the conflict of December 1906.

[28.](#) Cf. the electoral row in Upper Silesia in 1903.

[29.](#) See Fuchsmühl.

[30.](#) For more details see this chapter, section 5 and part 2, chapter 5.

[31.](#) In 1905-6: 229,820. In the Native States in 1903: 136,837.

[32.](#) Enlistment is becoming even more difficult, and the percentage of foreigners recruited is rising – a fact which is worrying the American government.

[33.](#) See part 1, chapter 4.4 Germany.

[34.](#) Haldane’s own political position, sharply hostile to the Labour Party, is demonstrated by the facts reported by Rothstein in **Die Neue Zeit**, 25th year (1906-7), vol.I, p.121. Whether the conflict over the school legislation between the Upper and Lower Houses in November-December 1906 is also a symptom of sharpening tension only the future can tell us. The recently reported rejection of general compulsory service by Haldane does not stand in contradiction to this, but accords with it.

[35.](#) Rejected by the Chamber for the time being in December 1906.

[36.](#) Cf. especially Assistant State Secretary Chéron in the debate in the Chamber on December 10, 1906, and **L'Humanité** of December 11, 1906; also part 1, chapter 3, footnote 14.

[37.](#) In the **Dünazeitung** of December 4 (17), 1906, even the District Councillor von Sivers-Römershof speaks of the “bloodthirsty Circassians”.

[38.](#) Not even in the recently prominent modern form of cheap trade and discount in concessions and natural riches to American trusts, the “dernier cri” in the double sense of Tsarist foreign policy.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

[1*](#). BERNSTEIN, EDUARD (1850-1932). German Social-Democrat. Theoretician of reformism, most prominent representative of revisionism in the Social-Democratic Party.

[2*](#). MOLTKE, GRAF VON (1800-1891). Chief of the Prussian and German general staff. Directed operations in the Franco-Prussian War, 1870-1.

[3*](#). CLEMENCEAU, GEORGES (1841-1929). Radical, French Minister of the Interior from 1906. Became known as the strong man of French politics, especially because of his use of the army in social conflicts at home and his support for the general strengthening of the armed forces. Headed the French government from 1917 to 1920.

[4*](#). HAGUE COMEDY. The peace conference held at The Hague in May-June 1899. It was inspired by Tsarist Russia, which was unable to keep up with the other powers in the armaments race.

[5*](#). BISMARCK, GRAF VON (1815-1898). Minister President of Prussia from 1862, he was responsible for the political direction of the creation of the German Empire, of which he was effectively founder and first Chancellor. Based his strength for many years on the National

Liberal Party, during which period he initiated the so-called Kulturkampf against the Catholic Centre. Later moved away from and attacked the National Liberals, without being able to replace them as a political support. Fell in 1896, soon after the accession of the new Kaiser, Wilhelm II.

6*. PINKERTONS. Private police in the United States of America organized by Allan Pinkerton (1819-1884). Used against American labour unions, especially during the strikes of 1877.

3. METHODS AND EFFECTS OF MILITARISM

1. THE IMMEDIATE OBJECT

We now move on to a special examination of the methods and effects of militarism, and in doing so direct our attention to a paradigm case of militarism, the Prussian-German bureaucratic-feudal-capitalist form – that very worst form of capitalist militarism, that state above the state.

Even if it is true that contemporary militarism is nothing more than a manifestation of our capitalist society, it is nevertheless a manifestation which has become almost independent and very nearly an end in itself.

Militarism, in order to attain its ends, must transform the army into a manageable, flexible and effective instrument. It must raise it to the highest possible level on the military-technical side; in addition, since it consists of men and not of machines and is therefore a living mechanism, it must be filled with the right “spirit”.

The first aspect of the matter finally resolves itself into a financial question; this will be dealt with later. Here we shall go into the second aspect.

Its content has three facets. Militarism seeks to produce and foster the military spirit first off in the active army; then in those groups which become important when, like the reserve and militia, they are used to supplement the army in the case of mobilization; and finally in all the other groups of the population which serve as a base and support for those strata which are to be employed for militarist or anti-militarist purposes.

2. MILITARY PEDAGOGY

The education of the soldier

The true “military spirit”, also called “patriotic spirit” and in Prussia-Germany “spirit of loyalty to the King”, means in brief a readiness at any time when so ordered to strike at the external and internal enemy. In order to produce this spirit the most perfect stupidity is needed, or at least the lowest possible level of intelligence. This makes it possible to drive on the masses like a herd of cattle in whatever direction is dictated by the interests of the “existing order”. The confession of the War Minister, von Einem, that he preferred a soldier loyal to the King, even if he were a bad shot, to one who was less submissive, even if he were a good shot, surely sprang from the depths of the heart of this representative of German militarism.

But here militarism finds itself in an unfortunate predicament. The technique of arms, strategy and tactics now make a significant demand on the intelligence ^[1], and make the intelligent soldier, other things being equal, the more proficient. ^[2] For this reason alone militarism in the present day could no longer do anything simply with a crowd of fools. But neither can capitalism make use of such a crowd, because of the economic tasks which have to be performed by the masses and especially by the proletariat. Capitalism is therefore forced by a tragic fate, in order to be able to exploit, in order to be able to extract the highest possible profits – this is its inevitable task in life – to produce systematically on a vast scale among its slaves the very intelligence which, it knows quite well, must bring its own death and destruction. All attempts, through skillful manoeuvring and artful co-operation with church and school, to steer the ship of capitalism between the Scylla of an intelligence so low that it makes exploitation altogether too difficult, and lowers the proletariat to the level of a useless beast of burden, and the Charybdis of an education which revolutionizes the heads of the exploited, which everywhere opens the gates of class-consciousness, which is necessarily destructive of capitalism – such attempts are desperate and hopeless. Only the agricultural workers of the region east of the Elbe – who, according to the famous words of Kröcher, are actually the most stupid of labourers, though, it should be noted, they can still provide the Junker with his best workers – now supply militarism on a large scale with material which

allows itself to be led like a horde of slaves simply on a word of command. This material, however, can be put to use only cautiously and within definite limits, for its level of intelligence is too low even for militarism.

It is often said that our best soldiers are Social-Democrats. Here is registered the difficulty of the task of providing the army, based on universal conscription, with the correct military spirit. [3] Since mere slavish and abject obedience does not suffice, and is anyway no longer possible, militarism has to use a roundabout way of strengthening the will of its troops in order to create for itself "shooting automatons". [4] It must bend the will by moral and psychological influence or by force; it must entice or compel it. The principle of the carrot and the stick is applicable here. The true "spirit" required by militarism, in respect first of all of its function against the external enemy, is chauvinistic pig-headedness, narrow-mindedness and arrogance; second, in respect of its function against the internal enemy, it is a lack of understanding and even hatred of all progress, of every undertaking and endeavour which might in any way threaten the power of the class dominant at the time. This is the direction in which militarism must guide the thoughts and feelings of the soldiers, in so far as it wants to lure with the carrot those whose class interests are opposed to all chauvinism and for whom progress should appear as the only reasonable goal until the time when the existing social order is overthrown. It must also not be forgotten that the proletarian whose age makes him liable for military service, although as a rule he is more independent and capable of political insight than the bourgeois of the same age, is not so firm in his class-consciousness.

The system of influencing the troops from the moral and psychological standpoint is a most daring and cunning one, whereby, instead of being separated according to their social class, the soldiers are divided according to their age, in order to create a special class of proletarians of 20 to 22 years of age whose thoughts and feelings will be completely opposite to those of the proletarians in the other, "older" classes.

First of all, the proletarian in uniform is sharply and ruthlessly cut off from his class comrades and his family. This is done by taking him away from his home, which is systematically done in Germany, and especially by shutting him up in barracks. [5] One might almost speak of a repetition of the Jesuit method of education, a counterpart of monastic organization.

Next it is necessary to extend this isolation for as long as possible, a tendency which is only checked by financial difficulties when it cannot find a military-technical justification. This circumstance is for example essentially the reason for the introduction in 1893 of the two-year period of military service in Germany. [6]

Finally it is necessary to make the best possible use of the time available to capture the minds of the trainees. Different means are used to this end. Just as in the case of the Church, all human weaknesses and the senses are put to use in the service of this military pedagogy. Ambition and vanity are encouraged, the military uniform is proclaimed as the most noble dress, the soldier's honour glorified as especially distinguished, and the rank of soldier trumpeted as the most important and respected; and indeed, it is endowed with many privileges. [7] The authorities speculate on men's love of finery: in contradiction to their purely military purpose, uniforms are trimmed with colourful tinsel like carnival costumes and cut according to the coarse taste of the lower classes, whom these authorities want to capture. All kinds of petty glittering distinctions, decorations, stripes for good shooting, etc., serve the same base instinct – for showing off and being looked up to. And how much of the suffering of soldiers has been soothed by military music, which, along with the glittering trimmings of the uniform and the pompous military ostentation, is to be thanked for that extensive popularity which our “wonderful army of war” can boast of among children, fools, servant girls and the lumpenproletariat? Whoever has once examined the dubious public which watches parades and the throng which follows the processions of the Berlin palace guard will understand this perfectly well. It is well known in fact that this attraction to the military uniform which is found in certain civilian

circles constitutes an important aspect of temptation for the uneducated elements in the army.

All these means are that much more effective the lower the intellectual level of the soldiers, the lower their social position. For such elements are easier to deceive, not only on account of their slight capacity for critical judgment, but also because for them there is a difference between the level of their former civilian life and that of their military position – one need only imagine an American negro [8] or an East Prussian serf suddenly dressed in the “most distinguished” uniform! In this way a tragic contradiction arises: that the effect of these means on the intelligent industrial proletariat, for whom they were first designed, is less than on those elements whom it seems hardly necessary to influence in this direction, at least for the time being, since they already constitute an adequately pliable material for militarism. But the same methods may also contribute to the preservation of the “spirit” acceptable to militarism. The same end is served by the regimental feasts, the celebrations of the Kaiser’s birthday and the like.

When everything has been done to place the soldier to a degree in a state of intoxication, to drug his mind, to fire his feelings and imagination, it is necessary systematically to work upon his powers of reasoning. A system of instruction attempts to cram him with a childish, distorted picture of the world, designed to suit the purpose of militarism. Of course this instruction, mostly given by uneducated men incapable of proper teaching, does not have any effect at all on the intelligent industrial workers who are often more intelligent than their instructors. It is an attempt to attain an impossible object, resembling an arrow which rebounds on the one who shot it. This was recently made clear to General Liebert by **Die Post** and by Max Lorenz (whose understanding has been quickened by competition for profit) in regard to the anti-Social-Democratic “instruction” of soldiers.

Hard drilling and the discipline of the barracks, the canonization of the uniform of the officers [9] and non-commissioned officers [10],

which in many fields really seems to be *legibus solutus* and sacrosanct – in short, the discipline and control which clasp the soldier in an iron bond in everything he does or thinks, on or off duty – serve to produce the necessary flexibility and obedience of will. Each individual is so ruthlessly bent, pulled and twisted that the strongest spine is in danger of breaking, and either bends or breaks. [\[11\]](#)

The zealous fostering of the “religious” spirit, which was demanded by a motion of the budget committee of the Reichstag in February 1892 as a special goal of military education, though rejected without prejudice, is also designed to complete the work of military oppression and enslavement.

Instruction and religious propaganda constitute at the same time the carrot and the stick, the latter being used for the most part carefully and in a disguised form.

The most attractive carrot, successfully used as a means of enticement for the formation and placing of the important permanent *cadres* of the army, is the system of “capitulation”, with the prospect of premiums for the non-commissioned officers [\[12\]](#) and of the “certificate of maintenance in civilian life” [\[13\]](#), which is a very cunning and dangerous arrangement. As we shall demonstrate below, it contaminates our whole public life with militarism.

The whip used by militarism is, however, above all the system of discipline [\[14\]](#), the military law with its rigorous threat to even the slightest opposition to the so-called military spirit, and military justice with its semi-mediaeval procedure, which deals out inhuman, barbarous punishment in the face of the slightest insubordination. Excesses committed by superiors against their subordinates meet, however, with light punishment, while the men’s right of self-defence has been almost completely taken away. Nothing makes one more angry with militarism and nothing at the same time is more instructive than simply reading the military articles and reports of military criminal trials.

To this category belong also the examples of the ill-treatment of soldiers, of which more will be said later. This ill-treatment is not legal, but is nevertheless probably the most effective of all coercive means of discipline used by militarism.

There is an attempt to tame men in the way in which beasts are tamed. Recruits are drugged, confused, flattered, bribed, pressed, locked up, disciplined and beaten. Thus grain upon grain is mixed and kneaded to serve as mortar for the great edifice of the army, stone added to stone, calculated to form a fortress against revolution. [\[15\]](#)

The fact that all these means of enticement, discipline and punishment are weapons in the class struggle becomes obvious if we examine the “Institute for one-year volunteers”. The one-year volunteer, the son of a bourgeois and intended as an officer of the reserve, is generally considered above suspicion where ad-capitalist and anti-militarist, and especially revolutionary leanings are concerned. He is therefore spared being sent away from his home, being shut up in barracks, being instructed and forced to attend church, and even spared a large part of the hard drilling. It is of course only in exceptional cases that he falls into the snares of discipline and military law, and even then mostly without incurring severe punishment. And those who exploit the ordinary soldiers rarely dare, in spite of their great instinctive hatred for everything “cultured”, to attack these volunteers. The training of the officers provides another striking proof of our thesis.

It is of great importance for military discipline that men work together in a mass, within which the independence of the individual is to a great extent abolished. Each individual in the army, like a criminal in a galley, is chained to all the others, and practically incapable of free action. The strength of the others, which is a hundred thousand times greater, prevents him by its overwhelming power from making any independent move. All the members of this mighty machine are subjected, not only to the hypnotic suggestion of those in command, but also to a special kind of hypnotism, mass hypnotism – which,

however, is bound to be without effect on an army made up of educated and dedicated opponents of militarism.

In the field of the education of the soldier, the twin tasks of militarism are obviously by no means always satisfied together, but often come into conflict. This applies both to training and equipment. Military training demands ever more imperiously a constant increase in the level of independence of the soldier. But as a “watchdog of capital” he requires no independence; indeed, he must have none (his qualification for suicide must not be denied). In short, war against the external enemy demands men, war against the internal enemy demands slaves, machines. As far as training and equipment are concerned, it is impossible to dispense with the bright uniforms, the glittering buttons and helmets, the flags, parade drills, cavalry attacks and all the other rubbish needed to create the spirit required in the struggle against the internal enemy – but in war against the external enemy these may become quite fatal or simply impossible. [16] This tragic conflict, whose manifold implications cannot be thoroughly dealt with here, has not been grasped by all the well-intentioned critics of our militarism [17], who in their innocence want simply to lay down the criterion for military training.

This conflict of interests within militarism, this self-contradiction from which it suffers, tends to take on a continually sharper form. It depends at any moment upon the relation between political tension abroad and at home as to which of the two contradictory interests gains the upper hand. It should not be forgotten that here lies the germ of the self-destruction of militarism.

When the war against the internal enemy in the case of an armed revolution makes such requirements of a military-technical kind that the dressed-up slaves and machines are no longer able to put down the revolt, then the last hour of coercive rule by the minority, the capitalist oligarchy, will strike.

It is important enough that this military spirit in general means disorder and confusion in proletarian class-consciousness, and that

militarism serves capitalism by contaminating our public life with this spirit in every direction simultaneously – leaving aside the purely militaristic contamination of which it is the cause. It does this for example by creating and furthering a feeling of servility in the proletarian in relation to the economic, social and political exploitation to which he is subject, thus retarding as far as possible the proletarian struggle for freedom. We shall have to come back to this point.

Bureaucratic and semi-military organization of the civil population

Militarism seeks neither more nor less than to exert the most lasting and effective influence possible on those who belong to the active army. Next it attempts to arrogate to itself as much power as it possibly can over these persons, for example by a system of control, by a far-reaching extension of military jurisdiction and of the system of military courts of honour, which is even applied to officers in the reserve [18] and to those in positions of command. Especially characteristic in this respect is the subjection to military jurisdiction of men called up before the control committee, something which is claimed by the military authorities for the whole time during which a control committee is sitting. This is a quite open breach of the law. Not the slightest basis exists for the establishment of such a right, and it constitutes nothing less than usurpation. Here must also be mentioned the so-called young men's defence organizations and military clubs, with their official or semi-military management and their aping of the military dress, fooling and feasting. A most important role is played in the field of military activity by the officers of the reserve, who bring the spirit of the military caste into civilian life and immortalize it. Still more important is the subjection almost without exception of the higher officials of the state and communal administration, as well as of justice and the education system [19], to military discipline, the militaristic spirit and the whole militarist conception of life. Every opposition movement which proves awkward and is not absolutely impossible to suppress is thus eliminated in advance. In this way – in conjunction with the system of military qualification for civilian life, which plays the same role for the

subalterns and lower officials – the submissiveness of the civil executive is assured. Care is thus taken that the trees of class justice and the system of class education grow high into the sky of militarism, while the trees of self-government [20] are well pruned. It should also be mentioned here that officers on active service and those in the reserve are forbidden to write publicly. Together with the highly instructive Gädke case, all this is the best evidence that militarism is striving ruthlessly for the spiritual subjugation and centralized control of all those who come within its reach, and is also evidence of its tendency continuously to extend its sphere of influence, whether by legal or illegal means, and of its limitless and insatiable craving for power.

Other military influences on the civil population

A still more important fruit of militarism's desire for expansion than the nuisance caused by the officers of the reserve is the troublesome system of military qualification for civilian life, which apart from its purely military aim also serves the purpose of sending out a following of loyal and enthusiastic representatives and advocates of the military spirit to all branches of the state and communal administration. At the same time the reliability and readiness of the bureaucratic apparatus which serves capitalism to strike [21] is supposed to be secured, and the "correct" way of thinking, that which "upholds the state", to be spread among the masses of the population who are especially "in need of education". This "educational" aim of the certificate of maintenance in civilian life was acknowledged with splendid unanimity and frankness in February 1891 in the German Reichstag by Caprivi [2*], the Imperial Chancellor, and the representatives of the ruling classes. This is therefore the ideal – based on upholding the state – of our popular education, which by chance, after the corporal had to leave the desk, has been embodied in a roundabout way in the non-commissioned officer.

The results of this education are, however, not very great. The poor devil who is "militarily qualified for civilian life" is very badly paid as a

lower official. And in the end it may not even be possible to get hold of a German non-commissioned officer *pour le roi de Prusse*. [22] The eternal problem of buying out the revolution!

In this connection it must be further mentioned that the same means by which the military enthusiasm of the soldiers is produced and maintained – all the tinsel and splendour, for example – are at the same time used to influence in favour of militarism the population outside of the army, including the circles from which the army is recruited, which provide it with its glitter, which have to bear its costs and stand in “danger” of falling to the enemy at home. Haldane, the British Minister of War, was intelligent enough to recognize this during his visit to Prussia in the autumn of 1906. He said that a valuable “phenomenon which accompanies militarism is that through coming into closer touch with the army and with war preparations the nation is educated in prudence and loyalty”. [23]

A quite different means used by militarism to spread its spirit lies in its capacity as consumer and producer as well as in the influence it carries over great state economic concerns of strategic importance. A whole army of manufacturers, artisans and merchants, together with their employees, lives on military work, in that it takes part in the production and transportation of articles necessary for equipping, lodging and maintaining the army, as well as of all other articles used by the soldiers. These parasites on the army sometimes, especially in the smaller garrison towns, impress themselves upon the whole of public life; indeed, the more powerful of them rule like princes over great communities and play first fiddle in the state and in the empire. The influence which they wield, thanks to militarism, enables them at the same time to exploit it with astonishing patience and to box its ears. They repay it – one hand washes the other – by becoming its keenest agitators, driven on, it is true, by their capitalist interest. Who does not know their names: Krupp, Stumm, Ehrhardt, Loewe, Woermann, Tippelskirch [3*], Nobel, the Powder Ring, etc.? Who does not know of the profits taken by Krupp from armour plate, those pocketed by Tippelskirch and the corruption that goes with them, the inflated freight and demurrage charges of Woermann, and the net

profits of the Powder Ring, amounting to 100 and 150 per cent, which have lightened the German treasury to the tune of many millions? [24] In Austria especially the suppliers' swindling caused a great sensation. [25] And every campaign means a golden harvest for the swindlers, for the pack of parasites – not only in Russia. [26] These great men reward militarism, as we have said, in the most Christian way, simply by robbing it, or rather the people. They pour the holy ghost of militarism over "their" workers and everything that depends on them, and wage a ruthless war against revolution. Of course neither these workers nor the great mass of the small army suppliers have a real material interest in the army. In countries which lack a standing army the prosperity and well-being of trade and industry is certainly in no worse a condition than in states which do possess such an army, and those persons employed in military production would be no worse off economically if no army existed. But meanwhile they do not for the most part see beyond the ends of their noses, and humble themselves obligingly to the energetic influence of militarism, so that counter-agitation meets with great difficulties.

As an employer in the great economic concerns (in the supply depots, the preserve factories, the clothing depots, repair depots, arms and munition factories, dockyards, etc.), militarism willingly and without exception delivers up its employees – there were 54,723 of them employed in state concerns by the German army and navy administration on October 31, 1904 [27] – to every kind of reactionary-patriotic demagogy, like that of the Imperial League against Social- Democracy. It also attempts systematically and in the most ruthless manner to further the patriotic-militaristic spirit by means of enticements like titles, decorations, festivals like those organized by the military clubs and – impossible pensions, slandering of the trade unions, and real barracks discipline. [28] The military workshops, more than any other state workshops, constitute the most difficult field for the education of the proletariat.

Of course, the anti-Labour influence has its limits, and the military administration has no illusions in view of the successes achieved by

the Social-Democrats, especially among the “Imperial” dock workers. All the threats – even the most childish, to close down the military workshops if the Social-Democratic vote among the workers should continue to increase, threats which were used in the election of 1903 in Spandau – are incapable of hindering the development of class-consciousness as long as militarism pays such niggardly wages to its workers and thus pushes them into the arms of Social-Democracy. One need only recall the frequent movements for higher wages among the workers in the “royal” factories, and the countless conflicts which these workers come into with the military administration, which often take on a lively character [29] for one’s pessimism to disappear.

The railways, post and telegraph are institutions of outstanding strategic importance, no less in the war against the internal enemy than in that against the external enemy. These indispensable strategic factors may, however, be rendered useless for capitalism by a strike, which can lead to a complete paralysis of the military organism. That is why militarism tries so hard to instil its spirit into the organizations of officials and workers in the transport concerns and productive concerns allied to them (railway workshops, coach factories, etc.). And how unscrupulously this aim is pursued (even leaving aside the system of military qualification for civilian life) is shown by the fact that in many states the employees are subjected to military law. It will also be made clear by a brief glance at the political position of these employees in the militarist states, where they are deprived of the right to form trade unions, either by administrative order, as in Germany and France [30], or by special laws, as for example in Italy, Holland and Russia. [31] We must not of course forget that the capitalist state, apart from these militarist interests, has a quite general interest in preventing the employees of the transport organizations from succumbing to aspirations “antagonistic to the state”. But this aim must remain unfulfilled in the long run, however many difficulties it presents in the meanwhile to the labour movement. It is shattered by the low pay and effective proletarian position of the employees of the transport concerns.

Militarism as Machiavellianism and as a political regulator

Militarism makes its appearance first as the army itself then as a system which projects itself beyond the army and clasps the whole society in a network of militaristic and semi-militaristic institutions – the system of control, the courts of honour, the ban on public writing, the reserve officer system, the certificate of maintenance in civilian life, the militarization of the whole bureaucratic apparatus (which in the first place is due to the trouble caused by the reserve officers and to the system of military qualification for civilian life), the young men's defence organizations, the military dubs and so on. Militarism also makes its appearance as a system which saturates the whole public and private life of the people with the militaristic spirit. The Church, the school, and a certain tendency to cheapness in art, together with the press, a wretched, venal rabble of littérateurs, and the social nimbus which surrounds "our glorious war army" like a halo – all these work together in a tenacious and cunning manner. Militarism, together with the Catholic Church, is the most highly developed Machiavellianism in the history of the world, and the most Machiavellian of all the Machiavellianisms of capitalism.

The frequently mentioned coup of the cobbler Captain of Köpenick presents us with the catechism of militarist methods of education and their results. The most sublime point in the catechism is the sacred manner in which the whole of bourgeois society regards the officer's uniform. In the six-hour examination by which this convict put our army, our bureaucratic apparatus and our subjection to Prussia to the test, those under examination passed so brilliantly that even their teachers' hair stood on end in the face of this quintessence of their pedagogy. No hat of Gessler has ever met with such obliging servility and self-humiliation as the hat of the immortal Captain of Köpenick, no sacred cloak of Trier has found so much credulous devotion as his uniform. This classical satire, whose great effect lies in the fact that it has killed by ridicule the principles of military pedagogy, would similarly have killed off militarism itself to the strains of the world's laughter, were it not for the fact that militarism – which suddenly finds itself in the strange role of a sorcerer's apprentice – is as necessary to bourgeois society as our daily bread and the air we breathe. The

old and tragic conflict! Capitalism and its mighty servant militarism by no means love each other; rather they fear and hate one another, and have good reason to do so. They regard each other – so independent has this servant become – as a necessary evil, and again there are reasons for this. Thus the lesson of Köpenick, which bourgeois society cannot follow, will remain simply a powerful means of agitation for anti-militarism and for Social-Democracy [32], whose prospects are the better the more militarism brings things to a head.

What the Captain of Köpenick did for militarism in the field of practice by his swindles was done by the invaluable Gustav Tuch at the end of the eighties in the field of honest theory. In his thick and dusty volume entitled **The Extended Military State in its Social Significance**, he sketched out a picture of the society of the future of which militarism was the heart and soul, the central sun which lighted, warmed and directed everything, the one true “national and civilized socialism”. The whole state was turned into a single barracks, which was the elementary school, the college and the factory for manufacturing patriotic feeling, while the army was an all-embracing organization of strike-breakers. This delightful hallucination of a thousand-year rule of militarism was in fact only methodical madness, but the fact that it was methodical in the way it worked out militaristic goals and methods, free from every restraint in conception, gives it a symptomatic meaning. [33]

Militarism has in fact already become the central sun in one dominant field, as we shall show in more detail below. Around it revolves the solar system of class legislation, bureaucratism, police administration, class justice, and clericalism of all kinds. It is the final regulator, sometimes secret and sometimes open, of all the tactics of the class struggle – not only of the capitalist classes but also of the proletariat, in its trade union organization no less than in its political organization.

1. Cf. Caprivi's remarks in the Reichstag on February 27, 1891; likewise those of the war Minister von Kaltenborn-Stachau: "The demands made on the non-commissioned officers have become greater as a consequence of the new armament, the new regulations on training, etc."

2. Cf. the remarks of the Bavarian General von Sauer made at the end of October 1898 before the National Economic Society in Munich (in Bebel, **Nicht stehendes Heer sondern Volkswehr**, Stuttgart 1898, p.77).

3. Cf. in this connection the moving complaint of Caprivi in the Reichstag sitting of February 27, 1891.

4. These "shooting automatons" (cf. also Corporal Lück) can however become very dangerous, because of course it may be that one day the mechanism is set in motion by an unauthorized person. Then the bourgeoisie will set up a cry, afraid not only of its own capitalist resemblance to God, but also of its feudal relations, and like the hunter in **Struwwelpeter** who is himself pursued will cry out in fear: "Please help me, people!", and complain about the "discipline of the German army being raised to a point where the soldier can no longer use his critical reason", as the **Leipziger Tageblatt** and other papers did in the Köpenick case – which of course does not hinder the bourgeoisie, in the perplexity of its position, from keeping itself always ready to offer sacrifices to the Moloch of this militaristic madness, with "discipline raised to a point where the soldier can no longer use his critical reason". Another tragic contradiction!

5. From the standpoint of health this is very serious, and has for example led in France to the people being infected to a high degree with tuberculosis and syphilis. In the French army five to seven times as many cases of tuberculosis are recorded as in the German. In a few decades, so a French warning has it, France will be decimated unless the system of barracks is abolished.

6. Cf. Schippel, **Sozialdemokratisches Reichstag-Handbuch**, Berlin 1902, p.929.

7. Cf. the state of helplessness of the police in relation to the military, and especially to officers, when they commit excesses. One might also note the privilege accorded to the army of marching frequently in closed ranks through the towns, often in processions of endless length, thus completely holding up traffic without sense or reason: parades whose only basis is military aesthetics. The most absurd example of the social danger and ludicrous pomposity of such pampered madness was seen some years ago in Berlin, when a detachment of the fire brigade in a great hurry was simply halted by a marching military column, which would not disturb its beautiful and majestic order by giving way. This action was, it is true, later censured.

8. See the essay, *Der amerikanische Neger als Soldat*, in no.638 of the **Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger**, 1906.

9. Curious saints, it is true! One might recall the Bilse case of November 1903^[1*] and the many “little garrisons” à la Forbach, the regulations concerning gambling and the drinking of champagne, duelling by officers – that *fine fleur* of the honour of officers – the Brüsewitz stabbing (October 1896) and the Hüssen shooting (**Prinz Arenberg und die Arenberge**, Berlin 1904, pp.13ff.), the Harmlos and Ruhstrat affairs, the photographic novels of Bilse and Beyerlein, Schlicht’s (Count Baudissin) **Erstklassige Menschen**, Jesco von Puttkamer, and last but not least the Prince Arenberg scandal, which also belongs here. The French “small garrison town” of Verdun made quite a stir in the autumn of 1906. Naturally, those who worship the uniform consider these things as a “likeable, piquant weakness” in those they worship, who nevertheless adhere firmly to the Christian faith. Here of course we see once again the international solidarity of the noblest and best! An interesting case is the disclosure early in 1903 of the mutual flagellation by officers of the British Grenadier Guards (**La Jeunesse Socialiste**, March 1903).

10. The non-commissioned officer is – “God’s representative on earth!”

11. The statistics of suicide among soldiers provides the most striking evidence of this. Even this phenomenon is international. According to official “statistics there was one suicide in every 3,700 men in Germany in 1901, in Austria one in about every 920. In the Austrian tenth army corps 80 soldiers and 12 officers committed suicide in 1901, a further 127 became insane and were invalided out in consequence of self-mutilation and maltreatment. In the same period 400 men deserted and 725 were condemned to hard labour or rigorous confinement! In these matters the struggle between nationalities certainly makes things much worse.

12. Introduced into Germany in 1891 (maximum 1,000 Marks). It had already been in existence in Saxony and Wurtemberg, and a precedent had also been set in the Reich by the granting of “non-recurrent allowances”. It is also found elsewhere; in France for example – though admittedly it meets with little success – the amounts are much larger (up to 4,000 Francs). The schools for non-commissioned officers also belong in this category – see the speech of Vogel von Falckenstein in the Reichstag on March 2, 1891.

13. Caprivi’s speech in the Reichstag on February 27, 1891, is the classical confession of a beautiful capitalist-militarist soul, together with its fears and needs, with its hopes and aims, and with its methods of attaining those aims. It opens wide a window permitting us a close examination of the innermost secrets of the soul. It begins with the statement that “only on one condition would the reintroduction of the (anti-) socialist law be renounced: on the condition that all measures be taken to pull the ground from under the feet of Social-Democracy or to take up the struggle against it”; one of these measures (thus a substitute for the anti-socialist law) being the payment of premiums Lion-commissioned officers in conjunction with the certificate of maintenance in civilian life. Caprivi continued:

The demands made upon the non-commissioned officers are increasing, in consequence of the increasing level of national education. The senior officer can fill his post only if he feels

superior to those he commands.

