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# The New Review

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## THE DOWNFALL OF THE INTERNATIONAL

BY ANTON PANNEKOEK (Bremen)

I.

Exactly half a century has passed since the International Workmen's Association was founded in London under the leadership of Karl Marx. It went to pieces after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and the Paris Commune. Exactly a quarter of a century ago, at the Congress of 1889 in Paris, the new International was founded. This year the Congress at Vienna was to celebrate the double anniversary. But just a month before it was to take place the firebrand of international war was tossed into Europe from Vienna. With the outbreak of the European War, the new International, too, is disrupted.

When the old International was founded (1864), capitalism in Europe, with the exception of England, was still in its first stages. Its political form, the bourgeois State, was as yet only partly developed. In England alone the bourgeoisie was already in absolute control of the government. There modern industrial methods and large scale production had produced a proletariat which had, to be sure, lost all revolutionary spirit in the remarkably prosperous period following 1850, but which had nevertheless built up strong organizations by means of which it had fought bitter struggles in the sixties in order to realize some of its immediate demands.

In France, on the other hand, the old system of small scale production was still in vogue, though here, too, it was already being hard pressed by the hot-house like growth of capitalist industry. In Germany the factory system began to grow strongly only in the sixties. It did away with the old system of handicraft, impoverished the craftsmen and drove them into the factories.

In these countries the working class was still wholly under

the influence of the ideals and thoughts of the age of individual enterprise. Their feeling of enmity toward capital was not the hatred of the exploited worker against his exploiting master. It was rather the resentment that the unfortunate, miserable master must feel for his stronger competitor, as is proven by the fact that the productive co-operative associations, rather than the labor unions, occupied the center of popular interest.

By means of these societies their supporters hoped to place machine production into the hands of the worker and so render him able to compete with the manufacturer. Lassalle's proposal of productive associations supported by State loans and the prevalence of Proudhon's ideas in France bear witness to the popularity of this idea.

The bourgeoisie, not having as yet acquired political mastery in these countries, formed a strong radical opposition party, which strove, above all, to unite the various provinces into a national whole. Its middle class wing, true to the ideals of 1848, aspired to political democracy, meddled with the labor movement and confused the minds of many workers with its empty phrases.

The workers of Western Europe were unanimous in their determination to defend their democratic institutions against European reaction under the leadership of Russian Czarism. The Polish Revolution in 1863, therefore, gave the impetus that led to the organization of the International.

The history of the old International is a constant struggle between the middle class ideals of the handicraftsmen and the spirit of the modern working class movement that the development of capital had produced. Coming from England, defended at the congresses by English delegates, provided with a general theory by Karl Marx, the new spirit gradually pushed the petty-bourgeois ideals of the past into the background. Thus the International became a school for the propaganda of the fundamental Marxian theories. The more progressive groups of the working class became class-conscious, and gained the insight into social problems that was to determine their tactics in the period that followed. Recognition of the necessity of industrial organization in the struggle against capitalist masters and of independent political warfare to secure control of the government, with communism as the ultimate goal—that was the abiding result of the internal struggles of the old International. But the organization itself was doomed to destruction. The European wars coming to a close in 1870, had fulfilled the national ideals of the bourgeoisie. In Central Europe larger nations, Germany and Italy, such as were necessary for the further development of capitalist industry, had

come into existence. These nations, together with the older France and England, were the battleground upon which the coming struggles of the proletariat were to be fought. The internationalism of a general organization governed by an executive in London had become impossible. The workers of each nation had to shape their struggles according to the local political conditions. The downfall of the International, therefore, was inevitable after the Paris Commune had proven "that the working class could not simply lay hold of the State machinery and wield it for its own purposes" (Marx), in other words, the proletariat was still in its first infancy from the point of view both of intellectual development and organizing power.