If it is now difficult to enforce discipline, it will become even more difficult if we have to take up the struggle against Social-Democracy; by a struggle I do not mean in this context shooting and stabbing. My recollections go back to the year 1848. Conditions at that time were very much better, since current ideas had not arisen out of long years of schooling but had suddenly come to the fore, and the old non-commissioned officers had a much easier task when facing the men than they do now when faced with Social-Democracy. (“Hear, hear!” from the Right.) To mention an extreme case: we need far better non-commissioned officers for street fighting against Social-Democracy than we need for fighting the enemy. In the face of the enemy the troops can be inspired with patriotism and other lofty sentiments, and be stirred to self-sacrifice. But street fighting and all that is associated with it is not a factor which can raise the feeling of dignity of the troops; they always feel that they are up against their own countrymen ... The non-commissioned officers can only retain their superiority if we seek to raise them higher. The allied governments want to raise the level of the non-commissioned officer class.

It was necessary, he continued, to make the non-commissioned officers a “class of men whose very existence would be bound to the state.”

This at the same time is a fine psychological description of the élite troops.

14. Arrest, together with deprivation of food, bed and light; fatigue drill and the like; in the field also the barbarous *Anbinden* or “binding on”. The Austrian *Krummschliessen* – “looking in a crooked position” – and “binding on”, the Belgian *cachots* and the internationally used “cat-o’-nine-tails” and the like are well known. Not so well remembered perhaps are the dreadful methods of torture used in the French disciplinary detachments and also applied to “politicals”: the *poucettes*, the *menottes* and the *crapaudine* (see the illustrated brochure published by the *Fédération socialiste autonome du Cher*

in 1902, entitled **Les Bagnes Militaires** – Breton’s speech in the Chamber; Georges Darien, **Biribi** [which is the collective name for all the military disciplinary institutions in North Africa], Dubois-Desaulle, **Sous la Casaque**, Paris 1899). On the *compagnies de discipline*, the *pénitenciers* and the *travaux forcés* (disciplinary companies, penitentiaries, hard labour) in the French Foreign Legion and its victims, see Däumig, **Schlachtopfer des Militarismus**. There are now energetic attempts to suppress the *biribi* (see the Chamber discussions on December 8 and 10, 1906). The disciplinary beatings which the officers of the British Grenadier Guards inflict on one another with praiseworthy democratic zeal deserve to be mentioned here as a curiosity (**La Jeunesse Socialiste**, March 1903).

15. The result of all these educational methods from the military standpoint has been discussed elsewhere. Here we will only point to the moral result, which brings the bourgeois as well as the anarchist and half-anarchist opponents of the army to utter especially passionate and widespread cries of pathos and indignation. “The army is the school for crime” (Anatole France); “drunkenness, misbehaviour and hypocrisy are what barrack life teaches” (Professor Richet). According to the **Manuel du soldat**, the term of service is “an apprenticeship in brutality and vulgarity”; “a school of immorality”; it leads to “moral cowardice, servility and slavish fear”. Certain military festivals can indeed hardly be conceived without that patriotic drunkenness which of course helps to uphold the state. On what Pastor César calls the “drunken and rowdy feasts” of the military clubs, see the **Leipziger Volkszeitung** of December 1, 1906. The result in terms of health is also less than pleasing; on the French army, see footnote 52 on p.143 of the present volume. The sanitary state of the standing armies of England and America, those democratic countries, is quite horrifying. The death rate was much higher than in Germany: 7.13 and 6.18 per thousand in 1906-7. According to the report of H.M. O’Reilly, Surgeon-General of the Army, dysentery and alcoholism are worse in the American army than anywhere else in the world.

[16.](#) In the struggle against the internal enemy we naturally include here the struggle against the spirit of international proletarian solidarity, a spirit to which “militarism against the external enemy” is so averse.

[17.](#) See **Die Sozialdemokratie im Heere, Reform des deutschen Heeresdienstes zur Abwehr des Sozialismus**, by an Officer, published by Costenoble in Jena, 1901. Also the material in Bebel’s **Nicht stehendes Heer sondern Volkswehr**, pp.46ff., and **Handbuch für sozialdemokratische Wahler. Der Reichstag 1848-1903**, Berlin 1903, pp.23ff.

[18.](#) Cf. in this connection the well known case of Gädke, in which the Prussian Court of Appeal gave legal approval to the unheard of aspirations of militarism.

[19.](#) Also many members of the medical profession; as to the results, see for instance the note in **Vorwärts** of January 17, 1894. It is not only the military doctors of the reserve who are subject to military pressure; it is brought to bear on the professional medical organizations and thus on the non-military doctors.

[20.](#) The daring adventure of Voigt, the “Captain” of Köpenick, the gifted cobbler and convict, has been characterized by the Liberals in this connection as a warning.

[21.](#) In the figurative and the literal sense of the word! See part 1, chapter 4.4 *Preliminary remarks*.

[22.](#) In Germany there exists a kind of union of these officials, the *Bund deutscher Militäranwärter*.

[23.](#) See the **Lokal-Anzeiger**, no.496, 1906.

[24.](#) See G. Feuchter, **Der Deutsche Pulver-Ring und das Militär-Pulvergeschäft**, Göppingen 1896, pp.25 and 30.

[25.](#) Details in **Lustig ist’s Soldatenleben**, Wien 1896, p.51.

[26.](#) Where the last stragglers of the swarm of vultures involved in the East Asian war, the Gurko-Lidvalls, caused a great stir toward the end of 1906.

[27.](#) Naval administration: 18,939; Prussian army administration, excluding the Ordnance department: 11,119; Prussian Ordnance department: 16,825; Bavarian army administration: 4,632; Saxon army administration: 2,754; Wurtemberg army administration: 374 (see the printed documents of the Reichstag, 1905-6, no.144).

[28.](#) In the Posen arms theft case of the winter of 1906, the accused, a factory worker at Spandau, repeatedly stated that he had to obey Lieutenant Poppe, the thief, who “as an officer” was “to a certain extent his superior”; that was what they had been taught. Poppe was not employed in the concern to which the accused belonged. His genuine officer’s uniform assisted him in his manipulations among the civilian population just as the fake uniform had assisted the Captain of Köpenick.

[29.](#) The struggles in the workshops at Spandau which come up every year in the Reichstag are well known. On the Berlin corps clothing department, see the **Fachzeitung der Schneider** of August 25, 1906. On the French naval arsenals of Brest, Lorient, Cherbourg, Rochefort and Toulon, see **Les Temps Nouveaux** of November 11, 1905. At present (December 1906) a strong movement is under way among the arsenal workers of Toulon, of which the outcome cannot be foreseen.

[30.](#) The French government has attempted explicitly to justify these measures by drawing attention to anti-militarist propaganda. See **Les Temps Nouveaux** of November 11, 1906.

[31.](#) Law of December 2, 1905; see in this connection the **Leipziger Volkszeitung** of December 14, 1906.

[32.](#) It is delightful to see the **Kreuz-Zeitung** writhing in this painful trap. It seeks in its great embarrassment to turn the spear and make out that Social-Democracy is in fatal difficulties, that the Köpenick

affair had disclosed to all the world its plans for the event of a revolution, which had thus been frustrated. An especially absurd aspect of this silly frightened talk is the illusion that such plans could ever be frustrated in the capitalist order and that the knights of the **Kreuz-Zeitung** would even move a finger in such a hopeless attempt. “Thank God, we can still depend on the military!” – this was after all the most honest heart-cry of our bourgeois philistines after the Köpenick affair.

[33.](#) See K. Kautsky, **Die Neue Zeit**, year V (1887), p.331.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

[1*](#). **BILSE TRIAL**. The court-martial of Lieutenant Bilse, which took place in Metz in November 1903. The accused had written a novel depicting the dissolute morals of the officer corps. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment. His judges were later reprimanded for having conducted the trial in public, for the facts which were brought to light were such as to throw the accusation back on the military system.

[2*](#). **CAPRIVI, GRAF VON** (1831-1899). Imperial Chancellor from 1890 to 1894. Responsible for the bill of 1893 raising the strength of the army by more than 80,000 men, while reducing the period of conscription from three to two years. Dismissed in October 1894.

[3*](#). **TIPPELSKIRCH & CO**. Army contractors, the firm of Tippelskirch was involved in 1906, together with the Prussian minister von Podbielski and the Hamburg shipping firm C. Woermann & Co., in a great scandal. Tippelskirch & Co. had secured a monopoly in the supply of clothes and equipment to the colonial forces, while von Podbielski, as a partner in the firm, shared in the enormous profits thus obtained. Woermann's made its share from transportation.

4. PARTICULARS OF SOME OF THE MAIN SINS OF MILITARISM (PART 1)

1. THE ILL-TREATMENT OF SOLDIERS, OR MILITARISM AS A PENITENT BUT INCORRIGIBLE SINNER

Two dilemmas

The militarists are not stupid. This is clear from the nature of the education system, which has been most cunningly worked out. They are remarkably skilful in their speculations on mass psychology. Although the standing army of Frederick, composed as it was of mercenaries and the dregs of the population, could be held together by the discipline of drill and by physical violence for the performance of its more mechanical tasks, this no longer applies to our army which is drawn from the whole population with its higher level of intelligence and morality, which is built on the principle of citizen duty and which makes great demands on the individual. This was immediately and clearly seen by Scharnhorst and Gneisenau [1*], whose army re-organization was inaugurated with the announcement of the abolition of capital punishment. [1] Nevertheless assaults, abuse, blows and all kinds of refined and horrible methods of ill-treatment belong to the stock-in-trade of the present-day military education system, as we have already pointed out.

The attitude taken on the militarist side towards the ill-treatment of soldiers is of course not determined by considerations of ethics, civilization, humane feelings, justice, Christianity and similar fine things, but by purely Jesuitical considerations of expediency. The fact that this constitutes a hidden underground menace to discipline and even to the "spirit" of the army [2] is far from being generally understood. [3] The ridicule by the old hands of the recruits and soldiers who make trouble, the vulgar barracks jokes and coarse abuse of all kinds, as well as a considerable amount of pushing around, of beating, etc., of men being tossed in the air or dragged

along the ground – all this is approved even in our day by the majority of the non-commissioned officers and even of the officers, who have become cut off from and hostile to the people and who have been trained to be narrow-minded politicians in miniature. In their hearts they approve of these things, and even regard them as necessary. The struggle against these excesses meets a resolute passive resistance from the very beginning. One can hear every day – not openly, but on the quiet – how the superiors characterize the demand that “the fellows” should be treated according to human dignity as stupid humanitarian drivel. Army service is harsh. But even when the underground menace of secret disciplinary ill-treatment has been recognized, one again finds oneself in one of those dilemmas into which a coercive system, which goes against the path of natural development, must land at every step. We have already brought some of these dilemmas to light. The method of ill-treatment, as we shall show later in more detail, is an indispensable auxiliary to the normal drill method. Capitalist militarism, for which a disciplinary structure based on free will is impossible, cannot avoid the use of such treatment. In spite of all doubts and regrets, this system serves – not officially, we repeat, but through official channels – as an illegal but necessary method of military education.

But apart from these general doubts, the militarists have had a bad conscience since the time when they began to get caught, that is, since the time when ruthless Social-Democratic criticism began to be levelled at the military organization and when even wide strata of the middle class began to recoil in the face of this militaristic morality. Militarism had to bear with set teeth the fact that it was not being run and commanded simply by the Supreme War Lord, but that materially it was dependent above all on the representatives of the people, upon whom it looked with scorn and contempt, that is, on the Reichstag, in which sit even representatives of the “common people” – in short, it was dependent on the “rabble”, who, under the protection of their Reichstag immunity, could lay bare the essence of the militarist system. It therefore found itself obliged, suppressing its rage, to keep this rabble, the “Reichstag fellows”, as well as the despised public opinion, in a good mood. It was a case of not putting

the military piety of the bourgeoisie to too severe a test, for the bourgeoisie, though it was ordinarily ready to pay for every possible military requirement, quite often and especially in times of financial difficulty tried to kick against the pricks. It was also a question of easing its position in relation to the electors, who, as far as their position in life is concerned, belong to the anti-militarist classes and who, on recognizing their true class position, would go over to the side of Social-Democracy. It was therefore finally a question of depriving Social-Democracy of its most effective weapons, so that the next tactic adopted was that of keeping quiet and hushing things up. The proceedings of the military courts were kept secret; "no ray of light fell in the darkness of their heart". And if any ray of light did manage to get in, they lied, disputed the evidence and embellished the matter with all their might. But the torch of Social-Democracy shed more and more light even behind the barracks walls and through the bars of military prisons and fortresses. The military debates in the German Reichstag in the 'eighties and 'nineties of the last century represent a hard and passionate struggle for the recognition of the fact that the horrors of the barracks were not a rare and isolated phenomenon, but a regular, very frequent and to a certain extent organic, constitutional manifestation of militarism. Good service was rendered in this struggle by the fact that in other states the proceedings of the military courts were carried out in public, which made it easier to prove without doubt that military ill-treatment was a normal property of militarism, even of the republican militarism of France, even of Belgian militarism and even, to an increasing extent, of the militarism of the Swiss militia. Social-Democratic criticism scored a victory essentially because of the impression created by the decrees of Prince George of Saxony (of June 8, 1891) ^[4] and of the Bavarian Ministry of War (of December 13, 1891), published in **Vorwärts** early in 1892, as well as by the Reichstag debates of February 15 to 17, 1892. After the usual "considerations" and wrangling, a reform of our military criminal procedure was, with great difficulty, finally achieved in 1898. It was nevertheless still quite possible to hang the cloak of Christian love over the frightful secrets of the barracks, and on a wide scale, by excluding publicity. But in spite of all the decrees effectively ruling out

such publicity, in spite of the action taken against the judges in the Bilse case [2*], the reform soon brought into the open such a cloudburst of horrifying cases of ill-treatment that all the objections to the criticism made by the Social-Democrats were brushed aside without any trouble, and the torturing of soldiers was recognized almost everywhere, if unwillingly, to be a standing institution of militarism in its support for the state. There were attempts, not always of an honest nature, to come to grips with this frightening institution which provided so much opportunity for Social-Democratic "agitation". Even if these attempts were not genuine, in that their promoters did not believe in their success, the point was to create an impression that there was dissatisfaction with the phenomenon and a desire to attempt to get rid of it. The torturers began to be prosecuted in a relatively thorough way. But for militarism the fight against the ill-treatment of soldiers is of course less important than its interest in military discipline and in preparing the people to bear arms in the fight against what are in fact, their own international and national interests. One only has to compare the sentences passed on torturers of the commonest kind with those which are often passed on soldiers for quite minor offences, and offences committed in a state of excitement or of drunkenness – such actions, directed against officers, take place almost every day. In this case the slightest misdemeanours against the holy ghost of militarism are punished with bloodthirsty and draconian measures. But where it is the soldiers who are ill-treated, comparative indulgence is shown to their torturers, in a spirit of understanding. It is therefore quite natural that the struggle of military justice against such ill-treatment, and against the merciless strangling of every trace of an awakening demand for independence and equal rights among the lower ranks, meets with little success. The case of the Prince of Saxe-Meiningen is relevant here. He had the courage to appeal to the men to support the struggle against ill-treatment, in fact to make it their duty to support it in order to get to the root of the evil with more determination than usual. But because of this bold step the prince was forced to retire from the service. [5] This case throws a somewhat lurid light upon the feeble and hopeless character of the official struggle against ill-treatment in the army.

The pamphlet written by our comrade Rudolf Kraff a former Bavarian officer, entitled **Opfer der Kaserne** (Victims of the Barracks), puts together valuable material with a skill which only someone with personal experience could possess. The regular compilation by our Party press of details of trials concerning the ill-treatment of soldiers – and of sailors [6] – news of which has come up from time to time, provides an overwhelming mass of material. But this material has unfortunately not yet been worked over. [7] This is an important and profitable task which ought to be put in hand.

Because of our fundamental standpoint we cherish no illusions about militarism. The Scharnhorst decree on military punishment says: “Experience teaches us that recruits can be taught to drill without the use of blows. An officer who thinks this impossible lacks either the necessary ability to teach or a clear understanding of what really constitutes the teaching of drill ...” – and this is theoretically true, but too far in advance of its time to be possible in practice. The ill-treatment of soldiers springs from the very essence of capitalist militarism. The human material is for the most part, as far as the mind is concerned, and to an even greater extent as far as the body is concerned, not fitted for the demands made upon it by military life, especially those of the parade drill. More and more young men enter the army whose outlook is hostile and dangerous to the military spirit, It is necessary to tear out a part of the soul of these “fellows”, and instil a new spirit of patriotism and loyalty to the crown. All these tasks cannot be solved by even the cleverest instructors, let alone the kind of instructors at the disposal of militarism. Here again, therefore, militarism must be more economical than it would like to be. [8]

And the existence of these military instructors is by no means assured. They are entirely dependent on the goodwill, on the whim of their superiors. They may expect to be sacked at any moment if they cease to perform their main task – that of fashioning the soldiers after the image of militarism. This is an excellent means of ensuring the pliability of the whole apparatus of military officers (commissioned and non-commissioned) in the hands of the authority

in command. One can easily understand that such superiors drill the men with a nervous ruthlessness which soon comes to no more than the statement: "If you do not obey orders I will use violence". And this violence is finally employed in the form of ill-treatment by the superior ranks, who have absolute power of life and death over their subordinates, themselves in a position of unconditional subjection. But it is a natural and humanly necessary consequence, and even the newly baked Japanese militarism quickly found itself involved in the same methods. [9] Militarism finds itself therefore, in this dilemma too.

The causes of such "pleasures of military life" are of course varied. The degree of education of the people, above all, exercises a strong moderating influence. [10] And it is not surprising that even French colonial militarism contrasts favourably with the militarism of the Prusso-German fatherland. [11]

But this method of wing violence as a disciplinary measure, which is due to a necessity inherent in the system, provides us with excellent means of fighting militarism at its roots and of achieving success, of stirring up ever greater masses of the people and of spreading consciousness among strata which it would otherwise be impossible, or at least much more difficult, to reach. Ill-treatment of soldiers together with military class justice is one of the manifestations of the uncivilized character of capitalism which makes people most angry. Since it is at the same time an underground menace to military discipline, it is the most powerful weapon in the hands of the proletariat in its struggle for freedom. This sin of capitalism is turned back with double force against itself. However penitent the sinner, whether in genuine contrition or in the manner of the fox in a children's story, we must not allow these weapons to be snatched from us, for in spite of his sackcloth and ashes this sinner is incorrigible.

2. THE COST OF MILITARISM, OR LA DOULOUREUSE

Another dilemma

Historical materialism, the theory of dialectical development, is the doctrine of the essential necessity of retribution. Every class society is doomed to self-destruction. Every class society is a force which wants to do evil and does what is good, as it wants to do good but must do evil. It is doomed to destruction by the inherited sin of its class character, for, whether it likes it or not, it must eventually produce the Oedipus which will strike it down – but unlike the legendary Theban, in full consciousness of parricide. This applies in any case to the capitalist social order and to the proletariat.

The ruling class of capitalism would of course like to look after its financial interests without being disturbed. But the peace which it would like is neither permitted by capitalist competition, national or international, nor does it suit for any length of time the taste of those from whose skin capitalism cuts its thongs. It is therefore necessary for capitalism to build a terrible fortress of domination, bristling with weapons, in order to protect the system of wage slavery and the divine right of profit. But even though capitalism requires militarism, it by no means finds the cost of militarism agreeable; on the contrary, it finds it very disagreeable. Yet since in our day it is no longer possible, according to the old prescription of Cadmus, to sow teeth and to see armed soldiers spring up out of the ground, there is nothing to be done but to put up with the greed of militarism and to feed its insatiable hunger. The budget discussions which take place every year in the parliaments show how much pain this financial question causes to the ruling classes. Capitalism, which is addicted to surplus value, is once again hit in its weak spot – finance. The fact that it costs so much is the only thing which keeps militarism within some kind of limit, at least in so far as the cost has to be borne by the bourgeoisie itself. But of course the morality of profit seeks and finds a convenient and miserly way out, by piling the greatest part or at least a large part of the burden on the shoulders of those strata of the population which are not only the weakest, but are also the very groups whose suppression and exploitation is the chief purpose of militarism. Like other ruling classes in other societies, the capitalist classes make use of their position of domination, which is based essentially on the exploitation of the proletariat, to force the

oppressed and exploited classes not only to forge their own chains but also to help pay for them. It is not enough that the sons of the people are made into torturers of the people – even the pay of these torturers is wrung to the utmost from the sweat and blood of the people itself. And even if the provocative and bloody nature of this robbery sometimes comes to the surface, capitalism still remains true unto death to its faith – faith in the golden calf.

It is true that by throwing the military burden onto the shoulders of the poorer classes one lowers the degree to which these classes can be exploited. But this is inevitable, and also helps to place capitalism, greedy for profit, in further financial difficulties.

Militarism weighs like lead on our whole life. But it is especially an economic weight, a pressure under which our economic life groans, a vampire which constantly, year after year, sucks the blood of the economy by drawing the strength of the nation away from productive and cultural work, as well as by the direct effect of its insane cost. Thus in Germany at present about 655,000 [\[12\]](#) of the strongest and most capable workers, mostly aged between 20 and 22, are withdrawn from work in this way. In Germany too the swelling military and naval expenditure amounts for example (including colonial [\[13\]](#) but not supplementary expenditure) to over 1,300 million Marks for 1906-7, that is, to roughly $1\frac{1}{3}$ milliards. The expenditure of the other military states is, relatively speaking, no less heavy [\[14\]](#), and even the military expenditure of the richer states, such as the U.S.A. [\[15\]](#), Britain (which spent 1,321 million Marks on the army and navy in 1904-5!), Belgium and Switzerland, is so enormous that it constitutes the chief item in the state budget. There is a tendency everywhere for costs to increase to the very boundaries of possibility.

The following compilation of the **Manuel du Soldat** is very revealing:

In 1899 Europe had a military budget of 7,184,321,093 Francs. There were 4,169,321 men employed in a military capacity. If they were working they could produce daily (at the rate of 3 Francs per man) to the value of 12,507,963 Francs. Further,

710,342 horses were required for military purposes, which, at a rate of 2 Francs per day per horse, could produce daily to the value of 1,420,684 Francs. This makes a total of 13,928,647 Francs. If we multiply this number by 300 it makes, when added to the budget, a loss in productive value of 11,362,915,313 Francs.

But from 1899 to 1906-7 the military budget of Germany alone has grown from about 920 million Marks to about 1,300 millions, or by more than 40 per cent. Total European military expenditure, without counting the cost of the Russo-Japanese war, would now come to about 13,000,000,000 Marks a year, or about 13 per cent of all world trade. Such a policy must surely end in bankruptcy.

Just as in the Russian Baltic provinces the military suppression of the revolutionary movement was for a long time delegated to the barons, who had been particularly affected by the movement, so in America the possibility has been created of entrusting to the bourgeoisie, even in times of peace, a certain element of the task of maintaining capitalist order. This is the role of the Pinkertons ^[4*], who have straightway become a legal institution directly employed in the class struggle; This institution, like the Belgian form of the Civil Guard, has at any rate the advantage that it moderates the phenomena which accompany militarism (ill-treatment of soldiers, the cost, etc.) ^[16] and is disliked by the bourgeoisie itself. The enemy of capitalist society is thereby partially deprived of highly effective propaganda matter. But this way of avoiding the problem, which is also more acceptable to the proletariat, is normally ruled out for the capitalist states, as we have already pointed out. As far as one can see ahead, they are unable to adopt the much less costly militia system because of the political task which must be performed by the army at home, because of the function it performs in the class struggle. This function in fact accords with the striking tendency to do away with the existing militia system.

By comparing the total expenditure of the German Reich for 1906-7, which came to 2,397,324,000 Marks, with the portion which falls to

the share of the army and navy, it can be seen that all the other items are simply peripheral in comparison with this great sum, and that the whole taxation system and financial policy centre round the military budget, "like the host of stars around the sun".

Militarism therefore becomes a dangerous impediment, often even the gravedigger of that cultural progress which in itself might be in the interest of the social order of our day. The school, art and science, public hygiene, the communications system: all these are treated in the most shabby fashion because, to use a popular expression, the greed of Moloch leaves nothing over for culture. The words of the minister, that cultural requirements are not to suffer, were endorsed with genuine approval only by the East Elbean Junkers who have some cultural pretensions. They could only cause ironic smiles among the other representatives of capitalist culture.

The figures are conclusive. It is enough to compare the German military expenditure of $1\frac{1}{3}$ milliards for 1906 with the 171 millions which Prussia spent in the same year for education of every kind, or the 420 millions which Austria-Hungary spent for military purposes in 1900 with the $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions which it spent on primary schools. The most recent Prussian law on the maintenance of schools, with its petty rules on the question of teachers' pay, as well as Studt's notorious decree against raising teachers' pay in the towns, speak volumes.

Germany could, with the funds at its disposal, solve all its cultural problems. And the more these problems were solved, the easier it would be to pay the cost. But militarism blocks the way.

The manner in which military costs are met in Germany – but the situation is not much different elsewhere, for example in France – is especially pernicious. It is militarism, one might almost say, which creates and supports our oppressive and unjust system of indirect taxation. The whole imperial customs and taxation policy, which tends to exploit the great masses of people, that to say the poor sections of the population, is essentially the cause of the fact that, in

1906 for example, the cost of living for the bulk of the people rose by between 10 and 15 per cent in comparison with the average for the years 1900-4. This policy, apart from serving Junkerdom, that class of parasites (and the loving care from which they benefit is for the most part based on the militarist system) serves, above all, the aims of militarism.

It is also militarism which is mainly to be thanked for the fact that our communications system, whose extension and perfection should after all be in the best interests of a capitalism which was intelligent and perceptive of its own needs, nevertheless fails by a long way to satisfy the demands made by traffic and technical developments. The system is instead employed as a milk cow, to impose a special indirect tax upon the people. The story of the last imperial finance bill introduced by Stengel would open even the eyes of the blind. One can calculate almost to the penny that this bill was only called forth by the need to fill up a 200-million Mark hole which militarism has again torn out of the state treasury. And the system of taxation laws, which puts heavy duty on items of mass consumption like beer and tobacco, and even on traffic, on which the vitality of capitalism depends, constitutes an excellent illustration of the point made above.

There is no doubt that militarism is in many respects a burden on capitalism, that this burden attaches itself as firmly to the neck of capitalism as the old man of the seas to that of Sinbad the Sailor. Capitalism needs militarism just as spies are needed in wartime and executioners and torturers in peacetime. It may hate militarism, but it cannot do without it, just as the civilized Christian abhors sins against the gospel yet cannot live without sin. Militarism is an inherited sin of capitalism, a sin which is of course open to rectification here and there [\[17\]](#), but which will be eliminated only in the purgatory of socialism.

3. THE ARMY AS A TOOL AGAINST THE PROLETARIAT IN THE ECONOMIC STRUGGLE

Preliminary remark

We have already seen how militarism has actually become the axis around which our political, social and economic life more and more revolves, how it pulls the wires which make the puppets of the capitalist puppet theatre dance on their strings. We have seen what goal militarism serves, how it seeks to attain this goal, and how in the pursuit of this goal it is forced by physical necessity to produce the very poison which will bring about its death. We have also discussed the important role which it plays – rather unsuccessfully – as a school for the inculcation of militarist ideas among those in uniform and among civilians. But militarism is not satisfied with all this. Even now, in peacetime, it exerts its influence in various directions in order to uphold the state and to prepare for the great day when, having served its time as apprentice and journeyman, it must deliver its masterpiece, for the day when the people will dare to rise in rebellion against its masters, the day of the great cataclysm.

On this day – and its bodyguard would prefer to see it come now rather than tomorrow, since it could be more sure of its ability to turn it into a massacre of Social-Democracy – on that day it will shoot and kill, murder to its heart's content in order (with God's aid) to save King and Fatherland. As its ideal, its model, it will take January 22, 1905, and the bloody May Week of 1871. Schönfeldt, the commander of the Vienna corps, made the following pledge to the bourgeoisie at a banquet in April 1904: "You may rest assured that you will find us behind you when the existence of society and the enjoyment of hard-earned property are threatened. When the bourgeois stands in the front line, the soldier will hurry to his aid!"

The iron fist is thus always raised to strike a crushing blow. There are hypocrites who talk of "safeguarding law and order", of "protecting the freedom to work", but what they mean is "safeguarding oppression" and "protecting exploitation". If the proletariat makes its presence felt with undue liveliness and power, militarism immediately rattles its sabres to try and frighten it back into its place. The omnipresent and almighty force of militarism – which stands behind every action taken by the state power against the workers and in the last instance lends it insuperable power – far from

remaining in the background, behind the vanguard of the police and gendarmerie, is quite prepared to carry out everyday work, to strengthen the pillars of the capitalist order in the hand-to-hand struggle. It is precisely this multiplicity of activity which characterizes the scheming nature of capitalist militarism.

Soldiers as competitors of free labourers

Militarism is well aware, as a functionary of capitalism, that its highest and most sacred duty is to protect the employers' profits. So it considers itself quite free, even bound, officially or unofficially, to place the soldiers like beasts of burden at the disposal of the exploiting classes and especially of Junkerdom. This is meant to solve the problem of the shortage of agricultural workers, a shortage brought about by the inhuman exploitation and brutality to which they are subject.

Soldiers are also given leave to gather in the harvest – another practice detrimental to the interests of labour, like the system of orderlies. It also makes it clear, even to the monomaniacs of the goose step and parade drill, that to present the system of long-term service as a military necessity is an unscrupulous and clumsy swindle. And it calls up memories, which are not at all flattering, of the company system as it existed before Jena. One should bear in mind, for example, the much discussed decrees of the general command to the 1st [\[18\]](#), IVth, Xth [\[19\]](#) and XVIIth Prussian army corps in 1906. The very many instances in which the post and railways draw upon soldiers for help in cases of heavy traffic should also be mentioned here, though their significance is more complex.

The army and strike-breaking

Militarism interferes directly with the struggles of the labour movement for freedom by employing soldiers as blacklegs under military command. In this connection we might recall the case, recently brought to the fore again, of Lieutenant-General von Liebert, the present commander of the Imperial Slander League against Social-Democracy, who as a simple colonel in 1896 had already

grasped the fact that a strike is a public calamity like a fire or a water famine. That is to say, it is calamity for the employers' class, whose guardian angel and executor von Liebert considered himself to be.

Specially notorious in Germany is the method employed in the Nuremberg strike of 1906, a method which consisted in pushing the men who were leaving their jobs back into the ranks of the blacklegs, by the use of a little gentle pressure.

Three events which took place outside of Germany are of much greater importance. First, there was the mass military blacklegging in the general strike of the railways in Holland in January 1903. The result of this episode was that the railwaymen were deprived of the right to form trade unions. [20] Second was the general strike of the Hungarian railway workers in 1904, where the military administration went even further. On the one hand it formed a blackleg column out of men on active service, who, contrary to the law, were kept under military command when their period of service had finished. On the other hand it went so far as to call up the reservists and men of the Landwehr who were to be found among the railwaymen, as well as non-railwaymen in the same groups who were technically suitable, and forced them to work as blacklegs on the railways. Third was the Bulgarian railway strike declared on January 2, 1907.

No less important is the struggle inaugurated by the ministers of agriculture and war in Hungary at the beginning of December 1906 against the right of the agricultural workers to form trade unions and go on strike. The careful training of soldiers to take part in blackleg columns for the harvest is very important here.

In France too blacklegging by soldiers is a well-known phenomenon. [21]

The fact that military education systematically encourages blacklegging, and the danger caused to the fighting proletariat by those workers who have just come out of the army and are quite ready to stab their class comrades in the back – these things also contribute to the gains made by international militarism. [22]

FOOTNOTES

[1.](#) See the very interesting but quite illusory *Regulations on Military Discipline*.

[2.](#) The perceptive order made by Manteuffel and dated April 14, 1885, says among other things: “Abuse injures and destroys the sense of honour, and the officer who abuses his subordinates is digging his own grave; for one cannot rely on the loyalty or bravery of someone who allows himself to be abused ... In a word, subordinates are what they are treated as by their superiors, from the general down to the lieutenant.”

[3.](#) The mass of deserters and those liable for service but who evade it serves among other things as a rough guide. 15,000 German deserters lost their lives during the first thirty years of the glorious Empire in the French Colonial Army alone. The bloody baffle of Vionville in comparison only resulted in 16,000 dead and wounded. See Däumig, **Schlachtopfer des Militarismus**.

[4.](#) They speak of “very serious conditions”, of “refined torture”, of the “efflux of brutality and degeneracy” which, given the officers in charge, is “hardly credible”, and was thought to have been rendered “practically impossible by the system of supervision. On February 8, 1895, **Vorwärts** published an Imperial decree, also applicable in this context, and addressed to the generals in command. The decrees of Scharnhorst and Gneisenau (after Jena) and of Manteuffel (April 18, 1885) are relevant in another connection, as is the decree of the Prince of Saxe-Meiningen.

[5.](#) Cf. for example the case of the unfortunate Rückenbrodt. In this case a terrible part was played by the use of a rope-like packing of asbestos with wire twisted round it. The torturers, with biting irony, called it the “military educator”. (**Vorwärts**, September 25, 1906.)

[6.](#) Cf. The **Frankfurter Zeitung** of April 6, 1903, the **Verhandlungen des Reichstages** of March 4 and 8, 1904, especially the speeches

of the deputies Bebel, Ledebour and Müller-Meiningen, and **Vorwärts** of May 6, 13, 14 and 21, 1903. Also the cabinet order reprinted in the **Armee-Verordnungsblatt** of April 29, 1903, which stresses that it is not the duty of soldiers to make complaints, but only their right. See in addition the **Militär-Wochenblatt** of May 29, 1903, according to which the fact that the Prince of Saxe-Meiningen had been reprimanded and sacked had caused a “most embarrassing sensation”. In what circles?

7. There is something in **Prinz Arenberg und die Arenberge**, pp.15ff., about “aristocrats who ill-treat soldiers”.

8. On February 27, 1891, Caprivi ^[3*] explained in connection with the ill-treatment of soldiers that “the educated non-commissioned officer is of more use to us than the common one, because the former more seldom allows himself to be carded away by his temperament, even when he is angry”. But where are educated N.C.O.s to be found, unless they are kidnapped?

9. Cf. for instance the **Brandenburger Zeitung** of December 8, 1906.

10. The river Main forms no demarcation line here. In the domain of the ill-treatment of the soldier, at least, German unity and solidarity have been realized.

11. Cf. Däumig, **Schlachtopfer des Militarismus**, p.370.

12. In 1906-7 there were 614,362 men in the standing army, and in 1905-6 there were 40,672 men in the navy.

13. Each soldier fighting in German South-West Africa cost the German Reich 9,500 Marks in 1906.

14. In France, for example, a total of 1,101,260,000 Francs in 1905! Since 1870 France has spent nearly 40 milliard Francs for military purposes (excluding the colonies!).

[15.](#) See part 1, chapter 2.5.

[16.](#) But even in the U.S.A. the Departments of War and of the Navy alone in 1904-5 took 240 million dollars out of a total budget of 720 millions.

[17.](#) See part 1, chapter 2.5.

[18.](#) The editor of the **Königsberger Volkszeitung** was condemned to a heavy fine in the autumn of 1906 for alleged libel, in that he criticized the decree concerning the granting of leave during the harvest.

[19.](#) Cf. the reply of the general in command in **Vorwärts**, November 3, 1906.

[20.](#) The strike began on January 30, 1903, and ended victoriously on February 1. On March 10 the anti-strike law came before the chamber, on April 6 the general strike was declared, on April 9 the anti-strike law was voted through, on April 13 the general strike collapsed. The mills of capitalism grind quickly when "Holland is in danger".

[21.](#) See the **Manuel du Soldat**, p.9.

[22.](#) **Ibid.**, p.8.

ADDITIONAL NOTES BY THE TRANSLATOR

[1*](#). SCHARNHORST, GERHARD VON (1755-1813). Appointed head of the Army Reform Commission after the Peace of Tilsit (1807). Collaborated in this field with Gneisenau, with the aim of introducing conscription coupled with political reform. Chief of Staff to Blücher in 1813, he died the same year after receiving a wound in the Battle of Lutzen.

GNEISENAU, GRAF VON (1760-1830). Prussian Field Marshal. In 1813 became First General Staff Officer to Scharnhorst, then Chief of

Staff. Attempted to convert the mercenary Prussian army into a so-called citizen army.

2*. BILSE TRIAL. The court-martial of Lieutenant Bilse, which took place in Metz in November 1903. The accused had written a novel depicting the dissolute morals of the officer corps. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment. His judges were later reprimanded for having conducted the trial in public, for the facts which were brought to light were such as to throw the accusation back on the military system.

3*. CAPRIVI, GRAF VON (1831-1899). Imperial Chancellor from 1890 to 1894. Responsible for the bill of 1893 raising the strength of the army by more than 80,000 men, while reducing the period of conscription from three to two years. Dismissed in October 1894.

4*. PINKERTONS. Private police in the United States of America organized by Allan Pinkerton (1819-1884). Used against American labour unions, especially during the strikes of 1877.

4. PARTICULARS OF SOME OF THE MAIN SINS OF MILITARISM (PART 2)

4. THE RULE OF THE SWORD AND RIFLE AGAINST STRIKES

Preliminary remarks

The military authorities have for a long time been convinced of the capitalist truth of the proposition that behind every strike lurks the hydra of revolution. The army is therefore always ready, if the fists, swords and revolvers of the police are not sufficient to curb the so-called strike excesses, to force the unruly slaves of the employers into submission with its swords and rifles. This is true of all capitalist countries and also, even especially, of Russia, though it is not yet completely capitalist and cannot be regarded as typical because of its peculiar political and cultural conditions. And even if Italy and Austria march at the head of the column in this respect, it is very important for the historical understanding of the republican state form structured by a capitalist political economy to point out again and again that, apart from England, soldiers have nowhere been such willing tools in the hands of the bourgeoisie for crushing strikes, nowhere behaved in such a bloodthirsty and ruthless manner as in the semi-republican and republican states, such as Belgium and France. With these, moreover, the freest states in the world – Switzerland and America – can well hold their own. Russia of course, here as in every other respect, cannot be beaten. Barbarism, or rather brutish ferocity, constitutes the general cultural situation of its ruling classes. It is the natural moving force behind its militarism, which since the time of the first harmless stirrings of the proletariat, has literally drowned in blood those peaceful workers who in their desperate need were asking for relief. No single event need be named here, for that would mean arbitrarily tearing one link out of a chain endless in time and space. For every drop of proletarian blood shed in all the other European countries put together, a proletarian life has been taken by Tsarism in its struggle to suppress the most modest demands of the labour movement.

Essentially related to this use of military force is the activity of the colonial armies and defence detachments against the natives of the colonies who do not allow themselves to be pressed into the yoke of the vilest exploitation and greed. But we cannot go into this question in more detail here.

Often it is not possible to draw a sharp line of demarcation between the army, properly speaking, and the *gendarmerie* and police. They work hand in hand, replace and supplement one another, and are linked closely together, precisely because the characteristics which come into play here – the violent aggression, the willingness and readiness ruthlessly and recklessly to make armed attacks on the people – these characteristics exist among the police and *gendarmerie* too. These qualities are in the main a genuine product of the barracks, the fruit of militarist pedagogy and training.

Italy

Ottavio Dinale has published two related articles [\[1\]](#) on the question of the massacres of workers in Italy. He deals not only with the actual street massacres, but also with those which had been planned in connection with workers' demonstrations in the economic struggle apart from strikes. The articles show in a striking manner how quickly the Italian army is on hand on such occasions, what petty reasons justify its attacks, and what extreme violence it uses against defenceless crowds. Even when crowds have been broken up and are fleeing, they have been attacked and fired on. In summing up, Dinale points out that in Italy the "king's bullets" have smashed the bones of Italian workers five, six or even ten times a year. He points out that the Italian bourgeoisie, the originator of the massacres, is one of the most reactionary and backward in the world, and that in its eyes socialism is not a political conception but only a kind of criminal thinking, of criminality pure and simple, which presents the greatest danger to law and order. He quotes the words of the Milan newspaper **L'idea liberale** on the day following the Grammichele massacre: "Dead and wounded ... A deserved fate ... Bullets – the most precious element of civilization, law and order."

After such a standard has been set, one can hardly be astonished that even a so-called democratic government like that of Giolitti never tried to call the army to order for its bloody barbarities. On the contrary, the military was officially praised for having “done its duty”. It seems even more natural that a motion of the Socialist parliamentary fraction on limiting the use of the army in conflicts with the masses was not carried.

The shootings of May 1898 made the situation in regard to the class struggle clear even for the blind and the shortsighted optimists. The following is an almost complete record of blood-letting in recent years:

		Dead	Wounded
Berra	June 27, 1901	2	10
Patugnano	May 4, 1902	1	7
Cassano	August 5, 1902	1	3
Candela	September 8, 1902	5	11
Giarratana	October 13, 1902	2	12
Galatina	April 20, 1903	2	1
Piere	May 21, 1903	3	1
Torre Annunziata	August 31, 1903	7	10
Cerignola	May 17, 1904	3	40
Buggera	September 4, 1904	3	10
Castelluzo	September 11, 1904	1	12
Sestri Ponente	September 15, 1904	2	2
Foggia	April 15, 1905	7	20
St. Elpidio	May 15, 1905	4	2
Grammichele	August 16, 1905	8	20
Scarano	March 21, 1906	1	9
Muro	March 23, 1906	2	4
Turin	April 4, 1906	1	6

Calimera	April 30, 1906	2	3
Cagliari	May 12, 1906	2	7
Nebida	May 21, 1906	1	1
Sonneza	May 21, 1906	6	6
Benventare	May 24, 1906	2	2

That makes a total of 23 massacres, 78 dead and 199 wounded! A good harvest!

There have also been countless cases in Italy which did not end in bloodshed but in which the military has mobilized against strikers or against workers and “peasants” in general who were demonstrating for economic demands. These army “exercises” are a part of everyday life on the other side of the Alps. [\[2\]](#)

We might also point out here what is commonly known: that according to Hervé’s testimony [\[3\]\[1*\]](#), there are as many massacres of workers and peasants in Spain – on whose dominions the sun once never set, but now no longer seems to want to rise – as there are in Italy.

Austria-Hungary

As everyone knows, things are not much better here, in the dual monarchy under the black and yellow flag. The Socialist delegate Dasynski quite justifiably exclaimed in the Austrian parliament on September 25, 1903: “In strikes, in demonstrations of the people as well as in cases where national feelings are inflamed, it is always the army which turns the bayonet against the people, against the workers, against the peasants.” To show the link with the realm of politics, he pointed out that “we are living in a state in which, even in times of peace, the army is the only cement binding such disparate elements”, and referred to the Graz events of 1897 and to the bloodshed in Graslitz. It is well known that the military made a bloody intervention in Vienna, Graz and Budapest when Badeni was

overthrown in November 1897. The frequent massacres of workers, especially in Galicia, are in everyone's memory (here we will only mention that the blood of the agricultural workers was shed in 1902 in Burowicki and in Ubinie in Kamionka), as are the bloody events in Palkenau, Nürschau and Ostrau. For these last events, however, the responsibility rests with the *gendarmérie*, a special force subject to purely military discipline and designed to maintain law and order. It is partly under the command of the military authorities and partly under that of the civil administration. During the general strike in Trieste in 1902 there were also dashes with the army. Ten people were killed or wounded. The events in Lemberg in 1902 during the masons' strike also deserve mention. During political demonstrations connected with the strike, hussars rode into the crowd and fired, killing five people. The riot at Innsbruck in 1905, which was based on a purely nationalist quarrel, lies however outside of the scope of this work.

Excesses of the most serious kind committed by the military authorities against the people have been frequent in Hungary, and continue up to the present day. The *gendarmérie* of course did its "duty" in a "thorough" way, as in the disturbance at Tamasi on the Puszta when without any reason it shot at a peaceful crowd of agricultural workers. It is enough to bear in mind one recent event, namely the battle which was fought in the Hunyad province on September 2, 1906, in which the military brutally attacked the strikers of the Petroseny coal mine. Many people were seriously wounded, of which two died, and 150 were slightly wounded.

The skirmishes and battles between the army and the proletariat, in addition to the political struggles which have taken place in the dual monarchy of the Habsburgs – all these will be dealt with later.

Dasynski, in the speech already quoted, made the claim that "bayonets should not be mixed up with politics". But as everyone knows they have since that time been put to political use with even more force and violence.

Belgium

In Belgium there is a long history of massacres of workers. The events of the years 1867 and 1868 are important, especially because of the intervention of the International.^[2*] The whole thing was set in motion by the so-called hunger revolt of Marchienne in 1867, when processions of unarmed workers were attacked and cut down by a company of soldiers. In March 1868 there followed the massacre of Charleroi, and in 1869 the infamous massacres of Seraing and Borinage.

The Charleroi massacre was set up by the military and *gendarmerie*, and directed against striking miners who had been driven to desperation by cut-backs and wage reductions. At the same time it made it possible for the International to carry on vigorous agitation in Belgium, and this in turn, after the General Council had issued a proclamation, helped the International to improve its organization to a considerable degree. ^[4]

During the so-called hunger revolts of 1886, in which the demand for a general franchise, though it was not clearly stated, played a role alongside the economic questions, the scenes of the 'sixties were repeated. On April 3, 1886, General Baron Van der Smissen issued his notorious circular, later repudiated by the Chamber itself. The circular stated, rather cynically: "*L'usage des armes est fait sans aucune sommation*", i.e. weapons are to be used without warning being given. The human sacrifice was great beyond measure. Sixteen workers were killed at Roux by a single volley. And on top of all this class justice puts its stamp of approval by the heavy sentences it passes on the workers. From 1886 to 1902 scarcely a strike took place in Belgium without military intervention. During these years alone about 80 people were killed. In the general strike of 1893 (we mention it although it was of a political character) there were many dead left upon the battlefield. The names of Verviers, Roux, La Louvière, Jemappes, Ostende, Borgerhout, Mont are burned in letters of fire into the minds of the class-conscious workers of Belgium. They are blood-stained pages in the thick book of sins of Belgian capitalism. The standing army was mobilized for the last

time in 1902 during the general strike, when the reservists were called up. The unfavourable reports which the ministry received as to the soldiers' mood and opinions were soon confirmed. The soldiers manifested their revolutionary ideas in a quite unashamed manner by singing the *Marseillaise*, hissing the officers, etc. The result was the usual one: the Flemish soldiers were sent to the Walloon districts and *vice versa*. But the final outcome was that the standing army was no longer brought into use. Since 1902 the proletarian soldiers of Belgium have relinquished their honourable role of watch-dog of capitalism, of being a "flying squad watching over the employers' stores of gold", at least as far as militarism at home is concerned. The *gendarmerie* and civil guard now do the job. To protect its sacred right to exploitation the bourgeoisie must now act for itself, it must risk its own skin – if one can talk of such a risk when the opposition consists of the unarmed masses. It is shown elsewhere that the civil guard performs its function quite adequately in the struggle against the enemy at home.

France

In France the history of the class struggle is written in letters of blood. We will not go over the massacre of July 1830, a battle which lasted three days; or the 10,000 killed in the street fighting of June 23 to 26, 1848 – the executioner's work of Cavaignac; or that of the "little Napoleon" on December 1, 1851; or the murder of the 28,000 heroes of the Commune, the sea of blood in which the French bourgeoisie, in its desire to avenge capitalism, tried to drown the rising of its slaves in the red week of May 1871 – *Père Lachaise* and the *mur des fédérés*, the tragic symbols of a heroism without comparison. All these events – revolutionary in the highest degree – in which militarism did its gruesome work are beyond the scope of our historical investigation.

The heroic deeds of militarism, its attacks upon defenceless strikers, began at an early date. The so-called revolt of the silk workers at Lyons, whose banner bore the famous and touching words "*Vivre en*

travaillant ou mourir en combattant" (To live working or to die fighting) began in November 1831 when the military fired on a peaceful demonstration. The angry workers captured the town in a struggle lasting two days. The National Guard fraternized with them, but the military soon took over the town again without having to draw their swords. La Ricamerie, Saint-Aubin and Decazeville are names made famous under the Empire as early examples. At this time the bourgeois republicans fought as hard as they could against soldiers being sent to the strike areas. But scarcely had these republicans captured political power than they themselves began to practise the Bonapartist method they had just been fighting against, and very soon they went even further. Only when the guilty party was a cleric or monarchist did they find words of censure, based on political rancour. The new régime had its baptism of blood in Fourmies on May 1, 1891, when a shot from a Lebel rifle pierced the body of a young girl, Maria Blondeau. The day's toll, for which responsibility lies with the 145th regiment of the line, was 10 dead and 35 wounded. But Constant, the butcher of Fourmies, and his right-hand man Captain Chapuis are not isolated cases. Fourmies was followed in 1899 by Chalons-sur-Saône, in 1900 by La Martinique and then by Longwy, when the officers sealed and celebrated the Franco-Russian alliance by the use of the knout, and finally in May and June of 1905 by Villefranche-sur-Saône^[5] and especially by the cavalry attacks and shootings in Limoges on April 17, 1905.^[6] In December 1905 the tragedy of Combrée was played out,^[7] and on January 20, 1907, force was used to throw people, demonstrating for a Sunday rest from work, off the streets of Paris.

We must not forget to mention Dunkirk, Le Creusot and Montceau-les-Mines where, according to the report of the Confédération Générale du Travail to the international conference in Dublin, the soldiers declared their solidarity with the strikers.^[8]

Meslier's exclamation at the recent great trial of anti-militarists is quite true: "Since the murder of little Maria Blondeau at Fourmies the working class in France has lived through a long martyrdom and counted many victims." Nothing better reduces *ad absurdum* the

illusions of the “new” – in fact quite ancient – method of peaceful development than the fact that the great rise in the level of anticlerical and republican opinions and activity so conspicuous in recent years in France, the France of Millerandism, has produced no decrease in the numbers of military “punitive expeditions” against strikes; on the contrary, there has been an increase. Nor will the recently established radical-democratic ministry of Clemenceau,^[3*] with its two Socialist members, bring about any change in the situation. Lafargue’s caustic remark that “in so far as modern armies are not engaged in colonial robbery they are employed exclusively in protecting capitalist property”^[9] also hits the nail on the head with regard to France.

United States of America

It is easy to understand what little importance is to be attached to the talk about equal rights to which the United States is accustomed ^[10], and to see that, in cases of necessity, capitalism has its own way of talking – the cannon, the rifle, the sword are proof enough. In this manner capitalism, even in America, still manifests its superiority over the proletariat. The following facts are very instructive with regard to the crucial importance of the method of military recruitment, posting and training, designed to prepare the troops to be used against the “enemy at home”. This method often takes on a peculiar character owing to the fact, which is a consequence of the special American conditions, that the workers are frequently well armed.

In the “New World”, as in Belgium, the period of the massacres of workers begins with the unemployed workers’ movement. On January 13, 1874, in New York a strong troop of police, without any provocation, attacked a procession of the unemployed. Hundreds of badly wounded workers were left on the battlefield of Tomkin’s Square.

Then followed the dramatic events of the railwaymen's strike of July 1877. The governor sent several companies of the state militia against the strikers of the Baltimore and Ohio railway, but this proved not to be enough. President Hayes sent 250 regular troops to help, but they fared no better. In Maryland ten of the militiamen called out were killed by rifle fire, and many more wounded. In Pittsburg the local militia, called out by the sheriff refused to intervene. The old trick of sending in troops from another district was tried. Six hundred militiamen sent from Philadelphia engaged the strikers in a short but violent battle. The troops were beaten, and fled the next morning. The militia called out against the strikers in Reading (Pennsylvania) was composed mostly of workers; they fraternized with the strikers, shared their ammunition with them and threatened to turn their weapons against any hostile militiamen. But one company, recruited almost exclusively from among the possessing classes and led by a headstrong officer, opened fire against the crowd, killing 13 and wounding 22. The company did not have to rejoice in its heroic act; it was soon in disarray and had to beat a retreat. St Louis, which for a time was completely in the hands of the strikers, was finally won back for "law and order" by the whole police force together with several companies of militia after they had laid a regular siege to the headquarters of the executive. [\[11\]](#)

For the horrors which swept over Chicago in May 1886 the responsibility must lie with Pinkerton and the police. MacCormick, the sewing-machine manufacturer, let loose his 300 armed Pinkertons against the strikers – allegedly in order to protect "those willing to work" – and thus gave impetus to the bloody attacks of the police, who struck out indiscriminately at men, women and children, killing six people and wounding many others. This was on May 3. On May 4 followed the famous dynamite bomb. This was the occasion for a fierce street fight in which 4 workers were killed and about fifty wounded. The results of the gruesome judicial sequel of May 4, 1886, in which democratic American class justice gave such a clear illustration of how far it will go, are known throughout the world.

The events of the years 1892-4 deserve closer examination. First, there were fierce fights between armed Pinkertons, enrolled by the employers, and the strikers during the strike at the Carnegie Iron and Steel Works at Homestead in July, 1892. Twelve people were killed and twenty badly wounded. The Pinkertons were overcome, but in the end the strikers were defeated after the occupation of the town by government troops and the declaration of martial law. Almost simultaneously a miners' strike broke out in Coeur d'Alène (Idaho). The militia, numbering only about a hundred men, was not in a position to intervene against the strikers, who were well-armed, in their struggle with the strike-breakers. Only the federal troops demanded by the governor managed to disperse the strikers.

The switchmen came out on strike in Buffalo in August 1892. The local militia, which was called out at the beginning of the strike, did not seem disposed to prevent picketing. Finally the sheriff was induced to ask the governor for troops. Within 48 hours almost the whole state militia appeared, outnumbering the strikers twenty times, and restored "peace".

During the same month the strikes at the Inman iron mines and at the Oliver Springs and Coal Creek coal mines gave the state governor the opportunity to bring out the whole of the state militia, after several isolated detachments of militia had been disarmed and sent home by the strikers. Here again, after the strike had been broken, class justice took its merciless course.

Finally, let us recall the Chicago Pullman strike of 1894, during which the President of the United States, in spite of a protest by Altgeld, the governor of Illinois,^[12] sent in federal troops which, together with the state militia, broke the strike. Twelve people were killed. It is clear that in this case, more than in any previous case, the system of justice worked hand in hand with militarism. So effective were the notorious injunctions and mass arrests in defeating the workers that the leader of the strike, Debs, said : "We were not beaten by the railroads, nor by the army, but by the power of the courts of the United States." ^[13]

What remains true, however, in spite of the fact that the militia frequently refused to act and that the workers were often armed, is that military force was decisive in the defeat of the workers in all the cases cited above. In the subsequent period, too, strikes in America were “in the majority of cases crushed with the help of the local police, the state militia or the federal troops”, and of course also with the help of the government, “by means of injunctions”. The strikes ended almost without exception in defeat for the workers, according to Hillquit’s rather pessimistic account. [\[14\]](#)

Canada

Canada’s “free” soil was stained with workers’ blood at Hamilton on November 24, 1906. In a clash with striking railwaymen the militia wounded 50 people, some seriously.

Switzerland

Switzerland’s book of sins in this field is truly long enough. As long ago as 1869 the government of the canton of Geneva set both police and militia against striking workers. In the same year the government of the canton of Vaud recalled by telegraph a battalion which had set out on a march, provided it with live ammunition and made it march with fixed bayonets into the town where the workers were on strike. In 1869 too the government of the canton of Basle made troops do picket duty when the silk-weavers went on strike to improve their pitiful condition. In the same year a strike broke out at La Chaux-de-Fonds, and the new bourgeois government hurried to provide itself with arms and ammunition, anticipating that it might be necessary to mobilize the militia.

In 1875 it came to bloodshed. Two thousand workers on the St Gotthard tunnel had struck to protect themselves against the shameless truck system. The government of the canton of Uri,

which, it is said, had been provided with 20,000 Francs for the purpose by the contractors, mobilized the militia. The vigorous attack claimed its victims: several dead and fifteen wounded were left on this battlefield of the class struggle. Blood was also shed in 1901 by two companies called out by the government of the canton of Vallais to crush the strike of the workers on the Simplon tunnel. A number of workers were badly wounded as a result. In the same year two companies were put on picket duty in Ticino against a strike of Italian masons. In October 1902 the well-known Geneva events took place. In the course of a strike against a firm of American exploiters the workers were chased and beaten by order of the government of Geneva, and when the soldiers refused to carry out police duty they were thrown into prison and deprived of their civil rights. We will mention in passing that on this occasion members of the bourgeoisie who were not even called out armed themselves on a large scale against the workers. At about the same time the militia was mobilized at Basle against a strike. In 1904 the building contractors of La Chaux-de-Fonds called on the government for military aid against a strike of building workers. To their dismay, the strike progressed in a quite orderly manner in spite of all provocations and therefore, from their point of view, seemed hopeless. The cavalry and a battalion of infantry were on the scene at once, and by intimidation drove the workers, who had conducted their struggle in a lawful manner, back to their lives of factory slavery. The military were mobilized in 1904 during a strike on the Ricken in the canton of St Gall, allegedly in order to protect the fruit and vegetable crops which in fact were in no danger at all. In the same way St Gall sent its militia to Rorschach, where during a wage dispute an angry crowd had smashed a few window panes at a French-owned foundry.

The events which took place in Zurich in the summer of 1906 were of a very serious character. The great rise in the cost of living had led to the outbreak of a number of strikes, the aim of which was to raise wages. The building workers came out too for the same goal. Without any cause the militia made a bloody intervention. They attacked and beat the workers in the most brutal manner, they dragged strikers, especially foreign ones, to their barracks and there

lashed them with riding whips – at the officers' command! And that was not enough: strike pickets and demonstrations were forbidden. An intervention in the Grand Council referring to the shameful events was first put off indefinitely and then strangled without discussion by the bourgeois majority. And to crown it all, six strike leaders were brought before the courts. Five of them were acquitted on August 24, 1906, but Sigg was condemned to eight months imprisonment and the loss of civil rights for one year for alleged incitement to mutiny by means of an anti-militarist leaflet addressed to the militia.

One can ask no more of a bourgeois republic or of a militia.

A special light is thrown on these data by the fact, already mentioned in another connection, that in 1899 those Swiss citizens not on active service were deprived of their ammunition. This, one can see, was carried out just in time to facilitate the employment of the militia in the interest of the bourgeoisie in a period when the class struggle was becoming more intense.

On December 21, 1906, the National Council adopted by 65 votes to 55 an amendment to the law on military organization. According to this amendment, when conflicts of an economic nature "disturb or menace peace at home", the mobilization of troops "thereby necessitated" may only take place for the purpose of "maintaining public order". (The law in its totality was passed by 105 votes to 4.) But it is clear that the amendment expresses precisely what was already the criterion for military intervention; it is therefore useless, absolutely useless, and the fact that a large minority voted against the amendment gives rise to thought.

Norway

Free Norway, which in the summer of 1905 passed through the most placid revolution in world history and then, to satisfy a primitive desire, crowned it by setting up a monarchy, follows the capitalist

states exactly, in spite of the peasant romance which is attached to it.

The use of military force against strikers is not a rare occurrence in this land of democracy. An article in the **Tyvende Aarhundrede** of May 1, 1903, p.53, gives details of this. We learn here that in 1902 alone there were two such cases, in Dunderlands Dal and in Tromsö.

Germany

There remains Germany. It is precisely in Germany that the use of the military in economic struggles is not usual. There are at least very few cases to record in which the army made an active intervention, the following being exceptions. In the weavers' riots of 1844 the Prussian infantry killed 11 and wounded 24 of those miserable proletarian who had been almost tortured to death. Class justice sealed the defeat by passing an enormous number of sentences of hard labour. There was also the miners' strike of 1889, when on May 10 the troops called for by the provincial president, von Hagemeister, left 3 dead and 4 wounded in front of the Moltke mine, and 2 dead and 5 wounded on the battlefield in Bochum. ^[15] In the disturbances of February 1892 involving the Berlin unemployed the army did not intervene, but according to reliable sources the Berlin military were held ready in their barracks on January 18, 1894, on the basis of a mere rumour that the unemployed had planned a demonstration in front of the palace.

This military "moderation" does not, however, have its base in some specially kindly and correct way of thinking on the part of the authorities which take the decisions. On the contrary! Germany has a strong force of police and *gendarmerie*, excellently organized as far as the ruling class is concerned. It is not in vain that Germany is a police state *katexochen*. The well-armed police and the well-armed *gendarmerie* here fulfil a role which elsewhere is played by the army. Moreover, they carry out their task more easily and with more adaptability, in regard to the complex situations which may arise at

any moment, than the military machine, which works in a slower and more clumsy way.

The number of bloody conflicts between strikers and police or *gendarmerie* is big enough in Germany. The Berlin tramway strike of 1900 and the so-called Breslau riot of 1906 are no exceptions. Biewald's severed hand is only an especially revolting mark of the bloodthirsty progress made by the police, another product of military culture. This hand in fact finds itself in good company with countless cracked skulls, severed ears, noses, fingers and other members, and this good company is rapidly growing.

The number of victims cut down by the armed state power during strikes must be hardly smaller in Germany than in other states. Even an approximate estimate of the number is impossible, however, because full records are not kept of those wounded in conflicts with the police, nor are such things really taken note of. If there are less of these victims in Germany than elsewhere, it is not the goodwill and humane nature of the capitalist class and its state which are to be thanked. That becomes very clear when one considers the fact that here it is almost a rule that, whenever big strikes take place, the troops are assembled and held ready in the barracks. The most serious instance of this kind concerns the Ruhr miners' strike, which lasted from January 8 to February 10, 1905.^[16] The bloodless outcome here is to be ascribed exclusively to the presence of mind, moderation, strict self-discipline, training and education of the German workers. We need have no doubt that the Prussian and Saxon governments would take up the side of the capitalist class in the economic struggle – with drums and trumpets, swords and guns – without thinking twice, if the occasion arose.