## II.

Twenty-five years after the foundation of the old International, representatives from the working class organizations of twenty nations met in Paris. The fact that the congress was recruited from representatives of Socialist Parties as well as Labor Organizations, linked the New International to the Old, and proclaimed the theoretical postulates of the latter as a great practical force. The seed had sprouted. Everywhere the workers had embraced the Socialist idea, and were carrying on the political struggle with steadily increasing success. With new industrial conditions there had awakened a new generation with new ideals. Capitalism had gained full control of industrial life; it had spread to the ends of Europe in the East, to America in the West. Everywhere it had done away with small scale production and handicraft and had cast the great mass of the people into the class of wage-proletarians. But even in the hour of its full development it produced the germs of its own destruction. The long years of business depression after 1875 had aroused doubts as to the stability of the capitalist order even in bourgeois circles, while in America the newly arisen monsters, the Trusts, had proclaimed the end of the era of free competition. Middle class opposition disappeared; the proletariat was arrayed face to face against the ruling class. The old middle class illusion, that matters might be mended with the simple expedient of co-operative organizations, had died out. Clearly and distinctly the new problem stood out: the proletariat must obtain control of society so that it may master the whole mechanism of production. Conquest of political power was recognized as the immediate aim; parliamentarism as the means, prepared and supplemented by the conquest of universal suffrage, which latter was at that time the most important factor in the political struggles of a number of nations. Hand in hand with the political struggle went the efforts to found and build up labor unions to secure

better conditions. The congresses of the new International were deliberative conferences of independent autonomous parties of various countries. After the last remnants of the earlier Anarchism were thrown out, these congresses were chiefly occupied with the discussion of parliamentary tactics.

Another twenty-five years passed. Capitalism grew and spread even more rapidly than in the preceding period. Favored by the period of unparalleled prosperity that began in 1894 in Germany and spread out over the other nations, interrupted only by short crises, capitalism had taken possession of the earth. It revolutionized every continent, it broke down the rigid immobility of immense empires that had resisted change for thousands of years, it seized the treasures of the world, it exploited men of every race and color. And everywhere the Socialist spirit, hatred against capital, took root in the minds of the exploited workers, often combined with the aspiration for national freedom.

Socialist organizations arose in China and in New Zealand, in Johannesburg and Honolulu, in Alaska and Arabia. Capitalism and Socialism were flooding the whole earth.

More important still were the internal upheavals. Capital had won complete mastery over the industrial and political life of the nations. All classes, even those which were apparently independent—farmers and the small business men—became its servants; but in the same measure ever greater masses of men became its foes. Gigantic factories filled with the latest machinery put millions of workers into the power of a few magnates. Organization growing steadily more perfect took the place of anarchistic competition. The first Trusts twenty-five years ago were but the weak beginnings of that concentration of capitalistic power which now placed the whole industrial life and the treasures of the earth into the hands of a few hundred kings of production. In Germany and America this development went on with the utmost vigor and rapidity. But while in America the great expanse of territory made possible the broadest development, in Germany, where all activity is crowded into a small space, the antagonism between classes and conditions became exceedingly acute.

These conditions have changed the attitude of the working class. They no longer believe that social supremacy can be won offhand by parliamentary legislation. Parliament has become a mere machine for granting appropriations to defray the cost of the new governmental functions, and at best a stage upon which the protests of labor may find utterance.

The proletariat is pitted against the colossal power of the State, which must be attacked and vanquished. But the strength of the

proletariat, too, has grown. The Socialist idea has taken possession of large minorities of the people in all capitalist nations. Greater still is the growth of labor unions; insignificant in 1889, they have taken rapid strides forward in the years of prosperity. Everywhere in the labor unions there are great armies firmly organized, bound to each other by strong ties of solidarity, confronting the mighty power of the magnates of capital.

But within this struggling mass of workers, progressive and conservative elements are fighting for supremacy.