5. MILITARY SOCIETIES AND STRIKES

Militarism attempts to maintain and extend militarist tendencies in men who have already finished their active service, through the use of military societies. It is therefore quite understandable that these societies intervene in strikes. They are not of course able to use

violence in suppressing the economic struggles of the workers, but they may be characterized as organizations designed for blacklegging. Certain quarters, at least, would be only too ready to use them for this purpose. Only the fact that, in spite of all precautions, a considerable proportion of opposition and even of Social-Democratic elements is to be found in them prevents the fullest use being made of these military societies, together with the fact that in the conflicts between employers and workers, it is precisely those workers who lack social understanding and who are normally as mild as lambs who are the first to get enraged, so that they get an understanding of the class struggle and of their own class position driven into their heads. Moreover, excesses on the part of the employers annoy even the Christians and liberal workers' organizations. In spite of these qualifications, the discussion which took place in June 1906 in Ostheim at a conference of the Federation of Military Societies of the Grand Duchy of Saxe-Weimar is very interesting. The discussion developed out of a principle adopted at a delegate conference, according to which it is a duty of the members to expel anyone who proves to belong to a party antagonistic to the state, and especially to the Social-Democratic Party. It turned out that participation in any strike, or at least in those strikes which are contrary to one's duty of "loyalty to the Emperor, Prince and Fatherland", was to be considered as confirming the fact that someone held revolutionary views dangerous to the state. Since it depends on the very same high personages who play first fiddle in the military societies to declare where and when this loyalty is put into question in a strike, and since these gentlemen, like our police and our courts, tend to consider every strike – which often, directly or indirectly, puts their own closest interests at risk – as a Social-Democratic machination, one can reckon on some productive work being done here by these societies. But it will not be as useful to the capitalist class as to Social-Democracy, which thrives on such clumsy repression, since it only serves to enlighten the workers and weaken the military societies. These societies are expelling, in an ever more systematic way, not only Social-Democrats but also the members of all the trade unions based on the principles of the modern labour movement. There is no doubt that, for the moment,

this practice is putting certain difficulties in the way of the trade unions in the smaller towns, because the members are often bound totem by material advantages, for which they have paid quite high contributions.^[17] This apart from the usual “pomp and panoply”.^[18]

The military societies find strong support in their aims from the practice of class justice. The administration has the impudence to treat them as non-political organizations, though their political-agitational character oozes through every pore. This aid the organs of the capitalist state are bound to hold out to militarism, on the grounds of solidarity and in the interest of their common higher aim, the protection of the capitalist social order.

6. THE ARMY AS A TOOL AGAINST THE PROLETARIAT IN THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE, OR THE RIGHT OF THE CANNON

Since the development of the class struggle, its most concentrated form, is the political struggle, it is natural that in the class struggle too militarism appears in its sharpest form in direct and indirect intervention in the political struggle. Militarism acts first of all as an economic power, as a producer and consumer. The ruthless exclusion of all Social-Democrats, or those suspected of being such, from the military workshops, from those at Spandau for example; the unconditional surrender of the workers, who are under the influence of militarism, to the reactionary parties, and especially to the Imperial League against Social-Democracy, Germany's Black Hundreds, at the same time as all contact with Social-Democracy is prevented; these facts show how splendidly militarism has grasped its main task, protection of the interests of the employers, and with what military efficiency it carries out this task. No Krupp or Stumm, no capitalist can compete with militarism here, in the energy with which it defends capitalist interests. The Imperial League against Social-Democracy, for example, controls the military workshops at Spandau in such a way that it almost plays the role of a *vigilante*, watching over the thoughts of every worker in the royal service. Its word and will decide which workers are to be sacked. This situation has been very strikingly shown up by the events in connection with the sacking

of the executive committee of a harmless union of unskilled workmen in the military workshops in the summer of 1906.

A considerable influence is also exerted – though it is on the decline – by the military boycott of public houses which are used by the workers' associations or any other organizations which, in even a remote way, savour of Social-Democracy. This boycott kills two birds with one stone. On the one hand it protects the soldiers from possible contamination by the revolutionary poison – this aspect really belongs to the field of military education discussed above. On the other hand it makes it difficult for the workers to get hold of rooms and halls for meetings, since they are often unable to hire a proper public meeting place. In Berlin for example this boycott has turned out to be impossible to apply and has been given up, but our comrades in the smaller towns suffer greatly from this plague, which of course is directed against the economic struggle of the proletariat.

[\[19\]](#)

But these are only “the smallest of its sins”. Militarism is not satisfied with endlessly interfering in the petty, everyday political struggle, though in this it never lets up. It has infinitely greater ambitions. It is the noblest and mightiest support of the throne and altar in all the greatest and most serious conflicts of capitalist reaction with the revolution. It threw its weight into the scales in the same way against the earlier revolutionary movements. This need only be briefly related.

We have already dealt with the gruesome laurel wreaths with which capitalist militarism crowned itself in the struggle against the proletariat of Paris in July 1830, in June 1848 and in May 1871, as well as in the riots provoked by “Napoleon the Little” on December 2, 1852. Of special interest here, because they took place in England, are the Chartist massacres of Newport and Birmingham in 1839, in which 10 people were killed and 50 wounded – *et tu, Brute!*

The whole of Russia has been under martial law at various degrees for the last two years to aid the cruel barbarities of Tsarism, and to crush without mercy the liberation movement by means of the fist,

whip, sword, rifle and gun, with which the army is turning this unhappy land into a great cemetery. Only the progress of the revolution and the disintegration of the army, which necessarily corresponds to the energy of the revolutionary forces, are reliable guarantees that this “Christian” but also suicidal plan will not be realized. As we have already pointed out, Russia has to be treated with many reservations when an examination of the capitalist states is being made.

The role played by the standing army in the first great Belgian electoral struggle is very important, as well as the role played in the second such struggle in 1902 by the national guard, the special militarist organization used by the bourgeoisie in the class struggle.

Austria saw the mobilization of the military against a workers’ demonstration in the Vienna Prater on May 1, 1896, and we have already mentioned the events in Prague, Vienna and Glatz (1897), in Lemberg and Trieste (1902). But it provided a second brilliant example of militarist-political action on the large scale in the election fight of 1905. Bohemia especially was on the point of becoming the scene of civil war.^[20] On November 5 and 28, 1905, the day on which election demonstrations were to be held, Prague, where the miners were also on strike, was filled with and surrounded by the army. The heights around were occupied by the artillery, ready to fire, and about eighty people were eventually wounded, though in fact by the police.

The events in Italy which belong to this section have already been mentioned.

Now we come to Germany, to that Germany whose supreme war lord, in a world-renowned speech – which has become a powerful weapon in the standing arsenal of anti-militarist propaganda in every country – gave the soldiers a curious interpretation of the fourth commandment. Not only did he make the well-known Sedan day speech against the “mob” in 1895, but also the famous appeal to the Alexander regiment on March 28, 1901. ^[4*] It was the proletariat as

such, the only sound pillar of the “constitution”, for which the military armament and Wrangel’s manoeuvres were meant, which in 1848-9 shamelessly crushed the German revolution, more or less betrayed and abandoned by the German bourgeoisie, and robbed it of its birthright. One might also recall the Boyen-Lotzen affair of the shackles in September 1870, and the bloody fantasies of Bismarck-Puttkamer memory. At the time of the infamous anti-socialist law, these “heroes of the 19th century” looked forward, longed to see the workers forced into the streets and cut down with the sword, rifle and shrapnel in the most artistic and sportsmanlike way.^[21] The fact that the army was held ready in the barracks in the case of May Day festivals^[22] and Reichstag elections is still well remembered,^[23] as are the events of 1896 during the process by which electoral rights were stolen from the people of Saxony, and the events of 1905-6, when the army participated in the “pacification” of the Saxon population.^[24] When election demonstrations were held in Hamburg on January 17, 1906, “bloody Wednesday”, police guns and swords sufficed to do the necessary work. The two corpses which adorned the pavements of the free Hansa town were their responsibility. The army, consisting of local people, was kept in the background.

On January 21, 1906, however, the defenders of capitalism showed themselves in their full glory. Whoever heard the guns rattle down the paved streets of Berlin on that “holy” Sunday has glimpsed the heart and soul of militarism. ^[25] The sound of those guns still resounds in our ears today, and spurs us on in our struggle against militarism with untiring, relentless, ruthless determination.

On January 21, 1906, it was simply a question of a demonstration against the infamous Prussian three-class electoral system. But we know that our militarism would be at least as eager to reach for the sword and rifle if it were necessary to make some reactionary changes to the state constitution by means of a *coup d'état*. And the latest Hohenlohe ^[5*] and Delbruck revelations have shown how Bismarck in 1890 was on the point of dispersing the Reichstag, of abolishing the electoral system, of driving the proletarian masses onto the streets to face the guns and cannons, of crushing Social-

Democracy by shattering the defenceless ranks of the workers, and so of building a fortress of blood and iron on the broken proletarian bodies in order to protect Bismarckian-Junker reaction.^[26] We have also heard that the German Kaiser would not endorse this plan because he first wished “to satisfy the legitimate complaints of the workers”, “to meet their legitimate demands”. We know, moreover, that the workers hold an opinion quite different from that of the ruling classes as to which of their demands are legitimate, and we know that the antagonism towards the Reichstag found among the most influential circles in northern Germany (especially marked in the ex-Communist Miquel,^[6*] as the Hohenlohe memoirs have shown) is continually on the increase.^[27] We also know that the danger of a “military solution of the social question by means of small calibre rifles and large calibre cannons appears today closer than ever.^[28] Should the chief of the General staff; Helmut von Moltke, become the Imperial Chancellor, as has been recently predicted, it would mean to all appearances a victory for the notorious military party at court.^[29]

There has never been a shortage of “shrapnel princes”, shrapnel Junkers and shrapnel generals in world history. One must be ready for everything. There is no time to lose.^[30]

7. MILITARY SOCIETIES IN THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE

The military societies of course manifest a very intensive political activity, which German justice naturally cannot see through its blindfold. Everyone knows how these societies are mobilized during elections, and how they force their members to leave the political organizations of the opposition. It is worth noting the way in which, to show their “loyalty to the king”, they deprive the class-conscious workers of meeting-places. There are only two new facts to be brought forward. First, the decision of the Society of Old Soldiers of the XVIth Army Corps in Duisburg-Beeck to boycott the Kaiserhof Hotel in Duisburg because it had been let for a miners’ meeting. Second, the expulsion from the military societies of Saxony of those publicans who allow their premises to be used by the workers for

meetings.^[31] It is not easy to take on these methods of struggle in the smaller towns, though when the workers are organized it simply means blows in the air.

The material which belongs to this section deserves to be systematically collected for use in the day-to-day struggle.

8. MILITARISM, A DANGER TO PEACE

Nationalist contradictions – the need for national expansion as a consequence of the increase in population, the need for the annexation of territories possessing natural riches in order to increase the national wealth (which means the wealth of the ruling classes) and the need to make the state independent by constituting it as far as possible as a self-sufficient economic unit with regard to production (a natural tendency to promote and extend a policy of protectionism, a tendency which can, however, only diminish in the face of the ever expanding international division of labour), the need for facilitating communication at home and abroad (for example through the acquisition of navigable channels and of harbours, etc.), which is the means through which trade, the metabolism of the economic body, is effected – these contradictions, together with contradictions in the general cultural level, especially in the stage of political development, can easily, even in the present day, produce international political tensions. The most important political tensions which today can lead to world war arise, as has already been shown above, from the competition of individual states within the world economy, from world trade, from international politics with all its complications, and especially from colonial politics. Those who bear the main responsibility for these tensions are the powerful figures interested in the expansion of industry and trade. They may be said to be interested in a successful war.

It must not, however, be forgotten that the existence of the standing armies in which militarism has consolidated itself in the most marked form in itself threatens world peace, and constitutes an autonomous danger of war. Apart from all this is the fact that the increase in military spending, that “endless screw”, can lead to the inclination to

let no favourable moment elapse without using one's temporary military superiority, or without starting a military conflict once it is thought necessary in order to prevent a further unfavourable shift in the balance of military power. This tendency, which as everyone knows was not without influence in France in the recent Morocco conflict,^[32] determines rather the time of the outbreak of war than the fact of its outbreak.

But the standing army produces, as does the militia to a much smaller degree, a modern caste of warriors, a caste of persons who, so to speak, are trained for war from childhood, a privileged class of conquistadores who seek adventure and advancement in war. To this group belong also those strata who have something special to gain from war, those who supply arms, munitions, battleships, horses, material for fitting out and for clothing, catering and transport requirements; in short: the army contractors, who of course are also present but to a lesser degree in states where there exists a militia. Both these groups with war interests, that is, those interested in war, even simply in the waging of war (the most adventurous of the officers and those of the army contractors who are quite independent of military success) are, to use a popular expression, "on the inside". They have connections with the highest state offices and possess a great influence over those powers whose job it is to make the formal decision on war and peace. They miss no favourable opportunity of attempting to turn this influence, which they have for the most part gained through their exploitation of militarism, into pure gold, and to sacrifice countless numbers of proletarians on the altar of profit. They agitate for colonial expansion, forcing the "dear Fatherland" into dangerous and costly adventures which are, however, profitable to themselves, in order then to be able to agitate for a navy to save the dear Fatherland in another way, which of course is again very profitable for them.^[33]

The struggle against the standing army and the chauvinistic-militaristic spirit means struggle against a threat to peace between nations. The old saying, *si vis pacem para bellum*, may still apply to some individual state surrounding by militarist states, but by no

means applies to the totality of the capitalist states against which Social-Democracy directs its international agitation. And even less does this saying imply the need to prepare for war by means of a standing army. On the contrary, the saying in its inverted form, *si vis bellum para pacem*, applies to such an army – there is no more sure method of provoking war than such a method of securing peace! In the case of the aggressive economic-political imperialism of our day the standing army is indeed the adequate form of preparation for war.

Just as it is true that peace between nations is in the interest of the international proletariat, and beyond that in the interest of the whole of human civilization, so it is true that the struggle against militarism – which, all in all, comes to a struggle against the sum and extract of all the tendencies of capitalism which disturb peace, stirring up nation against nation; in short, threatening a world war – this struggle is a struggle for civilization which the proletariat is proud to wage, which it must wage in its very own interest, and in the waging of which no other class as such (a few well-meaning enthusiasts here only prove the rule) has anything like as great an interest.

Militarism also disturbs peace at home, not only by its brutalization of the people and by the heavy economic burdens which it lays on them through taxes and duties, not only by the corruption which goes hand in hand with it (*vide* men like Woermann, Fischer, von Tippelskirch, Podbielski & Co. [Z*]), not only by the division of the people, already suffering enough from class division, into two castes, not only by military ill-treatment and military justice, but above all by the fact that it is a powerfully effective brake on every sort of progress, that it is an ingenious and very efficient instrument for keeping the valve of the social boiler firmly shut. For the person who considers the further development of the human race as necessary, the existence of militarism is the most important obstacle to the peaceful and steady character of such a development; for him untamed militarism is synonymous with the necessity of a blood-red twilight for the idols of capitalism.

9. THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

To abolish militarism or weaken it as much as possible is therefore a question of life or death for the political struggle for emancipation, a struggle whose form and mode militarism in a certain sense debases, and therefore decisively influences. It becomes even more a life or death question as the superiority of the army over the unarmed people, over the proletariat, increases in consequence of the highly developed technique and strategy, in consequence of the gigantic size of the armies, in consequence of the unfavourable way in which the classes are divided with regard to locality, and in consequence of the especially unfavourable relation of economic power in which the proletariat stands to the bourgeoisie. For all these reasons it will be far more difficult to make every coming proletarian revolution than it was to make all past revolutions. It is important always to remember that in the bourgeois revolution the leading force, the revolutionary bourgeoisie, had long held economic power in its hands before the revolution in the narrow sense broke out, and that there was a large class, economically subject to the bourgeoisie and exposed to its political influence, which the bourgeoisie could put to work to pull the chestnuts out of the fire. It is important to remember that the bourgeoisie had first of all to a certain degree picked up the old rubbish of feudalism before it broke it up and threw it in the lumber-room, while the members of the proletariat must conquer everything that was taken from them with the help of riches while themselves still going hungry and even at the risk of their lives.

FOOTNOTES

- [1.](#) **Le Mouvement Socialiste**, May-June and August-September 1906, *Les massacres de classe en Italie*.
- [2.](#) See for example **Les Temps Nouveaux** of December 16, 1905 (Ancona, Taurisano).
- [3.](#) **Leur Patrie**, Paris n.d., p.99.

4. In this connection see G. Jaekh, **Die Internationale**, Leipzig 1904, pp.69ff.

5. See **Mouvement Socialiste** of September 1 and 15, 1905.

6. See the detailed descriptions in **Mouvement Socialiste**, nos.155 and 156, and in **La Vie Socialiste**, 1st year, nos.15-18. The National Congress at Chalons-sur-Saône (October-November 1905), having rejected the motion of the Socialist fraction in the Chamber for a parliamentary inquiry, dealt in a comprehensive resolution with Limoges and Konstantin's report on it.

7. **Les Temps Nouveaux**, December 16, 1905.

8. A great sensation was caused a few years ago by the pamphlet **L'armée aux grèves** (The Army in Strikes) by Lieutenant Z.

9. **L'Humanité**, October 9, 1906.

10. See Sombart, **Warum gibt es in den Vereinigten Staaten keinen Sozialismus?**, Tübingen 1906, p.129.

11. See Hillquit, **Geschichte des Sozialismus in den Vereinigten Staaten**, Stuttgart 1906, p.211. This is the work which has mostly been used here for information on North America.

12. The same Altgeld who, on June 26, 1890, pardoned the Chicago anarchists.

13. See Hillquit, **Geschichte des Sozialismus in den Vereinigten Staaten**, pp.190, 209ff., 236ff., 306ff.

14. **Op. cit.**, p.314.

15. On May 19, 1889, the German Kaiser said to a deputation waiting on him: "If I perceive that the movement betrays Social-Democratic tendencies and that people are incited to unlawful resistance, I shall intervene with ruthless severity and make use of all the power at my disposal – which is considerable." According to

the **Freisinnige-Zeitung** he added that if the least resistance were shown to the authorities he would have the trouble-makers shot.

[16.](#) Cf. what took place in Landau-Kaiserslautern in September 1906.

[17.](#) Cf. the appeal of the Saxon Sharpshooters' and Riflemen's Military Society in the **Leipziger Volkszeitung**, December 1, 1906.

[18.](#) On the "drinking parties and brawls", to use the words of the pastor César, see the **Sozialdemokratische Partei-Correspondenz**, no.21, December 8, 1906.

[19.](#) To this category belongs also the threat of a military boycott – made for example during the 1903 Reichstag election campaign against those publicans at Spandau on whose premises the Social-Democrats had displayed lists of electors in order to facilitate the checking of the lists. They had to be taken down (see **Denkschrift des Reichstages**, no.618, 1905-7).

[20.](#) See also the paper **Der Jugendliche Arbeiter**, December 1905 (on the shooting of 16-year-old Johann Hubac).

[21.](#) Ludwigshaven in the Palatinate was practically occupied by troops on the Sunday before the 1887 election, and only the presence of mind of the Social-Democrats prevented an outbreak of shooting (see the description in the **Festschrift zur Mannheimer Parteitag**, 1906, pp.9ff.). The statement by the Kaiser recorded in the Hohenlohe memoirs for December 12, 1889, is interesting in this connection. He says that when the Social-Democrats are in a majority on the Berlin town council they will set about robbing the citizens. But that will not worry him, he adds. He will have embrasures made in the palace and watch the looting going on. Then the citizens will have to implore him to come to their assistance.

[22.](#) This applied especially to the first May Day celebration (1890), which the military firebrands, the "military party" (Hohenlohe's

memoirs, September 14, 1893) would have liked to use as the opportunity to settle the account in blood with the hated and dangerous Social-Democrats.

[23.](#) Cf. in the electoral riots at Laurahütte and Zabrze in Upper Silesia in 1903.

[24.](#) Cf. the order concerning shooting made for January 21, 1906, published by the **Leipziger Volkszeitung** on April 3, 1906.

[25.](#) See the same order, preceding footnote.

[26.](#) This was of course brought to light by the **Hamburger Nachrichten** in March 1892.

[27.](#) See the **Handbuch für sozialdemokratische Wähler**, 1903, **Der Preussische Landtag, Handbuch für sozialdemokratische Wähler**, Berlin 1903, and above all the **Hamburger Nachrichten**, the **Kreuz-Zeitung**, the **Deutsche Tageszeitung** and **Die Post**, in connection with the project to dissolve the Reichstag on December 13, 1906, if the election result should be unfavourable.

[28.](#) The appeal to the Prussian bayonets made by the thoroughbred Junker von Oldenburg-Januschau to the Reichstag in May 1905 and at the Provincial Conference of the Agrarian Federation in Konitz in December 1906 echoed the feelings in the hearts of, at least, a very influential camarilla.

[29.](#) The **Berliner Tageblatt** describes this up-and-coming character in the following terms: "Helmut von Moltke is said to be an outspoken reactionary, tempered by a certain soldierly frankness and a happy disposition, though he is also said to have spiritualist tendencies. He is not at all a man of theory, but a go-ahead man of action, cool but ready to make politics with the sword and rifle." There we have all the qualities so earnestly desired by our firebrands concentrated in one man.

[30.](#) So that the element of satire in the tragedy shall not be lacking, we will refer here to the farce played out in 1904 in the little Thuringian town of Hildburghausen. The students of the Technical Institute were angry with the police because not enough leniency had been shown towards the young bourgeois elements who had a habit of causing disturbances. One night they stormed the police station, and could only be forced back by a company of infantry – though without bloodshed. The sequel, before the Meiningen County Court, also deserves to be remembered. The accused “rebels” were not, as with workers in similar cases, sentenced to imprisonment or hard labour, but acquitted or given light fines. But the unfortunate lieutenant who intervened, and who had perhaps not kept strictly to the rules, was severely reprimanded.

[31.](#) Cf. the declaration made by the President of the Federation of Saxon Military Societies, published in the **Leipziger Volkszeitung** on December 1, 1906.

[32.](#) Cf. the article by Major-General von Zepelin in the **Kreuz-Zeitung**, December 23, 1906.

[33.](#) Cf. the **Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung** of December 5, 1906.

ADDITIONAL NOTES BY THE TRANSLATOR

[1*](#). **HERVÉ, GUSTAVE** (1871-1944). A university teacher, he was forced to leave his post as a consequence of legal proceedings arising out of his anti-militarist opinions. Founded the paper *La Guerre sociale*. Later became an ardent patriot, left the Socialist Party in 1916, supported Clemenceau. In 1927 created the fascist National Socialist Party in France.

[2*](#). International (second). Founded in 1889, based on the adhesion of national parties and unions. Later set up an executive body, the International Socialist Bureau. Congresses were held in Paris in 1889, Brussels in 1891, Zurich in 1893, London in 1896, Paris in 1900, Amsterdam in 1904, Stuttgart in 1907, Copenhagen in 1910,

Basel in 1912. Expelled its anarchist members in 1896, affirmed itself as based on Marxism. Adopted in 1907 the position of Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and Julius Martov that war should be transformed into social revolution. But in 1914 all its member parties (except the Russians and Serbs) voted for war credits in their respective parliaments and otherwise supported the war effort.

3*. CLEMENCEAU, GEORGES (1841-1929). Radical, French Minister of the Interior from 1906. Became known as the strong man of French politics, especially because of his use of the army in social conflicts at home and his support for the general strengthening of the armed forces. Headed the French government from 1917 to 1920.

4*. ALEXANDER REGIMENT SPEECH. The speech of Wilhelm II to the Kaiser Alexander Regiment on March 28, 1901, containing the words: "You are ... so to speak the bodyguard of the King of Prussia, and you must always be ready, day and night, to put your life at risk, to spill your blood for your king! ... If it should happen that the city rises up against its rulers, the regiment must punish this improper conduct of the people towards its king with the bayonet."

5*. HOHENLOHE-SCHILLINGSFÜRST, PRINCE VON (1819-1901). Third Imperial Chancellor, succeeding Caprivi in 1894. Responsible for an attempt, sometimes successful (law against subversion of 1894, Prussian anti-Socialist law of 1897), to introduce a severely repressive social policy. Supported the strengthening of the armed forces, especially the laws on the navy of 1898 and 1900. Resigned in October 1900.

6*. MIQUEL, DR. Ex-republican, who took part in the revolutionary movements of 1848, he became an extreme reactionary and a member of the National Liberal Party. In 1890 he was appointed Prussian Finance Minister.

7*. TIPPELSKIRCH & Co. Army contractors, the firm of Tippelskirch was involved in 1906, together with the Prussian minister von Podbielski and the Hamburg shipping firm C. Woermann & Co., in a great scandal. Tippelskirch & Co. had secured a monopoly in the supply of clothes and equipment to the colonial forces, while von Podbielski,

as a partner in the firm, shared in the enormous profits thus obtained. Woermann's made its share from transportation.

II. ANTI-MILITARISM

1. ANTI-MILITARISM OF THE OLD AND THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

The **Communist Manifesto**, the most prophetic work in world literature, does not deal specifically with militarism or adequately with its accessory significance. It does, it is true, speak of the uprising “brought about sporadically by the proletarian struggle”, and thus effectively indicates the role played by capitalist militarism *vis-à-vis* the struggle of the proletariat for freedom. It discusses at greater length the question of international – or rather inter-state – conflicts, and the capitalist policy of expansion (including colonial policy). The latter is regarded as a necessary consequence of capitalist development. It is predicted that national isolation and national contradictions would tend more and more to disappear even under the domination of the bourgeoisie, and that the domination of the proletariat would reduce them still further. One might almost say that the programme of measures to be taken under the dictatorship of the proletariat contains nothing specifically about militarism. The conquest of political power which is supposed to have already been brought about embraces the “conquest”, that is to say, the overthrow of militarism.

Special declarations about militarism began to appear with the congresses of the International. These declarations however refer exclusively to “militarism against the enemy abroad”, to the position to be taken up with regard to war. The Lausanne Congress of 1867 contained this point on the agenda: “The Peace Congress in Geneva in 1868”. It was decided to work together with the Peace Congress on the either naïve or ironical supposition that this congress would adopt the programme of the International. War was characterized as a consequence of the class struggle.

At the third congress of the International held in Brussels in 1868 a resolution moved by Longuet in the name of a commission was

unanimously adopted. It designated the lack of economic balance as the chief and lasting cause of war, stressing that a change can only be brought about by social reform. The labour movement is said to be able to reduce the number of wars by means of agitation and education of the people, and tireless work to this end is laid down as a duty. In case of war a general strike is advised, and the congress expresses its belief that the international solidarity of workers of all lands is strong enough to secure their aid in the war of the peoples against war.

Now the “new” International!

The resolution of the Paris Congress of 1899 is of the greatest interest in this connection. It deals with the standing armies, which it brands as the “negation of every democratic and republican régime”, as the “military expression of the monarchical or oligarchic-capitalist régime”, as a “tool for reactionary *coups d'état* and social oppression”. It characterizes these armies, together with the aggressive political positions whose tool they are, as the cause and consequence of the system of offensive wars and of the present danger of international conflicts. It repudiates these, both from a military-technical point of view and because of their direct disorganizing and demoralizing properties, hostile to all cultural progress, and also because of the unbearable military burdens which the armies impose on the peoples. It demands the abolition of the standing armies and the introduction of a universal citizen army, while regarding war as an inevitable consequence of capitalism.

This resolution is more thorough than any previous one in its characterization of militarism.

The proceedings of the Brussels Congress in 1891 were also important. Here the question of war, of international militarism, was dealt with exclusively. The Nieuwenhuis [\[1*\]](#) resolution, which described war as the result of the international will of capitalism and as a means of smashing the power of the revolutionary movement, and which demanded that socialists of every land should answer

every war with a general strike, was voted down. The Vaillant-Liebkecht resolution, which regards militarism as a necessary consequence of capitalism and peace between peoples as attainable only through the establishment of an international socialist system, was adopted. It calls on the workers to protest, by tireless agitation, against the barbarity of war and against alliances which promote it, and to speed the triumph of socialism by the development of the international organizations of the proletariat. This method of fighting was declared to be the only one capable of preventing the catastrophe of a world war.

The Zurich Congress of 1893 confirmed the Brussels resolution and indicated these ways of fighting against militarism: refusal to vote military credits, incessant protests against the standing armies, tireless agitation in favour of disarmament, support of all organizations which strive after world peace.

The London Congress of 1896 again discussed the two sides of militarism. It indicated as the chief causes of war the economic contradictions into which the ruling classes of the different countries have been forced by the capitalist mode of production. [1] Wars were considered to be acts of the ruling classes in their own interest at the cost of the workers. The struggle against military oppression was seen as a part of the struggle against exploitation, and as a duty of the working class. The conquest of political power, the abolition of the capitalist mode of production, the seizure from the governments of the means of power of the capitalist class, the tools for maintaining the established order [2] – this was fixed as the objective. The standing armies were considered to increase the danger of war and to facilitate the brutal oppression of labour. The immediate demands were: abolition of the standing armies and introduction of a citizen force, together with international courts of arbitration, with the people to decide on questions of peace and war. The resolution concluded that the people could achieve its goal in this connection only after it had secured a decisive influence on legislation, and joined in a system of international socialism.

The Paris Congress of 1900 passed a comprehensive resolution on colonial expansionist politics, and the possibilities of international conflict inherent in the capitalist system. It also condemned the policy of national oppression, bringing together a few especially barbaric examples, and gave special attention to the struggle against militarism. It referred to the decisions of 1889, 1891, 1896, pointed out the international and national danger of imperialist world politics, called upon the proletariat to redouble its efforts in the international struggle against militarism and its world politics, and proposed these practical means: international protest movements, refusal of all military, naval and colonial expenditure, and “the education and organization of the youth with the aim of fighting militarism”.

A survey of these decisions shows a steady growth of practical political insight into militarism abroad, and an ever deeper and more specialized recognition of the causes and dangers of war, as well as the significance of “militarism at home”. As far as the means of fighting militarism are concerned, however, the idea of a general strike against war brought forward in 1868 was far in advance of its time. In the same way, strikes of soldiers as a regular method of fighting against war were rejected by all later congresses – justifiably, in the circumstances. The recognized means of struggle, however, are progressing slowly. The refusal of military expenditure recommended to the proletariat is the only direct political manifestation of power against militarism, but it remains without significant immediate effect. All other proposals remain within the domain of propaganda in favour of changes in the legal position and in favour of future actions. This, of course, as is shown elsewhere, is the only domain more or less open to the proletariat for the moment. Even the refusal of military credits, as a rule, will have to be considered as a means of propaganda of this kind.

The chief difficulty for the moment, especially in Germany, lies in determining the form and method of anti-militarist propaganda. The fact that these have not been more carefully fixed in the congress decisions is due to the different external and internal position of the various countries, and from this point of view it may appear useful

and even necessary. We should not, however, forget that the tendency of the decisions is to lay greater and greater weight on anti-militarist propaganda and to make this propaganda more specialized. The Paris decision shows this perfectly clearly. It reflects both the growing self-consciousness of the international proletariat and the growing conviction that it is necessary to set about gaining partial advances against militarism abroad and at home by the use of the class-conscious power of the proletariat.

In conclusion we should mention the circular sent out by the International Socialist Bureau in November 1905 at the suggestion of the French section of the International in connection with the Morocco conflict. It makes no positive proposals for action against the war, but simply states what is self-evident and elementary – that the parties which are affiliated to the Bureau should, in the event of a threatened war, immediately make contact in order to work out and vote upon the means of avoiding or hindering the war.

FOOTNOTES

[1.](#) And not class contradictions! This question is specially dealt with here for the first time.

[2.](#) This is not really the object of the conquest of political power, but the essence of the conquest itself – to safeguard by means of organization what has been taken by the proletariat is of course one of the tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

[1*](#). NIEUWENHUIS, FERDINAND DOMELA (1846-1919). Dutch socialist. Became leader of the Dutch Social-Democrats in 1879, later took up more extreme positions, becoming an avowed anarchist. Played an important part in the 1891 and 1893 congresses of the International, opposing compulsory military service; his positions were rejected by large majorities.

2. ANTI-MILITARISM ABROAD WITH SPECIAL REGARD TO THE YOUNG SOCIALIST ORGANIZATIONS (PART 1)

The anti-militarist movement in capitalist countries other than Germany is for the most part strong and lively. This is especially true of the Latin countries such as Belgium, France and Italy, but also applies, though more recently, to Austria, Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries, and even to Holland, though anti-militarism is only just beginning to show itself there.

BELGIUM

Special anti-militarist propaganda was started in Belgium in 1886, when the army made large-scale interventions in strikes, as we have already seen. After leaflets had been distributed to remind the soldiers of their duty towards their working-class brothers^[1] two anti-militarist newspapers were founded: **Le Conscrit** and **La Caserne** (The Conscript and The Barracks).^[2] The first always appears in January (before the drawing of lots in February), the second in September (before the recruits are called up on October 1). Both appear in Flemish as well as French (**De Loteling** and **De Kazerne**)^[3]. In 1896 the Party handed over both newspapers to the National Federation of Young Guards, founded in 1894.^[4] But they remain under the control of the Party centre, to which the National Federation of Young Guards has sent delegates since 1896-7. The Young Guards were founded in 1893-4, though there were individuals in Brussels as early as the eighteen-eighties, mainly engaged in election work and in special anti-militarist propaganda. Since 1902 this has changed. The disappointments of the second general strike have caused the workers to go more carefully and slowly, and to pay great care to maintaining the roots of organization and propaganda. The aims of the Young Socialist organizations were

broadened, and the development of education given first place – undoubtedly the more solid method of anti-militarist propaganda, or rather that which best prepares the ground for it. As far as these organizations are concerned, it is impossible to deal full with their history here, tempting as this may be, though they are also closely linked with the anti-militarist struggle.^[5]

A few words only, then: since 1896 the monthly journal **Avant Garde**, organ of the students and Young Guards, has been appearing in Brussels. Since 1900 the **Antimilitariste**, monthly organ of the National Federation of Young Guards, has also been appearing.^[6] Since 1903 this federation has also published the illustrated monthly **La Jeunesse Socialiste**. This will be replaced in 1907 by the monthly journal **La Jeunesse c'est l'Avenir** (Youth is the Future),^[7] now controlled by the Walloon Federation of Hainaut and Namur. It has already been appearing since 1906 in Charleroi.^[8] Both journals were and are full of anti-militarist material. The same is true of the Flemish **De Zaaier** (The Sower), an illustrated monthly which has been published since 1903 on behalf of the Antwerp Federation of the **Jonge Wacht**. It was amalgamated in 1906 with the general Flemish language Party paper **De Waarheid** (published since 1902 at Ghent), but forms a special part of this journal with its own title. **De Waarheid** has a circulation of 3,000, **La Jeunesse c'est l'Avenir** of 5,000.

Some local organizations of the Young Guards – especially the Antwerp and Ghent Jonge Wachten – are engaged in vigorous anti-militarist activity of a literary kind, etc. The Antwerp group for instance published the paper **De Bloedwet** (Rule of Blood) in 1900, in order to agitate among conscripts (it has the same aim as **La Caserne**). It has also published the bi-monthly **Ontwapening** (Disarmament) since May 1, 1901, and finally, since 1905, **De Vrijheid** (Freedom). These papers all spread the anti-militarist word with great skill and enthusiasm. Hectographed bulletins are also produced. The Young Guards also do good work of course with leaflets and posters, mostly illustrated.^[9] These are sometimes addressed to young workers and sometimes to conscripts and

soldiers. Much useful literature in pamphlet form is also produced. Cheap postcards with an anti-militarist message, mostly illustrated, are sold in large numbers.

In Belgium more than half the young men liable to bear arms escape through the system of drawing lots. About 13,000 are called up every year. Around 60,00 copies of **Le Conscrit** and **La Caserne** are published altogether in the two languages.^[10] They are normally specially posted to the recruits, whose addresses can easily be obtained. Then personal contact can be made with those recruits who have been singled out.

Meetings of recruits regularly take place in January and September, as well as fêtes, street demonstrations and other actions.

Contact is not lost with proletarians who have entered the army. In some Guards' groups a system of aid is organized, and an allowance made to members of the Guards who have been called up during the time of their service. This allowance varies with the amount of time for which a member has belonged to the group and with the amount he has subscribed. Such members have to provide regular reports on their experiences in the barracks, and remain in personal touch with the Guards. If such a member serves in a different locality from that of his organization, he is put in touch with the local group. We cannot go into more detail for obvious reasons.

The agitation carried out in the barracks plays an important role in Belgium. There are about 15 soldiers' organizations (soldiers' unions) at present, which work closely together. An effort is of course made to eliminate these dangerous organizations. But although they are often suppressed, they always reappear, for their roots are too strong to be pulled up. Up to two-thirds of the men in a single regiment have been recruited. Some of the unions are closely connected with the Social-Democratic Party.

Propaganda literature is brought into the barracks in large quantities, and is also distributed to soldiers in the streets and other public

places. Meetings of soldiers take place. Many anti-militarist songs have been widely circulated.

The Party itself of course carries on strenuous anti-militarist agitation, and the women and girls take an active part too, in particular by helping the Young Guards in their agitation in the barracks. These efforts have met with great success. The pamphlet **Le catéchisme du conscrit** (The Conscript's Catechism), which appeared in several editions in 1896, is worthy of note. It resembles the French **Manuel du soldat**, and has been similarly subjected to fierce criminal prosecution.

Anti-militarist propaganda, indeed, comes up against severe persecution. This point can of course only be supported by an examination of the generally advanced political conditions in Belgium. In 1886 Anseele was condemned to six months' imprisonment for an appeal to mothers published in the **Vooruit** to bring up their sons in such a way that they would never turn their guns against the people. **Le Conscrit** and **La Caserne** are constantly brought before the courts. Since their foundation heavy sentences have been pronounced every year in connection with their publication, and the same thing of course has happened since the publication has been taken over by the Young Guards. The first case was that against **Le Conscrit** in 1897, when two comrades were sentenced to six months' imprisonment. In 1904 Coenen, secretary of the National Federation of Young Guards, was called with five others before the jury in Brabant in connection with the appearance of posters appealing to recruits. The same thing was soon repeated, this time involving Coenen alone, because of an article which had appeared in **La Caserne**. But he was acquitted.^[11] The sentences passed on Troclet in the middle of the eighteen-nineties on account of **Le catéchisme du conscrit** are also noteworthy.

The chief crimes for which penalties are imposed are the following: calls to disobey orders, insulting the army (six months' imprisonment is the minimum punishment!), and the infamous *atteinte à la force obligatoire des lois* – attack on the principle that the law is binding.

Where more than five people are shown to have conspired together the punishment is doubled. Every year sentences of imprisonment averaging from two to three years are passed. In 1903 the secretary of the National Federation was sentenced to three years in prison. It is true, however, that half of the accused are acquitted. The system under which the prisoners live is harsh. No distinction is made, on principle, between political and non-political prisoners.

Treatment accorded to anti-militarist soldiers is cruel, at least by Belgian standards. Those opposing militarism are threatened with three to five years' prison in the harsh correctional system. For the slightest offence the barbarous medieval punishment called the *cachot* is inflicted. The prisoners must lie in irons in an unheated cell, and are fed on bread and water. The cells are built over water, are damp, and in winter a spell in them can be dangerous to life. This goes together with the ill-treatment dealt out by the N.C.O.s, who are themselves given this job as a disciplinary punishment.

The extent of the growth of Belgian anti-militarism, in spite of its struggle against fire and sword, has been shown elsewhere, and can be said to be an almost complete success. In the critical year 1902 the whole population took such an interest in the propaganda that officers attempting to stop the agitation which was carried on openly in the streets among the soldiers were often attacked.

We must also mention the Groupes des Anciens Militaires (ex-soldiers' groups). They were formerly organized as a national federation, but are now flourishing as local organizations and publish a newspaper. Anti-militarist propaganda in the reserve and the militia, as well as agitation against the bourgeois military societies, are their chief tasks.

A few words must be added on the attitude taken by Belgian Social-Democracy, as far as tactics are concerned, towards militarism.

On the question of war, and above all on the tactics to be adopted if a war breaks out, there is no unanimity of opinion. Only three facts can be mentioned here:

The Party Congress at Ghent in 1893 expressed its enthusiastic approval of a telegram from the *anciens soldats* of Amsterdam which expressed the hope that the Congress would sanction the calling of a military strike in case of war, as the Dutch Socialists had suggested. The Louvain Congress of 1899 simply endorsed the proposal of De Winnes that to make propaganda for socialism was the best way of fighting the growth of military armament and of ensuring world peace. In 1905 the Socialist Federation of the Charleroi district resolved that in order to prevent war it was necessary:

1. To prevent troop mobilization by calling a general strike of railwaymen;
2. To organize a general strike in the coal mines in order to deprive the belligerent powers of the fuel necessary for the navy and for troop transport;
3. To stop work in the docks, arsenals and munitions factories.

The history of the Young Guards also throws an interesting light on the subject. Their congress in 1897 decided among other things to induce the Socialist Parties of other countries to organize their young people on an international and anti-militarist basis in order to make war impossible. The proceedings of the Brussels Congress of 1903 were also important. Two sharply opposed views were more or less equally represented. One view strongly defended, especially by de Man, used Hervé's^[1*] arguments to propose the declaration of a military strike (collective refusal to serve), a general strike and revolutionary agitation in case of war. The other view was put by Troclet and Fischer, who simply endorsed the resolutions of the international congresses. The Troclet-Fischer resolution was passed by seventeen votes to fifteen, with two abstentions.^[12]

At the Ghent Congress of January 1906 a sharp departure was made from anarchist tactics, and individual refusal to serve was repudiated. A motion put by de Man suggests that to snatch the means of power in the form of the army from the ruling classes it is

necessary to awaken proletarian class consciousness among the soldiers. Another of de Man's motions describes the army in its role against the enemy at home. The soldiers are advised to conduct themselves as properly as possible in the interests of anti-militarist agitation. The anarchistic dross was thus eliminated and things cleared up considerably.

FRANCE

In France anti-militarist propaganda began long ago and is very vigorous but not so well organized as in Belgium, nor does it follow the same tendency.

In 1894 the 12th Congress of the Socialist Revolutionary Labour Party (P.O.S.R.) at Dijon passed a specially noteworthy resolution against militarism in its two forms, emphasizing the harm done by militarism and the general danger it presented to the proletariat. The end of the resolution says: "In peacetime the standing army serves a police role, acting as a shooting machine. It drowns in blood the struggles of the miners and factory workers for their rights, the proletarian soldier in absurd anger raising his hand against his brother on strike."

Not only Social-Democratic anti-militarism but also the anarchist form developed in France, together with the specifically French tendency of anti-patriotic Socialist anti-militarism (which however later left its mark in Italy and even in Switzerland).

Anarchist and semi-anarchist anti-militarism was supported chiefly by the weekly journal **Les Temps Nouveaux** (Modern Times) and its numerous and often clever publications. These, like the paper itself, are for the most part based on a proletarian standpoint. They contain valuable material contributed not only by men like Kropotkin^[2*] but by syndicalists, especially P. Delesalle. There are also the publications of the individualist paper **Libertaire**. French anarchists were also responsible for the foundation in 1902 of the International Anti-

militarist Federation, and rather earlier of the Ligue Internationale pour la Defense du Soldat (International Soldiers' Defence League) with headquarters in Paris. The leading thinkers of this league – which seems to have disappeared – were the anarchists Janvion, Malato, then Georges Lhermite, editor of the radical paper **L'Aurore**, and Urbain Gohier. Their programme aimed at the abolition of standing armies, the abolition of the system of military justice and material improvements and guarantees for the soldiers. But their activity went far beyond this programme. The postcards, pamphlets and posters, often powerfully illustrated, which were published by the League continuously repeat the slogan "*A bas la justice militaire!*" (Down with military justice!) and the calls "Down with war!", "Down with militarism!", "Long live peace between nations!" But its influence could not extend beyond the borders of France.

The agitation for individual and collective refusal to serve and for desertion forms a large part of this propaganda, which of course is quite uneven. According to Kropotkin the military strike to be called against war is not to be merely passive but to go hand in hand with the social revolution and the defence of the revolution against the enemy abroad.^[13] This is to rebate the chief objection to anti-patriotism, or as the **Temps Nouveaux** calls it, anti-nationalism. It is well-known that Emile Henry, the anarchist and terrorist, threw his famous bomb at Carmaux in August 1892 as a warning in order to try to prevent a repetition in the miners' strike of the Fourmies massacre which had taken place the year before.^[14]

The anti-patriotic Socialist current of anti-militarism, which displays many anarchist traits^[15], is supported on the one hand by the Yonne Federation of the United Socialist Labour Party (the Yonne being an almost completely agricultural department)^[16] and on the other by a strong current within the anti-parliamentary trade unions. Anti-patriotism of course does not play such an important role in the trade unions, which are faced with the struggle against militarism on the home front, the most cruel and powerful enemy of workers on strike.

Since 1901 the Jeunesses Socialistes, the youth organizations of the Yonne, have published, in accordance with a resolution passed in 1900, a newspaper called **Pioupiou de l'Yonne**.^[17] Originally it appeared bi-annually, then quarterly, and it is designed, as stated at the head of the first numbers, "for those called up to join their regiments". All the reactionary forces at the state's disposal were let loose against the **Pioupiou**, which was distributed free to all the conscripts of the department. Legal prosecutions literally rained from the sky^[18], though they generally ended in acquittal. This in spite of the fact that the call to disobey if ordered to use arms against strikers was explicitly made. **Pioupiou**, still published by Moneret in 1905, was strongly influenced by Hervé, who, with Yvetot, was and is the leading figure and organizer of anti-patriotic anti-militarism. His work **Leur Patrie** contains a detailed and clever exposition and formulation of his ideas, and since the middle of December 1906 he has been publishing in Paris a weekly paper, **La Guerre Sociale** (The Social War), which renders vigorous aid to anti-militarism. To any war, however it might have started, he knows only one solution: *plutôt l'insurrection que la guerre*, and he fiercely attacks the attitude of the leaders of German Social-Democracy to aggressive wars.^[19] He is very far from supporting individual refusal to serve. In his case the struggle against militarism at home is relegated somewhat to the background. We shall deal elsewhere with Hervéism, which carries on its struggle with noteworthy tenacity and readiness for sacrifice.

As far as the form of Hervé's propaganda is concerned, the events of September 30, 1906 are characteristic. Hervé and a band of his supporters went to a fête at the Trocadero given by the Republican Youth of the 3rd *arrondissement* and by the French Educational League in honour of those called up to serve in the army. They made a demonstration against the patriotic-military event, came into collision with the police and were arrested.

As far as the anti-patriotic anti-militarism of the trade unions is concerned, the report laid before the Dublin Conference of trade union secretaries by the Confédération Générale du Travail gives a

good idea of its character. In striking contrast to Hervéism, it unilaterally underrates the significance of “militarism abroad”.

In this report the methods of anti-militarist educational work are divided into:

1. Solidarity work:
 1. “The soldier’s penny” (“*Sou du soldat*”);
 2. Reception and care of soldiers as guests in the trade union homes;
 3. Solidarity with those comrades who evade military service or who are victimized for rebellion against discipline.
2. Propaganda work: public meetings, social evenings, send-offs for recruits, demonstrations, posters, manifestoes, pamphlets, leaflets, the special annual illustrated number of the paper **La Voix du Peuple** (Voice of the People), the widely-circulated organ of the French Trade Union Federation, and finally the new soldiers’ handbook (**Nouveau Manuel du Soldat**), which had already been circulated in 100,000 copies in 1903. It led as everyone knows – and with the approval of the ex-Socialist Millerand – to the vigorous intervention of the administrative and judicial authorities.

The **Manuel du Soldat** was published in accordance with the decision of the trade union congress held at Algiers on September 15, 1902, by the Federation of Trade Union Houses. A second edition appeared in the same year, and a third in 1905. It ends with an appeal to the soldiers either to desert or to make anti-militarist agitation in the barracks, and to those on active service not to fire, even when ordered, on the so-called “enemy at home”, their brother workers.

The former organ of the Socialist Revolutionary Labour Party, **La Lutte Sociale** (The Social Struggle) ought to be mentioned here. It was published, probably for the first time in 1904, for the Union Fédérative du Centre by Allemane and Hervé, and was devoted to anti-militarist propaganda.

In 1905 the Socialists and syndicalists together^[20] published the red poster which appealed to the soldiers not to turn their weapons against the proletariat, and if ordered to do so to turn them instead against their commanding officers rather than their class comrades.

Finally, anti-militarist propaganda is one of the main tasks of the French Young Socialist organizations. Until 1903 each of the three French parties had its own special organization (Jeunesse Socialiste). Since 1902 the Jeunesses Syndicalistes, supported by the revolutionary trade unions, have appeared on the scene. At the moment they are in a rather chaotic situation.

The activity of the Young Socialist organization of the Yonne has already been mentioned. Since 1900 the **Conscrit**, still going in 1906, has appeared as the organ of the Revolutionary Young Socialists, and the paper **La Feuille du Soldat** (The Soldier's Paper) as the organ of the Union Fédérative des Jeunesses Socialistes du Parti Ouvrier (Federative Union of the Labour Party Young Socialists). Both call on proletarians in soldier's uniform to fulfil their duty to their class comrades. **La Feuille du Soldat** calls on them plainly to refuse to obey if ordered to turn their weapons against the working class, and to take part in the general strike when it is proclaimed. **Le Conscrit** emphatically rejects individual revolt as useless.

At the Congress of French Trade Unions in Amiens in October 1906 Delesulle was able to point out quite correctly that earlier trade union congresses had declared themselves for anti-militarist and anti-patriotic propaganda, and he announced that this position had been unanimously endorsed by the Committee. At the same congress a resolution moved by Yvetot was adopted, though opposed it is true by a large minority, calling for an intensification of anti-militarist and anti-patriotic propaganda. It was obvious that the minority was not opposed to anti-militarism or to an increase in anti-militarist propaganda but simply to the stress laid on anti-patriotic propaganda. The same thing was evident at the Congress of the French United Socialist Party held at Limoges in November 1906.

The Hervé resolution, put forward by the Yonne Federation, got only a few votes. It formulated the anti-patriotic point of view, and appealed to the comrades to reply to every declaration of war, from whichever side it might come, by a military strike and an insurrection. But the resolution put forward by Guesde, emphasizing the organically capitalist character of militarism and which considers that anti-militarism can only be furthered in the context of general Social-Democratic propaganda, was also voted down, though the minority was three times larger. It demanded in the short term a reduction in the length of service, the refusal to vote military credits and the introduction of a citizen army. Vaillant's resolution, moved by the Seine Federation, was adopted. After stating the principles adopted by the international congresses it demands international action against war and makes it a duty to use every kind of action, from parliamentary intervention and public agitation and demonstrations to the general strike and insurrection, according to the needs of the situation. At the beginning of 1906 Vaillant, as we know, published in **Le Socialiste** his famous proclamation on the occasion of the outbreak of the Morocco conflict, which ended with the cry: *plutôt l'insurrection que la guerre*.

No decision was reached regarding militarism at home, but many other indications are available which make the attitude of French Social-Democracy quite clear. The watchword is an appeal to the soldiers not to obey when they are used against strikes and against the working class. The **Manuel du Soldat** addresses the following words to the soldiers: "If they try to make you into murderers it is your duty to disobey! If you are sent against strikes, you will not shoot!" The famous words "*Vous ne tirerez pas*" – used by comrade Meslier in the great trial of anti-militarists in December 1905 are therefore only an echo of the general cry of the class-conscious Socialists or syndicalists.

The appeal to conscripts issued jointly by Socialists and syndicalists in 1905 and mentioned above contains a drastic and fearless solution of the problem, calling on soldiers not to use their weapons against the working class, but rather to turn them against the officers

who gave them that order. When this appeal was discussed in the Chamber, Sembat, in the name of the Socialists, declared: "I am asked what my opinion is regarding the advice to fire on officers. My answer is that when an officer has given the order to fire on strikers, I approve of this advice. And Lafargue has repeatedly endorsed this standpoint *in L'Humanité* in short, sharp terms.

The numerous trials of anti-militarists in France, which until recently almost always ended in acquittal, were a considerable help to propaganda. The **Pioupiou** trials have been dealt with above. Yvetot, having been acquitted ten times, was eventually convicted by a jury of the lower Loire in 1904 in connection with an anti-militarist speech and sentenced to – a fine of 100 Francs. But later he too became acquainted with prison life. In 1905 two anarchists were arrested in Aix. One of them was condemned to three months' imprisonment for an anti-militarist manifesto which had been posted up on the walls of Marseilles. Morel and Frimat were also imprisoned, and prison sentences were also passed in Brest, Armentières and Limoges.^[21] In the spring of 1906 convictions followed in Toulon and Rheims. The special number of the **Voix du Peuple** printed for recruits has been repeatedly seized. In October 1906 the editor, Vignaud, was arrested. Above all we should note the great anti-militarist trial in Paris in December 1905, at which Hervé and 25 others were sentenced to prison terms totalling 36 years, together with fines amounting to 2,500 Francs. But these severe sentences were not fully enforced.

Anti-militarist propaganda has a massive pamphlet literature at its disposal. Apart from the **Temps Nouveaux**, there are the *Librairie & Propagande Socialiste*, the *Société nouvelle de Librairie et d'Édition* (Georges Bellais), the *Librairie die Parti Socialiste (S.F.I.O.)* and the Stock publishing house which have made a specially important contribution to the publication of such pamphlets.

The successes of anti-militarist propaganda in France are considerable. In this connection we must not overestimate the significance of the fact that here and there an officer openly

expresses anti-militarist opinions and takes the consequences in a spirit of great selflessness.^[22] Such individual acts are not of great interest in connection with a purely proletarian class movement such as we take anti-militarism to be in France (as opposed to Russia). More important is the fact that the number of cases of desertion, of soldiers who refuse to serve or obey orders and who make anti-militarist demonstrations is on the increase. Very harsh sentences are sometimes passed in these cases,^[23] on other occasions sentences which, from the standpoint of German conditions, are amazingly mild. Thus two marines were sentenced in October 1906 to 15 and 60 days' imprisonment respectively by a court martial in Cherbourg for having exclaimed in front of a patriotic monument: "Down with the army, down with the officers, we don't need an army!"

We will give only a few details here. On May 3, 1905, 61 men of the 10th Company of the 32nd Infantry Regiment simply left the barracks for a place nearby because of bad food and ill-treatment. In September 1906 the soldiers arranged a demonstration in connection with the suicide of a reservist in the Compiègne garrison, sang the *Internationale* and insulted the officers. At the beginning of August 1906 the **Eclair** published a circular of the War Minister Etienne addressed to the corps commanders. He informs them that the N.C.O.s leaving the infantry school at Saint-Maixent^[24] had expressed anti-militarist ideas and explained that they were remaining in the army in order to win over adherents to their ideas. Above all we must draw attention to a number of strikes – for example at Durtkirk, Le Creusot, Longwy (Merrheim!) and Montceau-les-Mines – when the soldiers called in to intervene declared their solidarity with the strikers. It is no wonder that the **Nouvelliste do Rouen** treats the effect of Social-Democracy on the army as "a very dangerous wound on the body of France which requires the most drastic treatment".^[25]

In comparison with German conditions the War Minister Etienne used very moderate terms in the above mentioned circular when speaking of the danger of anti-militarism and the methods of fighting it. And it cannot be denied that in France great scope has been given

to anti-militarism with regard to the constitutional right of free expression of opinion. The reports of the trials of anti-militarists are very instructive in this connection. We remember how a few years ago the Socialist Fournière was permitted to lecture on social politics to the Polytechnic officers' school. And quite recently the lectures for officers at the School for Social Studies in Paris, in which Captain Demonge spoke quite openly and even in revolutionary terms against militarism, caused the flesh of our strict and narrow-minded militarists to creep. If we add the impending limitation of the scope of military justice and of the *biribi*, together with the government bill concerning the shortening of the term of service for the reserve and the militia (though it is true that this was rejected), and finally Picart's plan for the democratization of the officer corps by the realization of an *unité d'origin* of officers and non-commissioned officers^[26] – then France might appear to be an El Dorado of militarism. The position of Clemenceau^[3*] towards anti-militarism – he is the president of a ministry in which sit two "Socialists", once *amor et deliciae* of all social optimists – shows that it is not a question of a fundamental change in militarism, but simply of a change in form, due for the most part to anti-clericalism.

ITALY

The Italian labour movement in its different tendencies bears some resemblance to the French movement. Here too, together with the normal political party movement, we find anarchist offshoots and an anti-patriotic syndicalist movement which is anti-parliamentary and closely related to anarchism. The anti-militarist movement is also divided according to the same criteria. It goes back some time, but has only recently been systematically taken in hand by the Party. We must first mention the Young Socialist organizations and above all the Federazione Nazionale Giovanile Socialism, with headquarters in Rome, and to which a number of provincial federations are affiliated. ^[27] It published the **Gioventu Socialista** (Socialist Youth), edited by

Paolo Orano, and has been active from the outset in the field of anti-militarism, like the Belgian Young Guards.^[28]

In 1905 the Leghe delle Future Conscritti was founded as a special anti-militarist organization, subsidiary to the National Federation with which it is closely connected. Both organizations are recognized by the Party.

At a session of the Party executive in Rome in October 1905 the following resolution moved by Ferri was passed, with only one vote against:

The Party executive protests against police prosecution of Socialists and of their press in connection with the recent anti-militarist demonstrations. It notes with satisfaction the enthusiasm with which the Young Socialist organizations have carried on the anti-militarist agitation called for by the Party, and resolves that the whole Party, with the help of the executive, is to take part in this agitation. The aim is not merely to enlighten public opinion on the fact that huge amounts of state money are being wasted on the military administration, but above all to persuade the recruits and soldiers that, without ignoring their duty to defend the country, they should not co-operate in the murder of workers. These murders, in their frequency and cruelty, are an insult to our land.

Apart from this, the Rome Party Congress of October 1906 gave an idea of the general way in which anti-militarist propaganda is carried on in Italy. Anti-militarism was a special item on the agenda. Two motions were presented. That of the syndicalist Bianchi read : "The ninth Congress of the Socialist Party, in the discussion on militarism, approves the activity and propaganda methods used by the Italian Young Socialist organizations." The other motion was presented by Romualdi, editor of **Avanti**, and states: "Congress endorses the Party's anti-militarist traditions, and considers it necessary – in view of the refusal of the bourgeoisie to recognize that the army must stand on a position of genuine neutrality in the struggle between

labour and capital – that, in order to prevent the murder of workers and the breaking of strikes, an agitational movement should be started with the aim of dissuading the young workers from taking up their arms in such situations and becoming strike-breakers. At the same time Congress considers it necessary to make propaganda among the workers for the idea that they should not use violence against the troops, both in order to avoid a reaction on the part of the soldiers and to prove that a common bond of brotherhood unites the striking workers and the soldiers.”

Anti-patriotic as well as anarchist anti-militarism was represented in the discussion, but the strictly Social-Democratic variety was dominant, while anti-militarist agitation among the soldiers was only opposed by a few delegates using arguments similar to those heard at the 1904 Bremen Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party. The representatives of the Young Socialist organization explained that their comrades did not carry on anti-militarist propaganda according to Hervé’s method, but in order to reduce the army bill and to awaken a sense of solidarity between soldiers and workers. Finally it was decided not to put the motion of Fend and Turad to the vote, but to remit the question to the Party executive for consideration. At the same time it is very important to note that Ferri’s integralist resolution, which was adopted at the Congress by an overwhelming majority, contains the following passage:

The Party is developing political activity whose object is: to intensify anti-clerical and anti-monarchical propaganda in view of the present situation and of the growing clericalism of the government; to intensify anti-militarist agitation, whose aim is the education of Italian youth in socialism, in order to neutralize the tendency of the ruling classes to use the army as an instrument of coercion against the proletariat.

In Italy too anti-militarist agitation has made the army unreliable as a weapon against the so-called enemy at home. But in Italy also class justice has been wed, in the form of numerous trials and the infliction

of severe punishments, to attack anti-militarists both inside and outside of the army. The Turin events of 1905 are well known.

SWITZERLAND

Anti-militarism has made great strides in Switzerland, together with the ever more frequent use of soldiers in strikes.

At the Conference of the Swiss Social-Democratic Party held at Olten in October 1903, a resolution was drafted which takes up the standard position towards war and demands a military constitution which “clearly determines the rights and duties of the state and of its citizens”, and declares that the use of the army in strikes cannot be tolerated.

Dissatisfaction with this resolution led in April 1904 to the convocation of the Lucerne Congress, which set out, among others, the following demands:

A considerable reduction in military expenditure, the people to decide on questions of expenditure above a total of one million Francs, an improvement in the military and economic position of the soldier, abolition of military justice, prohibition of the use of troops in strikes.

The conference described it as the duty of the Party to use every means available to attain these goals, but without any more definite indication of those means.

The intervention of the military in strikes at La Chaux-de-Fonds and the Ricken made greater activity necessary, as well as the adoption of a clearer slogan. Heated discussions took place in meetings. The Federal Committee of the Trade Union Federation published a leaflet on September 15, 1904 which contained the sentences:

In all cases we must try to persuade the soldiers not to fire on their fellow workers, not to use their weapons against them, and not only to refuse to obey on these occasions but also to attempt with every means to prevent such murder. Only then will they be acting in the spirit of our Federal Constitution, which states that the soldier in uniform is first of all a citizen.

The Party Conference which took place soon after at Zurich passed the following resolution:

The Social-Democratic Party calls upon the soldiers, when they are mobilized against strikes, to bear in mind their solidarity with the workers and not allow themselves to be used in actions which would vitiate the right of their class comrades to strike and hold meetings.

The following Party Conference at Geneva instructed the Party executive to draft a resolution on the military question for the next conference.

In the meantime anti-militarist agitation was being organized and systematized. In 1905 a Swiss Anti-militarist League was established, whose object is:

1. To enlighten the workers to the fact that in bourgeois society the army acts as a hindrance to the liberation of the working class;
2. To use all means suitable in rendering the army harmless as far as its use as a means of power by the capitalists is concerned.

The first congress was held in October 1905 and the League has grown rapidly since then. It issues leaflets to the workers' organizations and pamphlets addressed to agricultural and industrial workers, and displays considerable activity. Among the pamphlets we must make special mention of the widely circulated and almost classic text, **The Watchdog of Capitalism**.

In accordance with the decision of the Lucerne Congress of January 1906 preparations were put in hand for a central library, as well as for a translation of Hervé's **Leur Patrie**. The League also publishes the **Vorposten**, which is devoted, and with great skill, to anti-militarist agitation.^[29] As far as the question of militarism abroad is concerned, the League takes up the standpoint which has been much argued over: that although only the victory of socialism can abolish war, something must be done while this victory is not achieved to prevent the "mutual slaughter of and by those without property at the command of those who possess it", and that the only thing that is of use in this connection is the "withdrawal of military labour power", that is, the military strike. As far as the question of militarism at home is concerned, they of course make the appeal: "*Vous ne tirerez pas!*"^[30] The second proposal is naturally much more disagreeable to capitalism, especially in Switzerland, than the first. But it is still a fact that a favourite manoeuvre of the bourgeoisie is to try to work its mill of counter-agitation with "patriotic" wind, which it endeavours to raise by stamping this tendency as "unpatriotic", "treacherous" and resulting in the "disarming of the nation in the face of the enemy abroad".^[31]

The Party Conference at Aarau held in February 1906 was the occasion of a very interesting anti-militarist debate. It came to light that in Switzerland too the idea of the military strike and of a refusal to take part in army service against other countries has its supporters. The following important resolution was passed.

(1) The Social-Democratic Party strives together with the Social-Democratic Parties of other countries to eliminate all possibilities of war among the civilized peoples as well as all instruments of war. It demands that international conflicts be settled by arbitration.

(2) As long as this state of affairs has not been established among the peoples of central Europe, the Party recognizes only a citizen army whose sole purpose is to protect the country from external attack.

(3) The Party protests against the use of soldiers in strikes. Since this misuse has in fact taken place in recent years, it demands guarantees against its repetition. As long as these guarantees are not forthcoming, the Party advises the soldiers to refuse to obey when ordered to attack workers on strike or to draw weapons against them. The Social-Democratic Party will in such cases attempt as far as possible to aid the individual concerned and his family with regard to the financial consequences, and for this purpose will get in touch with the trade union organizations. The Party considers that the best guarantee against the use of troops in cases of strikes lies in the strengthening of its political power at commune and state level.

(4) The Party demands an army organization which is based upon general military service, which is in harmony with democratic institutions and does not come into contradiction with the principle that all have equal rights under the constitution. It demands the reduction of military expenditure and opposes all expenditure not absolutely necessary for national defence.

As a consequence of this resolution it was decided to establish a fund for the support of army resisters.

The first, second and fourth paragraphs of this resolution practically cover the draft resolution submitted by the Party executive.^[32] The Party Conference however inserted paragraph 3 in the draft resolution, the passage which calls on soldiers to disobey orders in the event of intervention in strikes. The conference also made the wording of the resolution sharper and more definite, in accordance with the demand made in the **Vorposten**.

The Social-Democrats of the Grütli, as is known, take up for the most part a thoroughly petty-bourgeois attitude to militarism. They condemn for example the refusal to vote for the budget! It will not be surprising if on the military question they are found to be so light in weight that they will be blown out of the Party like chaff. The new

Party split which was rumoured to be going to take place at the Aarau conference has so far been avoided, in spite of the vigorous anti-militarist position taken up by the conference.

The publications of the study group of the workers' circle of Saint-Imier are also noteworthy. Among them one can find the useful pamphlet **The Army and Strikes**. The Young Socialist organizations, which probably only exist in French Switzerland, also play a certain role. The journal **La Jeunesse Socialiste** has been published in Lausanne since 1903 by a number of these organizations, but recently it has lost the character of a Young Socialist paper. We must also mention the Youth Society founded and directed in Zurich by the comrade and pastor Pflüger.

It is evident that in Switzerland too anarchism directs its attention to anti-militarism. There is an anarchist anti-militarist group in Geneva, apparently the only group in the whole of Switzerland which is affiliated to the International Anti-militarist Association, which we shall speak of later. The anarchist paper **Weckruf**, which is published in Zurich and has been appearing since 1902, considers anti-militarist agitation – in the anarchist sense, of course – as one of its main tasks. We should not overlook the fact that it is at least a kind of proletarian anarchism which is being put forward here – or rather, that the anti-militarist arguments put forward by **Weckruf** have a largely proletarian character. The successes of Swiss anti-militarism, shown especially by the Geneva and Zurich strikes, have already been mentioned, together with the subsequent memorable action of the system of justice. In addition let us note the fact that many proletarian members of the militia refused to march against the masons' strike at La Chaux-de-Fonds. In spite of the "sympathy" of so-called public opinion, severe sentences were passed on six of the militiamen by military justice. [\[33\]](#)

FOOTNOTES

[1.](#) We have before us one of the leaflets issued by the Antwerp branch of the Socialist Labour Party in 1886. It goes straight to the

essential point, calling on the soldiers to refuse to obey an order to fire on the people.

2. In regard to this activity see **La procès de la caserne**, Volksdrukkerij, Ghent 1905.

3. **De Loteling** and **De Kazerne** since 1887, **Le Caserne** since 1893, **La Conscrit** since 1899.

4. The Flemish papers were placed under the control of the Flemish Federation of the Socialist Young Guards in Ghent.

5. Cf. Housiaux in **Die Neue Zeit**, April 23, 1904, vol.2, pp.110ff., and the scattered congress reports. Three provincial federations exist: the Flemish (about 1,000 members), the Brabant (about 500 members) and the Walloon (about 8,000 members). The last was founded in September 1905. The Liege Congress of 1905 dissolved the National Council, which was reconstituted in rather different form in 1906 – the Flemish and Walloon Federations each elect a representative, and the National Congress elects the third (the National Secretary).

6. We need not consider the **Etoile Socialiste** here.

7. Its predecessor was the journal **Contre le militarisme, pour le socialisme**.

8. In 16 pages!

9. During the process of the drawing of lots in 1906 the streets were plastered with some 20,000 explanatory posters and 80,000 illustrated posters.

10. In 1906 the print of **La Conscrit** was over 68,000, that of **Do Loteling** about 30,000, **La Caserne** slightly less. In 1905 100,000 copies of **La Caserne** were distributed for special purposes.

11. Cf. **La procès de la caserne**.

[12.](#) On the debate, in which Vandervelde's intervention was decisive, see **Mouvement Socialiste** for August 15, 1903, pp.594 if., and **La Jeunesse Socialiste** for August 1903.

[13.](#) **Les Temps Nouveaux**, October 28, 1905.

[14.](#) In this connection see the pamphlet **Le patriotisme**, Libertaire Publications, Paris.

[15.](#) **Les Temps Nouveaux** takes a very friendly attitude towards it.

[16.](#) **Leur Patrie**, p.246. This is the explanation of the objection frequently made against Hervé that his support in the Yonne is to be explained by the old and deeply-rooted dislike of the peasants for military service.

[17.](#) **Piouiou** – a popular expression for “recruit”, with a certain affectionate and familiar connotation.

[18.](#) Cf. **La Piouiou en cour d'Assises** (The Recruit before the Jury), Auxerre 1904.

[19.](#) On Hervé's anti-parliamentarism, see **La Vie Socialiste**, pp.97ff. In **Mouvement Socialiste**, June 1, 1905, Fages says that the so-called *campagne antipatriotique* is in reality a *campagne anticapitaliste*.

[20.](#) With the co-operation of the *Association Internationale Antimilitariste*.

[21.](#) Cf. **Les Temps Nouveaux**, no.12, 1905. On the prosecutions against Loquier and Lemaire at Epinal and Amiens, see **ibid.**, no.26, 1905.

[22.](#) The case of Merrheim deserves special mention. At a strike at Longwy he made a direct appeal to his infantrymen to use no violence against the strikers even if they should provoke or attack the soldiers.

[23.](#) Especially in Algiers the death penalty is imposed for the slightest offence! Cf. the Besançon affair, **L'Humanité**, December 11, 1906.

[24.](#) Whose abolition is planned.

[25.](#) Cf. von Zepelin in the **Kreuz-Zeitung**, December 23, 1906.

[26.](#) They want first of all to put the military schools on the same basis. There will be only one school for each branch of the army, to be attended by both officers and N.C.O.s. This of course brings horror to our reactionaries (**Deutsche Tageszeitung**, December 22, 1906).

[27.](#) At the Milan Congress in September 1906 5 provincial organizations and 24 sections from northern Italy were represented, comprising 2,400 members.

[28.](#) In this connection see the proceedings of the Milan Congress.

[29.](#) The League has a very good song which goes to the tune of *Heil dir im Siegerkranz*.

[30.](#) Cf. **Vorposten**, *The Draft Resolution of the Party Committee*.

[31.](#) See the **Leipziger Volkszeitung**, January 30, 1906, *A Split in Swedish Social-Democracy?*

[32.](#) On the struggles in the Party Committee over the drafting of the proposed resolution, see the **Leipziger Volkszeitung**, December 28, 1905.

[33.](#) Cf. also Leo Tolstoy's **An die Soldaten und jungen Leute**, Berlin-Charlottenburg 1906, pp.15-16 (cases of individual refusal to serve), and **Les Temps Nouveaux**, no.26, 1905 (four months' imprisonment without deduction of time spent in custody, and two years' loss of civil rights).

ADDITIONAL NOTES BY THE TRANSLATOR

[1*](#). [HERVÉ, GUSTAVE](#) (1871-1944). A university teacher, he was forced to leave his post as a consequence of legal proceedings arising out of his anti-militarist opinions. Founded the paper *La Guerre sociale*. Later became an ardent patriot, left the Socialist Party in 1916, supported Clemenceau. In 1927 created the fascist National Socialist Party in France.

[2*](#). [KROPOTKIN, PRINCE](#) (1842-1921). Russian revolutionist, and a so-called scientific anarchist. Welcomed the First War, believing it would destroy the obsolete nation-state form. Hostile to the Bolshevik revolution.

[3*](#). [CLEMENCEAU, GEORGES](#) (1841-1929). Radical, French Minister of the Interior from 1906. Became known as the strong man of French politics, especially because of his use of the army in social conflicts at home and his support for the general strengthening of the armed forces. Headed the French government from 1917 to 1920.

2. ANTI-MILITARISM ABROAD WITH SPECIAL REGARD TO THE YOUNG SOCIALIST ORGANIZATIONS (PART 2)

AUSTRIA

A specifically anti-militarist movement in Austria can only be said to have existed since the Young Socialist movement came into being. This movement was apparently founded in Vienna at the beginning of 1894 with the establishment of a Society of Young Assistant Workers. This society directed its agitation against the national Youth Societies and the Catholic Youth Associations and was soon copied in other places, so that since October 15, 1902 it has been possible to publish the paper **Der jugendliche Arbeiter**, first as a bi-monthly, later monthly but bigger, as the organ representing the interests of the young workers of Austria. At Easter 1903 the Imperial Union of the Young Workers of Austria was founded, embracing all the local societies. Since April 1, 1903 **Der jugendliche Arbeiter** has been the official organ of this Imperial Union. A glance at the volumes of this cleverly edited paper shows that it understands how best to wage the struggle against militarism among young people.

We must further draw attention to the popular agitational pamphlet mentioned above and entitled **Lustig ist's Soldatenleben** (Merry is the Soldier's Life), which was published in Vienna as early as 1896. It contains an excellent description of the sins of militarism in their special Austrian version and exposes them in merciless fashion. We must also mention the collection *Lichtstrahlen* issued by the same publisher, especially two pamphlets: **200 Millions for New Guns? Who is responsible and who will have to pay?** and **The Murderous and Ruinous Course of Austrian Militarism**. In this context we must also note the mass distribution of copies of Daszynski's speech to the Reichsrat on September 25, 1903, under the title *Down with Dualism and Militarism!*

Czech anti-militarism deserves special mention. Here too the Young Socialist movement plays an essential role. A youth paper, **Sbornik Mládeže**, has been appearing since May 1, 1900. The Czech Young Socialist organizations have explicitly named anti-militarism as one of their tasks. The Social-Democratic Party Congress held in Budweis in 1900 refused, it is true, to permit the formation of special organizations of young workers. But this was aimed only at organizations outside the Party and led to a strengthening of ties between the Young Socialists and the general Party movement. The systematic organization of young people is making progress. In many places committees were formed with the special task of carrying on agitation among the young workers. From May 15, 1901 the paper *Sbornik Mládeže* appeared monthly; since January 1, 1905 it has been appearing bi-monthly. The Prague Conference of the Social-Democratic Party held in 1902 came out once more in favour of the principle of carrying on special agitation among young people and for organizing them within the Party.

In 1903 a Union of Workers' Athletic Clubs was founded, and this too concerns itself especially with young people. A permanent committee for agitation was founded in Prague in December 1904, and other towns followed suit.

On April 29 the first conference of the Czech Social-Democratic Youth was held in Prague; 22 Young Socialist committees were represented by 127 delegates. Agitational work followed, carried on in numerous private and public meetings. In *Sbornik Mládeže* a special column is devoted to the question of militarism, and this has frequently been the cause of its confiscation.^[1] In Prague a Workers' Academy has been established which is well attended. Conflicts between nationalism and militarism (the language question and the victimization of individual soldiers) intensify the anti-militarist tendencies. Here we will single out for special mention the case of the soldier called Nemrava who refused to bear arms and was accordingly punished. Processions of recruits dressed in mourning who drove through the towns in red-trimmed waggons accompanied by funeral music became a regular occurrence.

The events which have taken place during the election campaigns of recent years prove that the army can no longer be regarded as completely reliable in its support of reaction and of the ruling classes.

HUNGARY

In Hungary, where the Party and the trade unions are one and the same thing, or rather, where the Party only exists in the form of the trade unions, a youth movement was founded in Budapest in 1894 in the form of unattached branches of apprentices' organizations. It was under the direction of adults and its primary aim was education, but it collapsed in 1897 as a consequence of the terrible persecution of Socialists carried out under Bánffy, the "saviour of the bourgeoisie". In 1899, after Bánffy's fall, branches of the Workers' Educational Association were started for young workers. They too of course devoted themselves to the education of their members, and they too were destroyed after brutal persecution by the police and courts in the winter of 1901-2. The young people were scattered among the general workers' educational and training organizations.

The powerful economic boom of 1904, during which the number of workers organized in trade unions increased five-fold (from 10,000 to 52,410 members), carried the youth movement with the tide. The movement, which is still on the increase, also acquired a socio-political character. The outward form was that of educational societies or of independent organizations (in the provinces), or (in some places, for example in Pressburg) of athletic clubs. In spite of all chicanery, brutality, surprise attacks, legal convictions and confiscations, the organizations flourished. A paper, **Az Ifjú Munkás** (The Young Worker), was founded with the assistance of adult workers. It represents the corner-stone of the movement, which is everywhere being helped out by the Party, and appears at present in a circulation of around 1,500. The Union of Young Workers was founded in April 1906, but at this moment – December 1906 – is still awaiting the ministerial sanction for which it has applied. These organizations stand openly for socialism, but it has unfortunately not

been possible to establish whether they carry on specifically anti-militarist propaganda, and if so what form it takes.

HOLLAND

Here militarism has not yet – apart from the attempt to break the great railway strike of 1903 – taken on a specially oppressive form. Thus the Dutch Young Socialist Union (De Zaaier, Bond voor Jonge Arbeiders en Arbeidsters in Nederland),^[2] which was founded in 1900 (temporarily suspended in 1903 and reorganized in 1906), has relegated anti-militarist activity to a somewhat subsidiary position.

In its paper **De Zaaier**,^[3] founded in 1906 and excellently edited by Roland-Hoist, the struggle against militarism nevertheless takes up a considerable space.

In the winter of 1902-3, Holland's "red winter", a great number of anti-militarist meetings were held by De Zaaier, especially in Amsterdam with comrade Roland-Holst. At the De Zaaier Congress of April 8, 1906, held in Utrecht, a resolution which described the class character of militarism was unanimously passed. The Congress appealed to the Union to educate the young workers in regard to this characteristic by means of meetings, courses of lectures, especially in the recruiting period, and by leaflets and manifestoes, and as far as possible to act together with the Social-Democratic Party in this propaganda work. Meetings against militarism are held every year in October when the recruits are called up. At the beginning of 1906 a meeting was held in Amsterdam by De Zaaier at which, after a speech by Mendels, a sharp demarcation line was drawn in regard to anarchist anti-militarism.

Both the Party Congresses and those of the trade unions have occupied themselves to a considerable degree with the question of anti-militarism, and especially with that of propaganda directed to the soldiers.^[4]

The Socialistische Jongelieden Bond has existed for a long time in Holland. It publishes (or at least used to publish) the paper **De Jonge Werker**, edited by the Communist-anarchist Wink. It is under general anarchist influence, but does not openly endorse anarchism. Its membership is very small, and it seems always to be in the process of re-organization. The typically anarchist form of anti-militarism also exists, conspicuously in the person of Nieuwenhuis. [1*]

There also exists a Bond van Miliciens en Oud-Miliciens, which since 1903 has been publishing the monthly paper **De Milicien**. This League is a kind of politically neutral training organization with a programme directed towards the elimination of military abuses. [5] It has a naval counterpart in the form of the Matrozenbond, whose journal **Het Anker** is edited by comrade Meyer and is published at Helder. This organization has done a great deal of good in the way of improving the life of the sailors, and has even inspired strike movements. At times it has come up against sharp attacks by the state authorities – the leaders being punished and the sale of the **Anker** on board ship prohibited. It has often occupied the discussion of the Chamber.

SWEDEN

The Social-Democratic youth movement made its appearance in Sweden in the mid-'nineties. The Socialist Youth Clubs amalgamated to form the Young Socialist Union, whose organ was **Brand** and whose headquarters were situated in Landskrona. The Party did not look on this Union very favourably, and it gradually moved into anarchist channels. This is evident from its position on national defence and militarism abroad. An opposition movement was founded at Malmö in 1903, the excellent Social-Democratic Youth Association. Since January 1, 1906 it has published the paper **Fram** (Forward), a very full and solid monthly which costs only 10 öre. But it finds almost no support in the Party. From 1903 to 1906 it grew from seven clubs with around 450 members to 300-400 clubs with

between 14,000 and 15,000 members. By the end of 1906 it numbered some 25,000, with a large number of local organizations. **Fram** has a circulation of between 35,000 and 40,000 copies. The Socialist Union has about 10,000 members, and **Brand** (which is much smaller than **Fram** and inferior from the point of view of its contents) has a circulation of 10,000-12,000 copies.

Both organizations, in accordance with their statutes, have inscribed anti-militarism on their banners. To this end they use for the most part the printed word. The Social-Democratic Youth issues numerous pamphlets under the name of the Malmö Socialdemokratiska Ungdomsforbundets Förlag, including **Ned med Wapnen** (Down with Weapons) by Z. Höglund and **Socialdemokratie och Anarchism** by Kate Dalström. According to **Fram** of March 1906, military expenditure was attacked on the grounds that the money thus wasted could be used for the benefit of “the small agricultural concerns, for the education of the people and for insuring the workers”! During the crisis of the Swedish-Norwegian Union, the first Congress of the Social-Democratic Youth, held in 1905 in Stockholm, was the occasion of an excellent discussion on (among other things) the military question.^[6] It issued the well-known appeal *Down with arms!*, which called on the proletariat to refuse to serve in the army in case of a war with Norway – for which comrade Z. Höglund was to suffer nine months’ imprisonment.

The Liberal ministry, headed by the “half-Socialist” Staaff (like the “Socialist” Millerand in France and recently the Clemenceau-Briand-Viviani ministry) immediately reacted and thus acknowledged the importance of the movement. In May 1906 the infamous muzzling or anarchist law was passed, which we shall speak of elsewhere, and severe sentences soon rained down. On September 27, 1906, Sundström was condemned by the Norrköping municipal court to one year’s imprisonment with hard labour for having published a carefully written leaflet addressed to young men liable for military service. This sentence was the occasion, not only of anti-militarist demonstrations among soldiers, but also of an impressive protest demonstration in Norrköping. The police dispersed it with force. But

the sentence also produced another, very funny effect, which confirmed the truth of the proverb: "He from whom God takes away an office is given back his senses." Staaff's ministerial glory did not last long. The cold winds of the winter following his fall brought him to his senses. The fire of class justice which, as minister, he had fondly kindled, he now as a plain citizen tried to extinguish with fire-buckets full of lawyer's eloquence. In December 1906 he undertook the defence of comrade Sundström when his appeal was heard before the higher court of Jönköping, trying to prove to the court that the law had not been properly interpreted. And the sentence was indeed reduced to six months! In the summer of 1906 there followed the conviction of comrade Olsson, who was sentenced to six months' imprisonment by the Jönköping municipal court for having written an anti-militarist leaflet. At the end of September the Young Socialists arranged anti-militarist demonstrations in Helsingborg and Bjuf in order to give a reception to the men who had been discharged and transferred to the reserve. Armed police intervened. Many of the participants in the Helsingborg demonstration of September 29 were sentenced by the municipal court at the end of October to between 13 months' and 3 years' imprisonment. These events are very promising beginnings which however can only influence the form and not the nature and success of anti-militarist propaganda in Sweden.

On October 14, 1906 interesting negotiations were carded on between the two organizations, especially with regard to the anti-militarist question, with a view to unification.^[7]

NORWAY

Local Young organizations have existed in Norway for years, for instance at Christiania, Drammen, Larvik and Trondhjem. Since June 1901 the Kristiania Socialdemokratiske Ungdomslag has been publishing the excellent anti-militarist monthly (later quarterly) **Det Tyvende Aarhundrede**.^[8] A Federation of Young Socialist organizations (the Norges Socialdemokratiske Ungdomsforbund), with headquarters at Christiania, was founded at the Drammen Congress in June 1903. It is said to have about 2,000 members,

including many girls. It publishes a monthly called the **Jung-Socialist**, edited by Solberg. Its aim is the furtherance of general, social and political education, and in particular the fight against militarism. Its position on militarism is that of the Social-Democratic Party. At its Whitsun 1905 Congress a motion which explicitly stated that the anti-militarist struggle in every form should figure among its goals was rejected.

In connection with the specific anti-militarist activity of the Federation we should mention the pamphlet of the Norwegian lieutenant Michael Puntervold, which was widely circulated in the garrison towns. The following recent event should also be related.

On October 10, 1906, an anti-militarist meeting was called at Christiania by the local Social-Democratic youth association. It was announced by means of leaflets distributed in all the barracks and headed: "Orders for the mobilization of all officers and men". In spite of a prohibition on the part of the military authorities the meeting was well attended. Sundström and Lieutenant Puntervold (who is in fact one of the editors of the **Socialdemokrat**) were among the speakers, which itself was characteristic, though Puntervold had by this time already handed in his resignation from the army. Einar Li, another editor of the paper, who had refused to join the army and was being prosecuted in this connection, also spoke.

DENMARK

In Denmark too the Young Socialist organizations are the main agents of anti-militarist propaganda. They developed in opposition to the reactionary youth movements, and especially to the Christian Youth Associations which had a great number of members.

The first Young Socialist organization was founded in Jutland in 1893 or 1894, but it did not come into prominence until the end of the decade. Around the turn of the century a number of Social-

Democratic *Fremskridtsklebber* sprang up in the smaller communities of Jutland, and these worked in close liaison.

In 1900 an Ungdomsforening (Young People's Society) was founded at Copenhagen. In the spring of 1904 the local organizations in Copenhagen founded the Socialistik Ungdomsforbund i Danmark, which publishes a monthly paper called **Ny Tid** (New Times). This federation was originally incorporated in the Party and connected with the Swedish and Norwegian organizations. At the time when it was founded it counted 19 local groups. It divided the country into three districts for purposes of agitation, and devoted special attention to anti-militarist propaganda. Of its appeals – which had to be printed in Sweden, since no printer in Denmark would take on the task – 15 were seized one after another, but soon released again. Since militarist quarters were urging the foundation of a militaristic youth organization, anti-militarist agitation on a large scale was launched in April 1906. Apart from meetings, 50,000 copies of **Ny Tid** were distributed over the whole country, especially to soldiers returning from leave. Complications and arrests of course followed.

The Socialist Union gradually ran into anarchist channels, in an even more marked manner than in Sweden. The Congress of April 20-21, 1905, at which 7 clubs with about 500 members were represented, took up an attitude sharply antagonistic to the Social-Democratic Party. This attitude probably does not correspond to the position of the individual clubs, though it was the cause of the foundation in Copenhagen of a specifically Social-Democratic Youth Club, whose aim is above all the education and instruction of young workers and the fight against capitalism and anarchism. It is linked organizationally with the Party. The Party Congress held at Easter 1906 demanded the foundation of similar organizations throughout the country, and guaranteed moral and material support.^[9]

AMERICA

The following facts are to be reported from the United States of America:

The programme of the Social-Democratic Party of North America, founded in 1874, does not contain any specific mention of militarism, which had not yet made itself conspicuous. In 1879, after the strike battle referred to earlier had been fought, a number of workers' military societies were founded by the Chicago and Cincinnati Socialists, under the influence of the ideas of Bakunin.^[2*] They were called "Education and Defence Societies", and were vigorously opposed by the Party.

In the following period a large number of different ideas were expressed as to how to deal with the army and militia. The trade unions especially tried to keep aloof from all members of the standing army because of the frequent intervention of the army in strikes. Others expressed the opinion that it was precisely through close contacts with the members of the army that these dangers could be minimized.^[10]

The Socialist Labour Party of North America considers both anti-militarism and anti-clericalism to be secondary tasks as far as the labour movement is concerned. Militarism is treated not as an unimportant but simply as a subsidiary question, and the Party is decided that it will not become a simple anti-militarist organization. Lee remarks that although up to 1905 not a great deal of socialist propaganda had been done among the soldiers and militiamen, the Party had at least made a start on agitation.

In the 1904 Chicago platform of the Socialist Party the following demand is characteristically made in the minimum programme under paragraph 5: "Prevention of the use of the army against workers on strike". Emphasis is also laid on the international solidarity of the workers.^[11]

SPAIN

Here too there is not much to report. In anti-militarist agitation, as in the Young Socialist organizations generally, the characteristic features of the situation are a lack of clarity, splits and confusion –

and anarchism. This is a consequence of the generally muddled situation in the Party. There is, however, one youth organization which is recognized by the Social-Democratic Party, the Federación Nacional de Juventudes Socialistas, whose central committee is based in the industrial town of Bilbao. According to the statutes issued in 1906 its aims are education of young people in accordance with socialist principles and the use of those so trained in the Party.

FINLAND

In the spring of 1906 a club for young workers, a branch of the local Swedish Workers' Association, was founded in Helsingfors, which immediately attracted 40 members. On March 10, 1906, the club – which had meanwhile grown to 70 members – discussed the proposal put forward by **Fram** concerning affiliation with the Swedish association. The proposal was sympathetically received but rejected for technical reasons.^[12] The club published the agitational paper **Kamrat**. It supported the foundation of other clubs in the country, and of a union which would unite all the Finnish organizations. The first Congress of Finnish Young Socialist Organizations was held at Tammerfors on December 9, 1906. The affiliation of the Union of Young Workers of Finnish Nationality to the Labour Party was decided on, and the requirement to carry on the “struggle against militarism in all its forms” was added to the statutes.

RUSSIA

Russia is a special case and cannot be dealt with in detail here. A few general remarks have already been made. Let us simply repeat that the position of the officers *vis-à-vis* the Russian revolution is quite different from their position *vis-à-vis* the labour movement. Thus, the position taken up by Plekhanov in the **Diary of a Social-Democrat**, no.7, on agitation among the officers is consistent in itself. The significance of the anti-militarist movement in Russia is very considerable, and the movement itself forms part of the boundless great revolution.

THE INTERNATIONAL ANTI-MILITARIST MOVEMENT

It was apparently the French anarchists who first suggested the holding of an international anti-militarist congress, with a view to founding an international association. The motive was first of all the desire to establish on a more solid basis the maintenance of deserters abroad who, as a consequence of anarchist propaganda, had crossed the frontiers in rather large numbers. Most of the supporters of the idea of such a congress belonged to the Ligue Internationale pour la Defense du Soldat discussed above. This represented an unsuccessful attempt to constitute an international anti-militarist organization which failed because of the narrowness of its programme. It is said in any case that the idea of the anarchists found support in England and in other countries, and a committee was formed, to all appearances under the guiding influence of Nieuwenhuis.^[13] The slogan under which the congress was called was as “expressive” as anyone could wish: “Not a man nor a penny for militarism”.^[14]

The propaganda for the congress, which originally was to have been held in March or April 1903 in London, was in the meanwhile bearing little fruit, in spite of the fact for example that the committee had approached even the Social-Democratic organizations (without success, of course), the Belgian Young Guards^[15] and every kind of religious and humanitarian anti-militarist tendency to take part. Finally, after the congress had been arranged for September 1903 in Amsterdam and had then once again been indefinitely postponed, a special organ called **L'Ennemi du Peuple**^[16] was founded in Paris in order to agitate for the congress. The first number appeared in August 1903, and was edited by the anarchist Janvion in a spirit of the most strict Stirnerism. At last, in June 1904, thanks above all to the great efforts of Nieuwenhuis, it was possible to hold the congress in Amsterdam with a considerable attendance. It was of course a queer mixture that was assembled there – anarchists of all shades from Holland, France, Belgium, Bohemia (representatives of a small

group of miners), a number of representatives of Spanish anarchist trade unions, Dutch Tolstoyans, the evangelical pastor Schermerhorn and other similar varieties of Dutch humanitarian anti-militarism, and finally a number of British trade unionists.^[17]

The congress was only with difficulty prevented from turning itself into an explicitly anarchist congress for the foundation of an anarchist league. The proceedings began of course with the expulsion of the individualist anarchists^[18] and showed that the competing elements were quite unable to unite in common action.

Thus the Tolstoyans and Humanitarians were expelled next. Those who remained passed a number of resolutions:

1. A resolution proposed by the Dutch delegates which, while drawing attention to the intervention of the army in strikes, lays it down as the duty of the trade unions to fight militarism on principle, to establish friendly relations with the soldiers and above all to keep in constant contact with trade union members who have been called up.
2. The resolution put forward by Girault (France) which proposes that the trade unions should found youth organizations for the purpose of anti-militarist propaganda;
3. The resolution proposed by Vohryzeck (Bohemia), which recommends the tactics of the French trade unions to the trade unions "of the whole world"^[19];
4. A Dutch resolution which proclaims the general strike as the means of opposing war;
5. Another Dutch resolution which demands anti-militarist education of the young, especially through influencing the mothers;
6. A French resolution on the question of individual refusals to serve.

There was therefore no shortage of resolutions. Apart from these, a lengthy manifesto was also adopted, whose vague ideological

character was criticized by Nieuwenhuis himself with laudable severity.^[20]

Nevertheless, the International Anti-militarist Association was founded, and indeed with that splendid slogan “Not a man or a penny for the army”. Nieuwenhuis was appointed secretary. It was decided at the same time that a second congress would be held in Oxford in 1905. The Oxford congress, however, never took place, any more than the congress planned for Geneva in June 1906.^[21]

On the agenda for Geneva were, among others, the following items, to be found under paragraph 2:

1. What do we do to prevent war?
2. What do we do if war breaks out?
3. What do anti-militarists do if during a war the workers of one country refuse to take up arms while their brothers in the enemy state make an armed attack on their country?
4. The attitude of the workers of neutral countries in the case of war.

The problem of international disarmament and of Hervéism is presented here in its practical significance and with all the frankness one could wish for.

Paragraph 3 is entitled: Anti-militarism, partial strikes and the social general strike for the establishment of a communist society.

Under the influence of Nieuwenhuis a Dutch national anti-militarist congress was held at Zwolle in October 1904. Nieuwenhuis made a very optimistic report on the position of the International Association, and stated among other things that, apart from **L'Ennemi du Peuple**, a paper called **L'Action Antimilitariste** had been founded in Marseilles. The congress resolved to found a Dutch national anti-militarist society as a section of the International Association.

The Association is said to have made advances in France. A national congress was held at Etienne in July 1905 at which, according to the report of the A.I.A. (the International Association), “numerous groups took part”. A National Committee was set up, and it was decided to publish a national organ. This, however, did not appear until October 1, 1906, and has since been published as a monthly under the title **A.I.A.** (the initials of the name of the organization) as its bulletin. The congress also decided that in case of war the reservists should go on strike and the soldiers should refuse to obey orders and should mutiny. In the case of a general strike energetic support was to be given to the struggle of the labour organizations. Desertion was not among the actions recommended by the Association, and indeed all material responsibility for such desertion (apart from exceptional cases) was repudiated.

The most important aspect of the congress was the decision not to bind the Association to any party “doctrine”, whether anarchist or Socialist, but to preserve an independent, revolutionary character. Insurrection was however made a duty if it were decided on by the Association, and – here the anarchist tendency betrays itself – taking part in elections was forbidden. The Paris National Committee publishes in that city the bulletin **Publications of the A.I.A.**^[22], among which figures a pamphlet of 1906 concerning the aims, means and activity of the A.I.A.^[23] The well-known leaflet entitled *Aux Conscrits* (To Conscrits), which suffered at the hands of the Paris courts on December 31, 1905, was signed by members of the National Committee. As far as one can gather from the bulletin there exists a considerable number of local groups (“sections”), but the bad financial position allows us to conclude that the membership is not very large. The pamphlet mentioned above concerning the goal, means and activity of the Association describes it in the following way: “It is a fighting organization. It demands of its members on given occasions a readiness for direct, violent and insurgent action. Its only concern and the only goal of its activity is to oppose militarism, to destroy it wherever possible, by the power of the will to revolt.” It is therefore anarchism and putschism after all. This is also

shown by the strange discussion concerning the “reproach” made against the Association that it is an organization.^[24]

There also exist sections of the A.I.A. in Switzerland.

Apart from all that, there is the fact that during the sessions of the Socialist International Congresses held in Paris in 1900 and Amsterdam in 1904, international conferences of the Young Socialists were also held. On each occasion they asked the National Council of the Belgian Young Guards to establish an international link, but this was never done.

An international connection between the Young Socialist organizations has thus so far been attempted in vain. But it is probably not far away.

FOOTNOTES

1. Cf. **Die Junge Garde**, Mannheim, June 1, 1906.

2. The Sower, Union of Young Working Men and Women of the Netherlands.

3. The Party Executive refused to support it for formal reasons. Previously the Union had made use of the Belgian-Flemish **De Zaaier** as its official organ.

4. Cf., e.g. the Party Congress at Enschede in 1903 and the Trade Union Congress in May of the same year.

5. Cf. the programmatic article in the **Milicien**, no.8, 1904. One of the main objects of its struggle is the co-called “third drill practice”.

6. In this connection see the account of the activity of the organization published in Malmö in 1905 and covering the period from March 1903 to May 1905.

7. See **Redogörelse for förhandlingarna**, etc., Landskrona 1906.

8. The present editor is Jacob Vidnes; it is apparently once again being published as a monthly. For the rest see **Fram**, March 1906.

9. **Fram**, April and June 1906.

10. Lee, **La Vie Socialiste**, no.18, p.80.

11. During the Dutch anarchist anti-militarist congress at Zwolle in 1904 a letter was received from New York, and an expression of sympathy from the National Trade Union and Labour Congress in Canada. See **Ontwaking**, 4th year, December 1904.

12. See **Fram**, April and May 1906.

13. See **Die Vrije Socialist**, January 24, 1903.

14. See **Ontwaking**, August 1904, p.185.

15. Nieuwenhuis assured them that there would be room in the league even for Social-Democratic organizations if they were not frightened off by the consequences of the struggle against militarism and would recognize the above slogan. At the Young Guards Congress in 1903 such participation was unanimously rejected without a discussion, because the congress did not consider the basis clear and firm enough, nor anyway did it consider an international association outside of the Socialist International to be necessary or likely to cause anything but confusion.

16. **The Enemy of the People**, after the Ibsen play.

17. According to **Ontwaking**, August 1904, p.186, they represented 116,000 English miners of Durham and Northumberland! The above-mentioned Spanish trade unionists were, according to the same source, delegated by the Spanish Trade Union Federation and represented "at least 100,000 workers"!

18. Who protested against resolutions being passed in any form, and of course did not submit to the resolution of the congress to pass

resolutions.

[19.](#) The execution of this decision was to have been the task of the Oxford Congress.

[20.](#) Cf. **Ontwaking**, *loc. cit.*, pp.196, 197.

[21.](#) Cf. the call in the Zurich **Weckruf** of March 1906.

[22.](#) Among others, the paper **La Rue**, devoted to the struggle against tsarism, a leaflet addressed to mothers and entitled *A l'honneur militaire*, and the pamphlets **Lettre à un Conscrit** by Méric and **La Vache à Lait**, **Lettre à un Saint-Cyrien** (a pupil of the Officers' School at Saint-Cyr) by Georges Yvetot.

[23.](#) **L'A.I.A., son But, sos Moyens, son Action.**

[24.](#) **L'A.I.A.**, pp.15-16.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

[1*](#). NIEUWENHUIS, FERDINAND DOMELA (1846-1919). Dutch socialist. Became leader of the Dutch Social-Democrats in 1879, later took up more extreme positions, becoming an avowed anarchist. Played an important part in the 1891 and 1893 congresses of the International, opposing compulsory military service; his positions were rejected by large majorities.

[2*](#). BAKUNIN, MIKHAIL (1814-1876). Russian anarchist who struggled against Marx and his followers for control of the First International. Based a theory of revolution on spontaneous popular insurrection, which would destroy the state system.

3. THREATS TO ANTI-MILITARISM

On the question of militarism, reaction and capitalism are especially sensitive. They have quite clearly realized that in militarism they are defending their most important position of power against democracy and the working class. They stand in closed ranks against anti-militarism of both kinds – whether it concerns foreign or home affairs. The golden days when anti-militarism was treated in a half-hearted, often harmless and even merciful manner by the courts, spellbound by the use of traditional revolutionary phraseology, must be coming to an end in Belgium and even in France as militarism becomes a serious threat to the anti-proletarian powers. As far as Germany is concerned, let us recall the decree of January 1894 issued by the War Minister von Gossler (and published in the **Reichsanzeiger**) intended to muzzle the soldiers, to render them deaf and dumb. The non-commissioned officers and privates (not the officers, whose way of thinking can be relied on thanks to their birth and social position) are officially forbidden to engage in any recognizable activity of a revolutionary or Social-Democratic character, or to possess or distribute revolutionary and Social-Democratic publications. They are also forbidden (in order that all evasion or involuntary temptation shall be made impossible) to take part in any meetings, gatherings, festivities or collections of money without previous official sanction. Apart from that – and this is particularly characteristic of the ruthlessness with which militarism pursues its ends and its lack of concern for any feeling of honour and decency among the “fellows” – there is a rule that all members of the army on active service must make an official report if it comes to their notice that revolutionary or Social-Democratic publications are to be found in the barracks or on other military premises. German militarism has thus created for itself a means of protection of an especially criminal kind against the penetration of Social-Democratic or general anti-militarist poison into the active army, even if the actions involved are in themselves quite lawful and in no way constitute an incitement to disobedience, etc. This means of protection in fact goes even beyond the famous

Swedish muzzling law. That one person should inform on another, which is everywhere considered a rather nasty practice, is here elevated to an official duty. The soldier who is not an informer is put in prison for disobeying official orders!

The last straw however is that it is explicitly set down in the decree in question that these prohibitions and commands apply also to persons called up for purposes of training or inspection. This of course takes things too far. It is simply impossible to control such persons, to enforce for example that they sever their connections with the trade unions and other so-called revolutionary organizations for the duration of their training or even on the day of the inspection, or that they should for the period in question suspend their subscriptions to the labour papers (a technical impossibility), or even that they should for this period cease to read the forbidden revolutionary literature and banish it from their homes. Nevertheless, a case is known to the author in which a Potsdam court-martial in 1905 sentenced a worker to a long prison term because on the evening of inspection day he had taken part in a trade union meeting. On the other hand another prosecution of a worker in 1904 by the Potsdam criminal court failed. This man had sent to a non-commissioned officer whom he knew a Social-Democratic paper dealing with the bad material situation of such ranks, and in the event he was acquitted.

The vigour with which Gossler's decree is being applied to the men on active service is proved among other things by reports of soldiers who – in answer to an official inquiry or even as witnesses under oath – had stated their Social-Democratic opinions, with the careful reservation “in civil life”, being condemned by court martial. This is obviously quite illegal and immoral.

We might also recall the case of Colonel Gädke, which is important in many respects. As an officer in the reserve he was deprived of the right of wearing his uniform because, in a discussion on the Serbian royal murder he had said, quite generally, that in certain cases an officer's duty to his country may come before his duty to his king.

We should note the criminal and police prosecution of the Königsberg Society of Apprentices and Young Workers which took place in the summer of 1906. And, last but not least, there is the secret decree of the Prussian War Minister published in the press at the beginning of October 1906 which is concerned with determining the means and methods as well as the extent of Social-Democratic propaganda against militarism – a decree which at one and the same time of course reflects the fear and the bad conscience of our ruling classes. The anti-Social-Democratic instructions of General von Eichhorn also belong to this category.

This sensitiveness towards anti-militarism is of course as international as capitalism and militarism themselves, and the reaction against anti-militarist activity is everywhere harsh and brutal, as we have already seen in another context.

The Swedish muzzling law against anti-militarist agitation, carried through by the “half-Socialist” Staaff in May 1906, deserves to be more thoroughly described. It was passed without a debate by the first Chamber, but by the second Chamber only after lively discussion, though by an overwhelming majority. It is probably typical, in its form, of the way in which anti-militarism will be “legally” fought in the future. This law considerably increased the normal penalties for serious infringements of public order (for example, for incitement by spoken or written word to criminal actions), raising the maximum penalty from two to four years’ penal servitude! Moreover, it makes the public “approval” in the press of illegal actions and of incitement to break the law or disobey the legal authorities into a crime in itself, and makes it a duty of the military authorities to seize publications whose explicit aim is to undermine the soldiers’ sense of duty and obedience, and to hand them over to the appointed authorities. Finally it gives the commanders of troops the right to forbid the soldiers to attend meetings whenever it can be assumed that statements might be made there which would constitute a threat to discipline. The fruits of this law have already been described.

Meslier^[1] is quite right: everywhere reaction declares that the barracks is sacrosanct and inviolable territory, and treats anti-militarism as treason. But what he says of France also applies to Germany even in the present day (though with the reservation implied by our special form of monarchic-bureaucratic-agrarian capitalism): The most violent denunciations of anti-militarism come from the ranks of international capital, which raises its voice in hypocritical defence of “the interest of the fatherland”.

A most interesting proof of this sensitiveness towards anti-militarism – and at the same time of the extent to which militarism abroad has taken second place to militarism at home – is furnished by the remarks of the German Kaiser. His speeches of January 26, 1895, and of March 22, 1901, called for a struggle against the attempts of Socialists to instruct the young. And in 1906, in an interview with the French journalist Gaston Menier, he described anti-militarism as an “international scourge” – especially French anti-militarism, the very anti-militarism which is claimed to be on the point of impairing the capacity for action and attack of the French army, the army of our “hereditary enemy”! Not much more is needed before we see the foundation of an International Anti-anti-militarist League!

FOOTNOTE

1. Cf. **Un côté de la question sociale**. Moltke^[1*] moreover said in the Reichstag on March 19, 1869: “Let us be happy that we in Germany have an army that obeys. If we look at other lands we see that, instead of being a means of defence against the revolution, the army actually helps to bring it about. I advise you in the strongest terms never to be a party to the army changing its form in our country.”

ADDITIONAL NOTE

1*. MOLTKE, GRAF VON (1800-1891). Chief of the Prussian and German general staff. Directed operations in the Franco-Prussian War, 1870-

1.

4. ANTI-MILITARIST TACTICS

In itself anti-militarism is not necessarily proletarian or revolutionary, just as militarism is not specifically bourgeois or capitalist. We need only recall from the past, for example, the Russian Decembrists and Ernst Moritz Arndt's bourgeois-nationalist **Catechism for Soldiers** of September 1812 – it called upon the soldiers to rise up openly against the treacherous princes. In recent times we find decisive proof in the Russian revolution. But we must confine ourselves here to anti-militarism in the capitalist states.

1. TACTICS AGAINST MILITARISM ABROAD^[1]

The final goal of anti-militarism is the abolition of militarism – that is to say, the abolition of the army in every form, together with all the other manifestations of militarism identified above, which at root represent nothing but secondary effects of the existence of the army. When the trappings disappear, the institution soon follows.

The proletariat could only achieve this goal directly if we presuppose an international situation which excludes the need to use the army in the interest of the proletariat, so that the interests of the proletariat need in no way contradict the national interest.

If we consider the question simply from a logical point of view, the need for an army organization could also be eliminated as far as capitalism is concerned by removing the possibilities of conflict or by a process of international disarmament equally paced between the nations.

The removal of the possibilities of conflict would mean above all the renunciation of the policy of expansion which, as has been mentioned above, may find its natural conclusion in the globe coming under a single trust managed by the Great Powers. It would also mean what in the end comes to the same thing: the creation of a federal world state.

This however is for the moment a romantic dream of the future; the probabilities indicate that world politics will not attain this “state of permanence” before the proletariat realizes its final aim and replaces capitalist world politics with its own.

Things are even worse as regards international disarmament. This would mean not only the abandonment of military competition by all the military states but also the renunciation of the chances of gain which one or other of the mightiest states, which might be most influential in bringing about disarmament, has or thinks it has (from this arises the proposal for arbitration to establish contingents in proportion to the size of each of the armies!). Disarmament means moreover neither more nor less than the abandonment of those international interests which might cause the ruling classes, capitalism, to appeal to the *ultima ratio regum* (the last resort of kings), that is to say, to just those interests which are regarded by capitalism as most important, indeed vital for its life, especially the policy of expansion. The belief that all this can be carried out under the domination of capitalism before this natural state of permanence in world politics has been attained is simply blind faith. Certainly the influence exerted by the proletariat on foreign policy, directed against the world policy of expansion and in favour of a world federation, is growing ever stronger even in backward countries and may lead to the reduction of the danger of war and the pacification of world politics. But the increase in the influence of the proletariat also increases the danger of Bonapartist tricks, so that it is doubtful whether the sum total of the possibilities of war can be reduced. There can be no question of eliminating them.

Anti-militarism can also be a force in bringing about balanced international disarmament if it succeeds in rendering the existing armies incapable of action, or at least in crippling their activity. Hervé^[1] demands – this is the essence of his idea – that we should work at any price towards this aim of crippling the armies. A good number of more or less sound arguments have been raised against the feasibility of this plan. The most serious – though it does not apply to the proposal for a combination of disarmament and

revolution – is that it is impossible to bring about complete international disarmament. Even in the most progressive countries there are always plenty of strike-breakers to be found! Precisely the more civilized nations would, relatively speaking, be weakened and thus become prey to the lower cultures.

But Hervé's idea is also acceptable in principle only if we assume that the proletariat under no circumstances and in no case has an interest in the defence of the nation. And the main dispute centres around this point. In this connection Kautsky's *Realpolitik*, which rightly is not satisfied with the superficial and confusing distinction between offensive and defensive wars, is preferable to the exaggerated anti-patriotism of the Yonne Federation, which fails to recognize the practical position. Until the economic and social state of permanence for which Social-Democracy strives and the abolition of the class character of society have been realized all over the world, there exist possibilities of war which even Social-Democracy – in fact precisely Social-Democracy – cannot eliminate. It is of course obvious, as we have pointed out above, that the normal causes of war under capitalism are so constituted that the proletariat has nothing to do with them – indeed, it must oppose them with all its strength. It is nevertheless incorrect to think that all wars are actions directed against the proletariat. This might be possible in a Bonapartist sense, and it may well be that a little Bonapartism is “always present”. But the essential point as far as the causes of war are concerned is the fight for spoils, for profit between the capitalist classes of the world powers. It may of course be that as a result of such wars and during their course uprisings and revolutions will take place, and each of the belligerent powers may be forced to turn its weapons against its own proletariat. Thus a solidarity of interests of the ruling classes of these powers against the proletarian classes is brought into effect, but this would normally produce a tendency for the war to be terminated. And it is just as natural that every successful war based on capitalist motives, whether or not there is any intention in that direction, produces Bonapartist consequences, whereas if the course of the war is unsuccessful the chance that capitalist reaction may collapse balances the fact of the damage

which civilization is sure to suffer. The proletariat therefore has an especially strong reason to take action against war, and it is easy to see how things can get out of hand in this struggle – and easy too almost to approve such excesses. As a stimulant to thought Hervéism has a valuable mission to fulfil, and fulfils it.

We must first sort out the different kinds of war. The point is to be clear about these differences! Then we shall be able to tell in what cases disarmament can be pursued as a matter of principle. Of course the question of what basic position to take on the problem of war is of the greatest practical importance and in no way simply theoretical speculation. Nor does the question automatically decide itself when we are faced with a concrete case. On the contrary, it is precisely such a concrete case which, because of the excitement of the situation, easily introduces a tendency to blur a clear insight into what is happening. The events which took place in the German Party at the time of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war and of the Herero rebellion warn us to be on our guard and to begin to sort out the question of principle.

It is moreover necessary to examine in each case, apart from the question of what is desirable in principle, the further question of what can be achieved in practical terms. And in this connection too Hervé cherishes dangerous illusions. The time is not yet ripe for a general strike and a military strike against every war harmful to the proletariat. Hervé exclaims: “With enough energetic anti-patriotic agitation, the mountain will come to Mohammed!” Here he shows his anarchist colours. We must point out that the greater part of the proletariat is not yet class-conscious and not yet enlightened from the Social-Democratic point of view; even less can it be won for anti-patriotic action in a case which demands not only a certain coldblooded willingness for self-sacrifice but also presence of mind in the excitement of a passionate chauvinistic upsurge. It is impossible to attain complete success. The measure of success, of disarmament, will be directly proportionate to the measure of education and training which is enjoyed by the working class in each country: the most backward nation is the easiest to defend. An action

of this kind would be a premium on cultural backwardness so long as the education and readiness for struggle of the great mass of the proletariat in the countries concerned in the war is not more or less simultaneously raised to the highest point. Organization and the general revolutionary education of labour are the preconditions for a successful general and military strike in the case of war. To use straightforward anti-militarist propaganda for this purpose would be absurd.

Things are normally like this: when the proletariat has got so far as to be able to carry out such actions, it has got far enough to seize political power, for there are no more unfavourable conditions for the display of proletarian power than those normally present at the outbreak of a war.

And as far as Hervé's plan is concerned of combining a military strike with an insurrection – that is, the attempt to capture political power and give the revolution the means to defend itself – it would of course not itself be a premium on cultural backwardness. But it is necessary to ask whether such a plan can ever be realized – in so far as it is ever possible in a social revolution – on a national scale, leaving aside the feasibility of realizing such a plan, like that of the military or general strike, on an international level. As far as the national level is concerned, the chances of success are in direct proportion to the development of the proletariat and the degree of the political, social and economic pressure under which it lives. And this pressure will constitute either a hindrance or a help in accordance with its intensity and its relation to the economic and ideological-political development of the proletariat. In countries where this pressure is moderate, therefore, in spite of the development of the proletariat – England, for example – not much more would be attained than in countries where the intensity is high but the proletariat little developed – for example in the agricultural and overwhelmingly Catholic industrial centres of Germany. What may be practicable for France, Belgium and Switzerland is by no means practicable for Germany. And anti-militarist propaganda on its own cannot supply what is lacking, even if it is perfectly suited to the

task of awakening class consciousness. There is a further objection. Even insurrections cannot be fabricated. If we consider the question in a reasonable and level-headed way we cannot assume that every war – or even every war which is condemned by the proletariat and harmful to its interests, and even given energetic agitation – would immediately raise even the most receptive audience of the people, let alone all the peoples exploited by capitalism, to the revolutionary fever heat necessary for a successful revolt. War is a factor which does not appear with anything like the same regularity as the conflict with militarism at home. The masses generally look on it as a rather remote and theoretical danger. They do not see it as a pure manifestation of the class struggle, and the fact that it depends on the actions of foreign states makes it difficult to know just what is going on, not only with regard to the war itself but also with regard to the actions taken against it.

Here too Hervé underestimates the great driving forces which would have to be put into effect by such anti-war action if it were not to disintegrate in a ludicrous and dangerous manner like a bomb exploding in the pocket of someone about to throw it.

Again the point is to make the necessary distinctions! Don't measure everything by the same criterion! There are of course cases of wars which release the revolutionary forces, which create a state of great social and political tension inside individual states and bring things to a head. This would be true for example of an intervention in Russia, though the likelihood of this is not very great. The outbreak of such a war would be the sign for the peoples of western Europe to declare a ruthless class war, it would be a force, a whiplash whose effect could only be an uprising against reaction at home; against the worshippers of the knout, against the ignominious hangmen of an unhappy people thirsting for freedom. In fact, Vaillant's slogan – *plutôt l'insurrection que la guerre!* – would find an enthusiastic echo among the peoples of all civilized lands.

Other cases are now imaginable in which such altruistic solidarity would surely spring up – a war between Sweden and Norway, for

example. But this is not the normal development on which we can base the principles of our tactics. It is possible that in the foreseeable future a situation of this kind would be created by a war between France and Germany. It is the task of the Social-Democratic movement in the two countries to promote this situation by revolutionary propaganda work. Much of course depends on the cause of the war in question. It cannot be denied that, for example, in spite of all efforts to drum up an atmosphere favourable to imperialist politics, colonial motives for war bring little grist to the mill of the war-mongers.

If we can therefore at the moment only set complete disarmament as our object in rather exceptional cases, there are no reasons of principle nor any practical reasons against the reduction of arms, which simply reduces the capacity of an army to attack. The abolition of the standing army and its substitution by a citizen army, a militia, together with a corresponding reduction in military expenditure – which goes hand in hand with the other measures, as Gaston Moch has expertly shown – and the weakening of all other dangerous military influences:^[2] these are the demands which the class-conscious proletariat has quite logically inscribed everywhere on its banner.

There are therefore good reasons why the decisions of the international congresses (which contain the minimum anti-militarist programme of the majority of the organizations whose principles are those of the modern labour movement) are only able to make certain general points on the question of “militarism abroad”. Nor is it any less reasonable that the tactical programmes of the individual parties in each country do not go into details on the question, or that the struggle against militarism normally takes place in the domain of general politics. That is to say, these parties try to make some progress towards their object by the influence they exert on the whole social order rather than by specialized propaganda. The resolution moved by Vaillant at the French Party Conference at Limoges, which is to be put before the Stuttgart Conference in 1907, is essentially a good one and a useful contribution.

The attacks of the anarchists, especially those of Nieuwenhuis,^[2*] against this attitude of the Social-Democratic movement are doomed to failure. The resolution in question may be a little fatalistic, but it is not empty words. And empty words and fantastic schemes are all we get from those whose attempts to solve the tactical problems of our day – which in any case can never be completely solved – consist in the announcement of quite unrealizable schemes.

2. TACTICS AGAINST MILITARISM AT HOME

The problem of the struggle against militarism at home is much simpler and far more promising. Its obvious goal is disarmament, the unconditional and effective disarmament of the state power, and its method – which depends on political conditions in each country – lies between the slow, calm and thorough work of education and the French style: “*Soldats, vous ne tirerez pas!*”

This struggle, and the need to make it more concrete, is being forced upon the proletariat every day – especially in those countries where it is now normal to use the army against workers on strike or on political demonstrations. Everywhere – in France, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland and Austria – one can see clearly how the specialized forms of anti-militarist propaganda take on their own character and become a reality under the pressure of military intervention in the class struggle. This applies to France too, in spite of Hervéism, whose considerable support in the syndicalist movement can only be partly explained by its anti-patriotic tendencies. It also applies to America, as Lee shows.^[3] And if in Germany we find that this kind of anti-militarist activity comes up against widespread apathy, this is not a little due to the fact that here bloodshed as a consequence of armed military intervention in strikes has largely been avoided. Must it be the fate of all progressive movements that they cover the well only when the child has fallen in? Will Social-Democracy itself ignore the Cassandra calls, in spite of its optimistic and unambiguous programme for the future?

3. ANARCHIST AND SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC ANTI-MILITARISM

The goal of Social-Democracy is determined by an economic and historical analysis. Only in this framework does it find its justification. It is therefore far removed from all utopianism. The goal of anarchism is ideologically determined without any historical basis. This indicates the relation, the contradiction between the two movements.

The Social-Democratic conception is historically organic, the anarchist conception arbitrary and mechanical. Anarchists of course regard men as the bearers of historical development as they understand it, and the will of these men as the agent, and so they try to influence this will. Social-Democracy too considers it necessary to influence the will of the working class.

But between the two ideas there exist fundamental differences.

For anarchism this process of influencing the will is the only essential precondition of success. For Social-Democracy it is of subsidiary importance by the side of the stage of objective economic developments, none of which – with the best will in the world as far as the masses and a given class is concerned – can be skipped.

The anarchists consider that such an influence is always possible if energy be exerted. Social-Democracy considers that, as a mass class manifestation, it is only possible when certain economic conditions have been fulfilled. The struggle of the two tendencies turns around these conditions, while differences within Social-Democracy normally arise from a dispute as to whether such conditions are fulfilled in a given case. This is of course a difficult question to decide, and it is therefore difficult to determine to what degree one should attempt to influence the will, and especially what degree of predisposition is necessary in a given case. Personal optimism or pessimism play an important role here which cannot be eliminated. This is how the differences within the Social-Democratic movement arise. Those who assume that influence can play a great role and demand only a small degree of predisposition tend towards the anarchist position – they are the anarchist-Socialists. In spite of the contrast – which is not contradictory – between anarchism and

socialism, we therefore find all possible gradations between the tendencies, like colours in a spectrum.

The degree to which the will can be influenced depends on the degree of predisposition and upon the instability of the mental balance of the people or class in question. In times of excitement this instability is much greater than in times of calm. There exists therefore a potential which can at times be confusing or even dangerous, but is for the most part extremely useful. In times of excitement, then, more can be achieved than in quiet times. But this surplus normally vanishes as soon as calm is restored, together with the surplus of energy which it helped to produce. The history of revolutions is living proof of this fact.

The basic differences between the two fundamental conceptions is also shown by the fact that anarchism considers it possible for a handful of determined men to accomplish anything – of course by making use of the will of the masses, whether this remains active or passive. Socialism too considers that a well qualified and determined minority with a clear aim can carry the masses with it at decisive moments and exert an important influence. But the difference is this: while the goal of socialism in exerting such influence and its estimate of its feasibility lies in the possibility of awakening and carrying out the will of the masses (which the masses will be ready and able, given the situation, to display as their social will), the goal of anarchism is defined in terms of a true enlightened despotism, in the sense that a determined handful of usurpers carry out their own will and make use of the masses as a tool to that end.

Anarchism wants to spring, on an untamed horse, over the difficulties of the economic and social situation, or – depending on the circumstances – to bridle the horse by its tail. The *leit-motiv* is: in the beginning was the deed. Of course a time may come in the development of the class struggle when the action now proposed by anarchism will be feasible and correct. But the mistake of anarchism lies not in the absolute impracticability of its proposed methods, but in the relative impracticability which arises from the fact that it is

incapable of reading the social relation of power at a given time, which in turn is due to a lack of historical and social insight. And if the proposals made by anarchism can be realized and approved of at later stages of development, this represents no justification but rather a condemnation of anarchist tactics. It ought to be added however in justice that these tactics do often stimulate thought.

Anarchist and semi-anarchist anti-militarism is related to the anarchist and semi-anarchist conception of the general strike. The relation can be demonstrated by the fact that for this kind of anti-militarism the military strike is the schematic culmination. To grasp the essence of this anti-militarist tendency and its differences with Social-Democratic anti-militarism, the following questions must be distinguished: the basis of anti-militarism, the methods of propaganda for anti-militarism, the final aim and object to be attained, and the means by which this object is to be gained.

The fundamental principle of the anti-militarist movement is the same for anarchism as for socialism in so far as both see in militarism an especially violent and mechanical barrier to the realization of their social plans. But for the rest the principle of the one is as different from that of the other as the anarchist world outlook is from the Social-Democratic. It is not possible here to go further into the question of how little anarchism understands the organically capitalist character of militarism and the laws of economic and social development which as a consequence have to be applied to it. Here lies the root of all the other essential differences between the socialist and anarchist forms of anti-militarism. They can be summed up as follows. Social-Democratic anti-militarism in its struggle against militarism considers this system as a function of capitalism, recognizing and applying to it the laws of economic and social development. Anarchism regards militarism more as something independent, arbitrarily and accidentally created by the ruling classes, and carries on the struggle against it, just as it carries on the struggle against capitalism in general, from a fantastic ideological standpoint, which ignores the laws of social and economic development. In restricting itself to surface phenomena, it attempts

to knock militarism off the saddle by appealing out of thin air to individual determination; in short, it tries to achieve its goal in an individualist manner. Anarchism in fact is individualist not only in its social goal – in different degrees, according to the variety of anarchism, but also in its historical, social and political conception and in its methods.

The final goals of the anarchist and Social-Democratic forms of anti-militarism, if we are satisfied with a slogan, are the same: the abolition of militarism, abroad as well as at home. But Social-Democracy, in accordance with its conception of the essence of militarism, regards the complete abolition of militarism alone as impossible: militarism can only fall together with capitalism, the last class system of society. Capitalism of course is not something fixed, but a constantly evolving system which can be influenced and weakened to a considerable degree by contrary tendencies contained within it, and above all by proletarian tendencies. In the same way militarism, the manifestation of capitalism, is not incapable of being weakened, as is shown by the different forms it takes in different countries. Its connection with capitalism can also be loosened.^[4]

But the same thing holds to a greater or lesser degree of the other manifestations of capitalism, and it changes nothing of the organically capitalist^[5] character of militarism, and nothing of the fact that the goal of Social-Democracy's anti-militarist propaganda is not to fight the system as an isolated phenomenon, nor is its final aim the abolition of militarism alone. Anarchist anti-militarist propaganda, on the other hand, regards the simple abolition of militarism as its ultimate goal. Of course we cannot deny that anarchists too wage the struggle against capitalism (understood in the non-organic anarchist sense), but they wage it in parallel, and not together with the anti-militarist struggle. But even the anarchists, in their truly zig-zag theoretical course, quite often show glimpses of a more profound social insight.^[6]

It is in the methods of struggle that the fundamentally different historical modes of interpretation are most apparent. Here we have to distinguish between the method of promoting an anti-militarist movement and the method of using such a movement against militarism. As far as the first method is concerned, anarchism works first of all with moral enthusiasm, with moral stimuli, with humanitarian arguments, with arguments about justice – in short, with all kinds of appeals to the will which ignore the class character of anti-militarism and seek to stamp it as an abstract efflux of a universal imperative of universal validity. It therefore quite consistently turns its attention not only to the men but also to the officers.^[7] Anarchist anti-militarist propaganda therefore resembles, and in a way which brings it no credit, the pathetic declamations of Tolstoyans and the impotent incantations against war of the so-called friends of world peace like Bertha von Suttner.

Social-Democratic anti-militarism, on the other hand, is based on the class struggle, and is therefore directed in principle exclusively to those classes which are necessarily enemies of militarism in that struggle – though of course it is happy to see the bourgeois splinters which fall in its direction in the course of disintegration. It educates in order to persuade, but the subject which it teaches is not that of categorical imperatives, of humanitarian positions, of ethical postulates of freedom and justice, but that of the class struggle and of the interests of the proletariat in this struggle, of the role of militarism in the class struggle and the role which the proletariat plays and must play in the same struggle. It deduces the task of the proletariat in the struggle against militarism from the interests of the proletariat in the class struggle. Of course, it also uses, to a degree which must satisfy anyone, arguments of a moral kind – the whole pathos of the categorical imperative and of the basic rights of man, the beautiful but never practised principles preached by the bourgeoisie since the time of its dawn, and even religious and especially Christian ideas and conceptions. But all these play a subsidiary role. They serve to facilitate the process of opening the eyes of unenlightened workers, so that the daylight of class

consciousness can penetrate their minds. They also serve to raise enthusiasm for action.

The anarchist method of applying anti-militarism, of giving effect to anti-militarist sentiments, is again of a more individualistic and fantastic character. It lays great stress on individual refusal to serve in the army, individual refusal to resort to arms and individual protest. Anarchist literature triumphantly reports all such cases with care and exactitude. It has of course two aims in view: furthering the above-mentioned action against militarism and carrying out a kind of propaganda by deed on behalf of the anti-militarist movement. It starts out from the supposition that heroic examples of this kind are admired and imitated, producing support and enthusiasm for the movement which these “heroes” endorse.

Things are different with Social-Democratic militarism. It knows of course that individual acts can and will be signals for and symptoms of mass movements, but signals and symptoms only. And even signals they can only be when tension has reached its highest critical point, when the only thing necessary is to light the fuse leading to the powder barrel. To bring about a gradual organic disintegration and demoralization of the military spirit – that is the goal with which Social-Democracy fights militarism. Everything else serves this end, or plays a subsidiary role. In any case there is even in the anarchist movement a growing tendency critical of individual action, as is shown by the International Anti-militarist Association.

As far as the military strike is concerned, anarchist tactics are quite fantastic. They expect – given good will and a great deal of energy – to conjure it out of the sky, whereas Social-Democracy considers such a strike, like any other mobilization of the troops on the side of the revolution, as simply a logically and psychologically necessary consequence of the disintegration of the “militarist spirit”. This disintegration can only come about parallel to and in consequence of class factors and of education.

Very characteristic of anarchist anti-militarism is the little pamphlet by Domela Nieuwenhuis entitled **Le militarisme**.^[8] For him it is not the

crowned kings who are lords of the land, but the bankers, financiers and capitalists (not capitalism as an organically necessary social system). For him wars depend on the decisions of these bankers. For him reaction is the party in authority, which extends “from the Pope to Karl Marx”. Without examining the class position of the soldiers he simply accepts the opinion of Frederick (prompted by a bad conscience): “When my soldiers begin to think, not one of them will remain in the army”. He borrows methods of anti-militarist propaganda suggested by Laveleye in his book **Des causes actuelles de guerre en Europe et de l’arbitrage**:

1. The removal of all restrictions on international traffic;
2. Cheaper freight, postal and telegraph charges;
3. Introduction of a uniform international system of coinage, weights and measures, and of uniform international legislation;
4. The establishment of equal rights for foreigners as compared with native inhabitants
5. Promotion of the knowledge of foreign languages and especially of foreign cultures
6. Creation of an extensive literature of writings and works of art which cultivate a love of peace and hatred of war and all its accomplices;
7. Promotion of everything which gives strength and effectiveness to the representative system and can help deprive the executive authority of the right to decide questions of war and peace;
8. Support of all those industrial undertakings which apply the surplus wealth of the country to increasing the prosperity of other lands, so that capital takes on a cosmopolitan character and links the interests of international capitalists;
9. (This is the point to which Nieuwenhuis objects) – Work by the clergy to fill the minds of the faithful with a horror of war, after the Quaker fashion;

To these methods of anti-militarism Nieuwenhuis adds others which he considers more effective, namely:

10. Promotion of the international interests of the workers;
11. The abolition of kings, presidents, upper chambers and parliaments as social institutions inimical to peace;
12. Abolition of embassies;
13. The reform of history teaching, its transformation into the history of civilizations;
14. The abolition of standing armies;
15. An arbitration system to settle international disputes;
16. A federal United States of Europe, after the fashion of the United States of America;
17. The military strike in case of war, together with the general strike;
18. Passive resistance and individual refusal to serve in the army;
19. Promotion of general development and of the conditions which make for the well-being of all mankind.

At this point, Nieuwenhuis makes the characteristic remark: “If men have anything to lose through war, it is in their interest to see that peace is kept” – as if it were the proletariat which disturbed peace.

The careful critic will see here nothing but a muddle^[9] – muddle in the basic social and historical conception, muddle in the arrangement, muddle in the detail. The main point is not even mentioned. The most important point which does find a place – that which relates to certain economic bases of militarism – is mentioned on the side, almost as if by accident. Points of subsidiary, second and third-rate importance appear in the foreground, and by their side quite utopian and fantastic remedies. The means of anti-militarist propaganda are lumped together with anti-militarist action itself. The superficiality of the fundamental conception and the inclination to put everything on the basis of personal initiative and good will become quite evident. The final sentence of Nieuwenhuis’ pamphlet is a revelation of the depth of the confusion in the anarchist conception: “Daring, more and ever more daring – that is what we need in order to triumph.”

1. Cf. in this connection the inquiry in **La Vie Socialiste**, I, nos.15-18; **Mouvement Socialiste**, 1905, and **Vorwärts** of September 17, 1905; also the protocols of the international congresses.

2. Cf. Moch, **Die Armee der Demokratie**; also Bebel, **Nicht stehendes Heer, sondern Volkswehr**, pp.44ff. He cites Berner, **Der männermordende völkerverderbende Militarismus in Österreich**, pp.52ff. Also **Handbuch für sozialdemokratische Wahler**, Berlin 1903, pp.20ff.

3. Cf. **La Vie Socialiste**, no.18, p.80.

4. See [part 2, chapter 5](#).

5. More correctly: arising organically from the systems of class society.

6. Cf. e.g. Nieuwenhuis in **Ontwaking**, August 1904, pp.196ff.

7. It has already been shown that in Russia even the officers can be reached by anti-militarist propaganda based on the standpoint of the class struggle.

8. **Publications des Temps Nouveaux**, Paris 1901, no.17.

9. What Nieuwenhuis says in **Ontwaking**, pp.196ff., in his criticism of the manifesto of the A.I.A. Congress, is much clearer and more profound.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

1*. HERVÉ, GUSTAVE (1871-1944). A university teacher, he was forced to leave his post as a consequence of legal proceedings arising out of his anti-militarist opinions. Founded the paper *La Guerre sociale*. Later became an ardent patriot, left the Socialist Party in 1916, supported Clemenceau. In 1927 created the fascist National Socialist Party in France.

2*. NIEUWENHUIS, FERDINAND DOMELA (1846-1919). Dutch socialist. Became leader of the Dutch Social-Democrats in 1879, later took up more extreme positions, becoming an avowed anarchist. Played an important part in the 1891 and 1893 congresses of the International, opposing compulsory military service; his positions were rejected by large majorities.

5. THE NEED FOR SPECIAL ANTI-MILITARIST PROPAGANDA

It is certainly true that militarism bears within itself the germs of its own destruction, and that capitalist culture in its entirety contains many mutually contradictory and destructive elements, not least those tendencies whose basis is scientific, artistic and ethical education and which are responsible for a determined attack on militarism. The subversive effect for example of the *Simplizissimus*^[1*] literature must not be underestimated.^[1] The story of Cromwell, the story of the year 1789 in France and that of 1806 in Germany show us how a military system can disintegrate and rot to the point where it destroys itself. It is true that in all violent conflicts between the people and the state power a peculiar psychology of blood becomes active and powerful, a suggestion, a hypnotism of blood, or even – to use Andreyev's phrase – a blood logic, which may in the space of a moment decisively reverse the balance of forces. But all this has no bearing on the question of the necessity for propaganda, which itself is a part of the organic process of disintegration, and the same holds of all the other manifestations of capitalism and indeed also holds of capitalism itself. Its relevance is restricted to the question of the chances of a successful process of agitation.

The special danger which militarism presents has been explained above. It stands before the proletariat as a robber armed to the teeth, and its ultimatum is not "*La bourse ou la vie*" (your money or your life), but "*La bourse et la vie*" (your money and your life) – which goes further than the morality of robbers. Besides the fact that it is a great danger for the future, militarism is an ever present, ever real danger, even when it is not actually on the attack. Not only is it the Moloch of economic life, the vampire of cultural development, the chief agent of falsification in the class struggle, it is also the factor which, explicitly or implicitly, in the last instance regulates the form of the political and economic movement of the proletariat in the class struggle. This in all important respects is indeed determined by militarism in its role as the chief pillar of the brutal might of capitalism. Militarism is crippling our activity. In the disruptive peace

before the storm our Party life is becoming sluggish, and parliamentary work overcome by languor and paralysis.

The weakening of militarism requires the investigation of the possibilities of a continuation of peaceful development, or at least of a limitation on the possibilities of violent clashes. It also means above all the restoration to health, the revival of political life and of the Party struggle. The ruthless and systematic struggle against militarism already in itself leads to the revolutionary development and strengthening of the Party, and is a source of the revolutionary spirit.

From all this there follows the necessity, not only of a struggle, but also of a special kind of struggle against militarism. Such a ramified and dangerous structure can only be dealt with by action which is equally ramified, which is energetic, wide-ranging and daring, and which tirelessly pursues militarism into all its hiding-places, always *en vedette*, on the alert. The dangers presented in the fight against militarism also force one to take action which is more flexible and adaptable than agitation of a general kind. However unpopular this conception was and is in Germany, a number of points must be made which may overcome the attitude of reluctance and dispel such doubts. First, we have a special form of propaganda for women and young people. We also carry out specialized agitation not only among agricultural workers but also in the trade unions for the different trades. Finally, we can point to the successful anti-militarist propaganda conducted in other countries. It is only a matter of time, and probably a very short time, before the fundamental idea expressed in the motion no.114, rejected at Mannheim, is generally recognized.

Such action has also been made into a duty of German Social-Democracy by the well-known and unanimous decision of the International Congress of 1900.

The demand for such special propaganda has absolutely nothing to do with the unhistorical, anarchist conception of militarism. We are quite clearly conscious of the role which militarism plays within

capitalism, and of course have not the remotest idea of setting it above or on a level with capitalism, since it is simply an aspect of capitalism – or more correctly, a specially pernicious and dangerous manifestation of capitalism. But our whole agitation against capitalism is directed against these manifestations, in which capitalism takes on a concrete form. We can to a certain extent designate the field of the anti-militarist struggle as a special one; alongside the general political struggle, alongside the trade union struggle, for that matter even alongside the co-operative and educational struggle. To sum up: we are anti-militarists in so far as we are anti-capitalists.

If, from a historical point of view, anti-militarism has everywhere been transformed – in conjunction with the use of troops in civil war, against the internal enemy – from a set of generalities of a rather theoretical nature into a practical movement adapted to contemporary reality, this is no reason to hinder the development of specifically anti-militarist propaganda in lands in which the army has not so far been used in this way, or not within living memory. It has always been the pride of the Social-Democratic movement that it does not wait to be burned before it is waxy of the fire, but learns from history, from social science and from the experiences of fraternal parties to take an attitude of foresight and to build on these experiences. They have a clear message to relate as far as anti-militarism is concerned. And the time is ripe.

FOOTNOTE

[1.](#) Major-General von Zepelin was concerned with this danger – see the **Kreuz-Zeitung**, December 23, 1906.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

[1*](#). SIMPLIZISSIMUS. A satirical German journal, founded in Munich in 1896 by A. Langen and Th. Heine. Hostile to militarism and clericalism, it ridiculed the ruling authorities, and suffered a number of legal trials as a result.

6. ANTI-MILITARISM IN GERMANY AND GERMAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

The programme of German Social-Democracy, together with that of international socialism (at least of the Marxist school), sets as its object the “seizure of political power” – that is, the abolition of the social domination of the capitalist oligarchy over the proletariat and its temporary substitution by democratic-proletarian rule. This includes, as a major point, the abolition of capitalist militarism, the most important element of the power of the capitalist oligarchy.

The minimum programme deals with the question of militarism in a special manner, and sets out the special tasks and goals to be worked for. It thus meets all principled objections to a special anti-militarist propaganda form. It demands: “Universal training in the use of arms. A citizen army in place of a standing army. The people to decide on questions of war and peace. Settlement of international disputes by arbitration.” It thus repudiates for the present and foreseeable future the unmistakably utopian standpoint which is directed not simply against militarism but against every kind of preparation for war, not simply against capitalist and reactionary wars but on principle against participation in any war, which not only fights against war but tries quite unrealistically to deny the real possibilities of war and their consequences. German Social-Democracy, like the overwhelming majority of the foreign parties, even the French Party, is not anti-patriotic (like Hervé^[1]) or anti-national (Kropotkin^[2]), but rather indifferent to patriotism in accordance with its class position.

As a party of the proletariat Social-Democracy is of course without dispute the unconditional enemy, the enemy *sans phrase* of the violence shown by militarism at home. To destroy it root and branch is one of its most important tasks.

What has been done in Germany so far to carry out the decision of the Paris Congress of 1900?

The attempt to develop special anti-militarist propaganda in Germany has been resisted by influential leaders of the movement, who say that there is no Social-Democratic Party in the whole world which fights militarism as hard as German Social-Democracy. There is much truth in this. Ever since the German Reich has existed ruthless and tireless criticism has been levelled by the German Social-Democrats in parliament and in the press against militarism, the whole of its content and its harmful effects. It has collected material to indict militarism, enough to build a gigantic funeral pyre, and has waged the struggle against militarism as part of its general agitation with great energy and tenacity. In this respect our Party needs neither defence nor praise. Its deeds speak for themselves. Nevertheless, there is more to be done.

We by no means deny that the struggle waged against militarism has met with great success and that the form of the struggle has been well adapted to the goal. Nor do we deny that this kind of struggle will remain useful, and even indispensable, in the future, and bring more successes. But that does not settle the question. It does not resolve the problem of the education of young people, which is the most important part of the fight against militarism.

It is of course true that our general agitation opens people's eyes, and every anti-capitalist and Social-Democrat is *per se* an excellent and reliable anti-militarist. The anti-militarist side of our general educational work leaves no doubt on this point. But to whom is our general agitation directed? It is and was rightly and necessarily designed for the adult man and woman worker. But we want to win over not only the adult workers, but also the children of the proletariat, the working-class youth. For the working-class youth is the working class-to-be, he is the future of the proletariat. "He who has the youth, has the future."

At this point someone will retort: He who has the parents has the children of these parents, he has the youth! In any case it would be a wretched Social-Democrat who did not try his best to fill his children with the Social-Democratic spirit, and bring them up as Social-

Democrats. It may be that the influence of the parents – together with the influence of the economic, social and political conditions under which the working-class youth grows up, but which, though the most important and obvious means of agitation and enlightenment, cannot be influenced by Party activity and must therefore be disregarded here – can easily overcome all the cunning of the attempts of reaction and capitalism to capture the child's mind. But this fact clearly does not refute our point. One cannot settle things so easily. In fact it is precisely a careful examination of the above trend of thought which shows where the failing in our present agitation lies, a failing which is growing continually more serious and urgently demands a solution.

“Every Social-Democrat brings up his children as Social-Democrats.” But only to the best of his ability. This is the basis of the first important failing. How many people have a general understanding of how to teach, even if they have the time and inclination, and how many Social-Democratic workers, even if they have the best of intentions, have the necessary leisure and the necessary knowledge to educate their children? And in how many cases do the women and other politically backward members of the family rather unfortunately constitute a serious counterweight to whatever educational influence the class-conscious father may possess? If the Party wants to do its duty properly it must go into every nook and corner to help with home education. What is required is general educational and especially agitational work among young people, which must have an anti-militarist aspect.

But further: how many proletarians are really educated in Social-Democracy, educated to the point where they themselves can educate others on the fundamental principles of the standpoint and goals of the movement? How many workers are there in time of peace so ready for sacrifice and so tireless that they are even willing to undertake, to the best of their ability, the tough, painful, continuous hourly and daily work of education? And apart from those who are a quarter or half-educated, and the lukewarm who form an enormous mass: what a huge number of workers are total strangers to Social-

Democracy! Here is a great field full of the best hopes of the working-class, almost incalculable in its potential, whose cultivation must not at any cost wait upon the conversion of the backward sections of the adult proletariat. It is of course easier to influence the children of politically educated parents, but this does not mean that it is not possible, indeed a duty, to set to work also on the more difficult section of the proletarian youth.

The need for agitation among young people is therefore beyond doubt. And since this agitation must operate with fundamentally different methods – in accordance with its object, that is, with the different conditions of life, the different level of understanding, the different interests and the different character of young people – it follows that it must be of a special character, that it must take a special place alongside the general work of agitation, and that it would be sensible to put it, at least to a certain degree, in the hands of special organizations. Our agitational work, with the growth in its volume and the increase in the Party's tasks, and at a time when the decisive struggles are drawing ever nearer, has become so extraordinarily extensive and complex that the need for it to be divided up becomes more pressing – a division of labour of whose relative, but only relative, difficulties we are not by any means ignorant.

And now we can go even further. Within the framework of agitational work among young people, anti-militarist agitation fills a quite special and peculiar role. It must appeal to circles which are often not accessible to the attempts of Social-Democracy to educate young people; it must stretch out much further than the general attempts at education can normally do in order to take in those sections of working-class youth which do not attend the workers' educational schools, courses and lectures, or read the general literature for young people. It must also appeal to those young workers who, as they grow older, can no longer be reached by these general educational efforts. The proper domain of this agitation is in fact young people between the ages of 17 and 21! It will have a more agitational character than that of general education. Its forms will

also be different, at least to some extent. It is also, because of its rather dangerous character, best not to couple it with these general attempts. On the one hand, it might make the general work more difficult than is necessary and even bring it into discredit. On the other hand the division will ensure that the dangers facing specifically anti-militarist agitation are reduced to the minimum since things will be directed by comrades who have been familiarized with all the pitfalls. And finally, the anti-militarist material (ill-treatment of soldiers, military justice, etc.) is so colossal and scattered that even here division of labour and specialization are required if the best possible use is to be made of the available matter. And not only does this matter need to be put to us; but also collected, sifted and worked over.

The last argument shows quite clearly that anti-militarist agitation, even among adults, can gain a great deal through specialization.

The opportunity for work is obviously there, for rewarding work in plenty!

What successes have so far been achieved by the old methods in the development of anti-militarism in Germany?

It is true that a large part of the German army is already "red". A mere glance at the party groupings within the German nation shows this to be the case. And it was this obvious fact which caused the famous chief of the Imperial League, Lieutenant-General von Liebert, to take up his pen and write the well-known and amusing book **The Development of Social-Democracy and its Influence on the German Army** – a book now held in contempt because of its fatalism even by the Social-Democratic renegade Max Lorenz who, in accordance with his job, is now out to burn what he previously lauded. The same developments induced General von Eichhorn to introduce anti-Social-Democratic instruction in the army in the autumn of 1906.^[1] It is true that in the 1903 Reichstag election nearly one-third of the German electorate (male German subjects over 25) voted for Social-Democracy. It may also be true that, in general and at least for the time being, it has a stronger following among the

young than among the old. But it is nevertheless debatable whether this proportion holds good for the age group from 20 to 22. We should be quite clear on these points: that these young people do not at all belong to the elements who are firm in their convictions, and that there is all the world of difference between voting for Social-Democracy, being a Social-Democrat, and being ready to face all the personal risks involved in anti-militarist activity in the army. The “psychological” factors, the “suggestion” and “blood logic” mentioned above may be powerful agents in the destruction of military discipline, but it cannot be seriously suggested that even a third of the army has reached such a position as far as ideas and morale are concerned, nor that military intervention by the right in the form of violent unconstitutional action – a *coup d'état* – directed against the so-called internal enemy, the labour movement, would be impossible or even difficult.

Matters are undoubtedly more difficult for militarism when it comes to mobilizing the reserve and militia, especially for war. Indeed, a military correspondent of **Vorwärts** pointed out in October 1906 that among the members of those bodies who would be called up in case of war – who would then make up some four-fifths of the army – at least one million could be considered as unreliable from the point of view of militarism. But even on this point we have to take up a critical attitude and not forget that mass suggestion on militarist lines or mass psychosis and the methods of suggestion employed by the military authorities are capable of knocking a big hole in the above calculation.

What has been achieved in these fields has been achieved by means of the general propaganda carried out in the labour movement. German Social-Democracy has as yet hardly done any specialized work on conscripts. We know of nothing suitable which has been published in this line, apart from the well-known **Handbook for Conscripts** and the leaflet issued by the Party executive in the summer of 1906. And both these publications deal only with the legal position of those in the army. True though it is that history is on our side, it is not true that everything happens of its own

accord. This kind of quietism and fatalism is a big mistake from the point of view of historical materialism and fatal as far as agitation is concerned, and can only be countered by agitational activity and by specifically anti-militarist activity in particular. Anti-militarist propaganda in Germany must be very quickly and energetically improved.

The South German Young Guards have courageously taken on the task of providing a political solution to the problem. This is of course only a beginning, but it will – it must – soon find powerful support, if only to nip in the bud the anarchist anti-militarism which is starting to take root in Germany.^[2]

We repeat: is German Social-Democracy, the German labour movement, the nucleus and elite (as it likes to be called) of the new International, going to avoid tackling this problem – whether out of prudence or of over-confidence – until it is too late? Will it delay until it is forced to act by a dozen German equivalents of the murder at Fourmies, will it remain unarmed until the time when its strength and tactics are stretched to the limit by a world war or an intervention in Russia,^[3] for which it will then have to bear the responsibility?

And finally: have the German workers not been sufficiently alerted by the police massacres of their class comrades, which might also be said to come into the domain of anti-militarist propaganda?

However this may be, German Social-Democracy can no longer ignore the fact that, as far as militarism is concerned, the watchword is: *si vis pacem, para bellum!* Begin as early as possible with anti-militarist propaganda, in order that the dangers which militarism holds for the working class can be reduced to a minimum in advance!

The specially difficult character of this propaganda in Germany should really be no reason for it to be postponed. On the contrary, it is a good reason for it to be speeded up.

The German proletariat is ready enough now, and the general political situation at home under which it groans makes it even more vital for us to act.

FOOTNOTES

[1.](#) Cf. **Sozialdemokratische Partei-Correspondenz**, December 8, 1906.

[2.](#) Cf. the monthly supplement to the **Freier Arbeiter, Antimilitarismus**, which has been appearing for some time.

[3.](#) The improbability of such a thing is beyond doubt, but it has not become more improbable in consequence of Prince Bülow's [\[3*\]](#) speech in the German Reichstag on November 14, 1906.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

[1*](#). HERVÉ, GUSTAVE (1871-1944). A university teacher, he was forced to leave his post as a consequence of legal proceedings arising out of his anti-militarist opinions. Founded the paper *La Guerre sociale*. Later became an ardent patriot, left the Socialist Party in 1916, supported Clemenceau. In 1927 created the fascist National Socialist Party in France.

[2*](#). KROPOTKIN, PRINCE (1842-1921). Russian revolutionist, and a so-called scientific anarchist. Welcomed the First War, believing it would destroy the obsolete nation-state form. Hostile to the Bolshevik revolution.

[3*](#). BÜLOW, PRINCE VON (1849-1929). Imperial Chancellor from 1900 to 1909, succeeding Hohenlohe. Resigned in 1909 after pressure from Conservative and Centre Parties, and was replaced by Bethmann-Hollweg.

7. THE ANTI-MILITARIST TASKS OF GERMAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

The anti-patriotic form of anti-militarism has not been and will not be able to take root in German conditions. But Social-Democratic propaganda will have to be filled to a much greater degree with the spirit of international working-class solidarity and with the appeal for peace between nations as one of the goals of the proletarian struggle for liberation. The demands set out in the anti-militarist programme mentioned above form a suitable and unobjectionable basis for this task.

From a general point of view militarism in its internal form, together with all its evil manifestations (more evident in normal times), will in the future find itself in a rather more difficult position, and its role in the class war will become more evident. Where the main attack is to be launched is something that will be determined at the time by the national and international situation.

Whatever forms and methods of propaganda we have to introduce or adapt in Germany, we can of course assume that we shall have to keep within legal limits. The question of carrying out propaganda inside the army is therefore ruled out in advance.

German Social-Democracy has not even done enough work in collecting documentary evidence against militarism. Details are normally available only of the military budget and the growth in indirect military burdens and the peace-time strength of the army. But the connection between these military burdens and the customs and taxation policy awaits closer examination. What is notably lacking is information on the ill-treatment of soldiers, on the exploits of military justice, on cases of suicide among soldiers, on health conditions in the army, on injuries suffered on active service, on conditions of pay and pensions, together with an account of the use of soldiers to force down wages and of related army decrees and their use (with men on the point of being disbanded) to break strikes, of intervention by the army and armed police forces in strike

situations, of the victims of such actions, of the system of military boycott, of military intervention in politics, of the use of the military societies in the social and political struggle, and of such exploits of militarism in other countries, especially in the economic and political struggle. A special account therefore has to be opened for militarism, naval militarism and colonial militarism. We have insufficient knowledge and material relating to the militarist youth societies of our opponents, as well as to the anti-militarist movement and its struggles.

The regular collection, sifting and study of all this material must be systematically taken in hand. It cannot be treated as a task secondary to the general agitation.

This material would of course first have to be put to use in our general agitational work, in parliament, in the press and in general leaflets and meetings. But it must be directed to specific objectives, into specific channels, in order to penetrate and take effect among those strata of the population which are especially important to the anti-militarist movement. We have to consider first of all not only the young people liable for military service but also their parents, and especially their mothers, who can render especially valuable service in educating their children in anti-militarism. There are also the older workers, whose influence on their younger comrades and the apprentices has to be put to the best possible use. And finally we have to step up the struggle, in terms of energy and method, against the military societies.

The agitation must never directly or indirectly incite to military disobedience. It will have attained its goal if it shows up the essence of militarism and its role in the class struggle, if it raises indignation and disgust in response to its exposure of the real character of militarism, its function as an enemy of the people.

Wherever the law permits, the chief agent of this propaganda must be the youth organizations, which already by awakening class consciousness are tending to weaken militarism and the militarist spirit. These youth organizations must make use of the press, of

pamphlets, of leaflets, of lecture courses and education in order to spread the anti-militarist word as widely as possible in the form most acceptable to young people. Festivals and cultural events must be used to the same end. The members of the associations must in turn be educated in order to become propagandists of anti-militarism. By personal contact between friends of the same class and age, together with the circulation of literature, by these means the family, relations and friends, the workshop and factory will be transformed through the work of the youth organizations into centres of recruitment for anti-militarism.

The youth organization itself must not limit its agitation to its own members, but continually widen its audience. It must address the whole of the class of young workers. It must also, in the way described above, win over the older workers. It must make systematic use of the press, leaflets, pamphlets, public meetings, lectures, galas, festivals and so on, attractive to young and old. Meetings organized on the occasion of the departure of the recruits as well as demonstrations of all kinds must serve the same goal.

The Party too must take up in press and parliament and in a systematic way – as it has already done, but more energetically – the material and social interests of the soldiers and non-commissioned officers.^[1] Thus, in a quite irreproachable way, it can ensure the sympathy of these groups.

The foundation of special associations of ex-soldiers, as in Belgium and Holland, with the special task of opposing the military societies, is not to be recommended in Germany – the general political and trade union organizations are sufficient.

If we examine what has been done in other countries, we get an idea of what remains to be done. And if we take a glance at the programme set out above, we recognize that the Party, in spite of all that it has done in the field of anti-militarism, has only begun to fulfil its task. It is, so to speak, at the kindergarten stage as far as anti-militarist propaganda is concerned.

These multiple activities obviously cannot all be carried out by one central organization, but they can and must be centrally directed and controlled. The necessity of the establishment of such a centre is already evident, because only thus can the most careful use be made of all the legal possibilities of action. Like a net cast into the distance, anti-militarist propaganda must reach out to the whole people. The proletarian youth must be systematically inflamed with class consciousness and hate against militarism. Youthful enthusiasm will take hold of the hearts of the young workers inspired by such agitation. These young workers belong to Social-Democracy, to Social-Democratic anti-militarism. If everyone carries out his task, they must and will be won. *He who has the young people has the army.*

FOOTNOTE

[1.](#) Improvement in pay, food, clothing, housing, treatment, lightening of the service, suppression of ill-treatment, reform of the system of complaints, of discipline and of punishment, as well as of military justice, etc.

Table of Contents

Militarism & Anti-Militarism

Preface

Footnotes

Additional notes by the translator

I. Militarism

1. General

1. On the essence and meaning of militarism

2. Origin and basis of social relations of power

3. Some items from the history of militarism

Footnotes

Additional note

2. Capitalist Militarism

Preliminary remarks

1. "Militarism against the external enemy", navalism and colonial militarism. Possibilities of war and disarmament

2. Proletariat and war

3. Characteristics of "militarism against the internal enemy" and its task

4. The constitution of the army in some foreign countries

5. Conclusions

Russia

Footnotes

Additional notes

3. Methods and Effects of Militarism

1. The immediate object

2. Military pedagogy.

The education of the soldier

Bureaucratic and semi-military.

organization of the civil population

Other military influences on the civil population

Militarism as Machiavellianism and as a political regulator

Footnotes

Additional notes

4. Particulars of Some of the Main Sins of Militarism (Part 1)

1. The ill-treatment of soldiers, or militarism as a penitent but incorrigible sinner

Two dilemmas

2. The cost of militarism, or La douloureuse

Another dilemma

3. The army as a tool against the proletariat in the economic struggle

Preliminary remark

Soldiers as competitors of free labourers

The army and strike-breaking

Footnotes

Additional notes by the translator

4. Particulars of Some of the Main Sins of Militarism (Part 2)

4. The rule of the sword and rifle against strikes

Preliminary remarks

Italy.

Austria-Hungary.

Belgium

France

United States of America

Canada

Switzerland

Norway.

Germany.

5. Military societies and strikes

6. The army as a tool against the proletariat in the political struggle, or the right of the cannon

7. Military societies in the political struggle

8. Militarism, a danger to peace

9. The difficulties of the proletarian revolution

[Footnotes](#)
[Additional notes by the translator](#)

[II. Anti-Militarism](#)

[1. Anti-militarism of the Old and the New International](#)

[Footnotes](#)
[Additional note](#)

[2. Anti-militarism Abroad with Special Regard to the Young Socialist Organizations \(Part 1\)](#)

[Belgium](#)

[France](#)

[Italy](#)

[Switzerland](#)

[Footnotes](#)

[Additional notes by the translator](#)

[2. Anti-militarism Abroad with Special Regard to the Young Socialist Organizations \(Part 2\)](#)

[Austria](#)

[Hungary](#)

[Holland](#)

[Sweden](#)

[Norway](#)

[Denmark](#)

[America](#)

[Spain](#)

[Finland](#)

[Russia](#)

[The international anti-militarist movement](#)

[Footnotes](#)

[Additional notes](#)

[3. Threats to Anti-militarism](#)

[Footnote](#)

Additional note

4. Anti-militarist Tactics

1. Tactics against militarism abroad

2. Tactics against militarism at home

3. Anarchist and Social-Democratic anti-militarism

Footnotes

Additional notes

5. The Need for Special Anti-militarist Propaganda

Footnote

Additional note

6. Anti-militarism in Germany and German Social-Democracy.

Footnotes

Additional notes

7. The Anti-militarist Tasks of German Social-Democracy.

Footnote