### III.

The policies and theories that comprise the spirit and nature of modern capitalism may be summed up under the name of Imperialism. Capital is eager to spread out over distant continents, to start railroads, factories, plantations and mines, in order to realize high profits. To this end it is necessary that these foreign regions be controlled politically by the home country. Each government strives to conquer or control the largest possible part of the earth for its bourgeoisie, that it may be in a position to protect the interests of its capital there. Each government, therefore, strives to secure the greatest possible amount of world-power and arms itself against the others in order to impart the greatest possible weight to its demands and to force the others to recognize its claims. So we see each European nation striving to become the center of a world-empire consisting of colonies and spheres of influence. This policy of "imperialism" controls nowadays to a greater or lesser extent, the political life of all nations and the mental attitude of the bourgeoisie. It has given to the possessing classes, who hitherto had nothing to oppose to the Socialist ideals of the working class, a new ideal: to make the fatherland great and mighty among the peoples of the earth. The intellectuals, who had formerly flirted with Socialism, now became the enthusiastic supporters of the bourgeoisie; the old ideals of world-peace, progress and democracy were supplanted by the ideals of world-power, patriotism, race prejudice, the admiration of force and brutality. All doubt as to the ability of capitalism to persist indefinitely, and in full vigor, has disappeared, while Socialism is now regarded by them as feeble humanitarian sentimentalism, which unfortunately puts the working class in opposition to national aims. An insane competition in the increase of naval and military armaments eats up billions of dollars, piles heavy taxes upon the masses of the people, and makes drastic social reforms impossible. In all lands it became apparent that a small but powerful clique of capitalists and bureaucrats controlled the political life, not only

in the semi-absolute monarchies of Germany and Austria, but also in democratic France and in parliamentary England. The centralized power of the State was tremendously increased, in order to enable it to cope with the problems of the great world struggle.

On the other hand, the forces of resistance in the proletariat were also growing. The ever increasing taxes and military burdens aroused the bitterest opposition in ever widening circles, as was plainly evidenced by the electoral victories of the Social Democracy. Spontaneous outbreaks from among the masses revealed possibilities of new methods of working class warfare, other than parliamentarism and labor unionism. They showed the weapons at the disposal of the proletariat in the struggle against imperialism: *mass-actions*, in which the working masses demonstrate their opposition on the streets or seek to impose their will upon governments by means of political general strikes. Thus the political and industrial struggles of the workers flow together into one united struggle against the government and organized capital. To be sure, such actions demand a strength of the proletariat, a firmness of organization, a willingness to make sacrifices, a solidarity, a clear Socialist understanding, a revolutionary energy, such as are now to be found only inadequately and can grow only in course of the struggles themselves. But these first struggles already open before us a vista of the coming period of revolutionary assaults upon the State by the proletariat, a period that is destined to supersede the preparatory period of peaceful parliamentarism and labor unionism.

But at the same time the elements of weakness also become more apparent. The rapid growth of the party and labor union organizations has produced an army of parliamentarians, functionaries and officials, who, as a sort of specialists, became the representatives of the traditional methods of warfare and obstructed the adoption of new methods. As the Social Democracy grew in parliamentary strength, the tendency to join hands with portions of the capitalist class for the purpose of winning reforms became more marked. The middle class idea of making capitalism more tolerable by means of small reforms was adopted in place of the revolutionary struggle for power. This reformism, which refused to have anything to do with the class struggle of the proletariat gained the upper hand in the Social Democracy of most of the West-European nations—in France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, while in England the Labor Party showed the same tendency without using Socialist phrases. In Germany, as a direct result of reactionary pressure from above, the tactics of the class struggle maintained their ascendancy; but here, too, similar reformistic

tendencies made their appearance with the growth of the organization. It is true that organization is a condition, a necessary instrument for the victory of the proletariat; but as it becomes stronger there is the dangerous tendency to regard it as the end, instead of as the means to an end, its maintenance becomes the highest aim, and in order to safeguard the organization serious struggles are carefully avoided. This tendency is furthered by the numberless officials and executive heads of the party and the labor unions. In recent years the struggle between these two opposing tendencies in the German Social Democracy came to a head upon several occasions. But each time those who called for revolutionary tactics against the increasing strength of imperialism and pointed to the necessity of mass-actions, were in the minority. This was due in the main to the fact that among the workers themselves there was little revolutionary energy. This again is a direct result of the prosperity which furthered capitalist expansion as well as the growth of labor organizations. For in good times there is little unemployment, wages increase, the laboring masses are comparatively satisfied, are not driven to rebellion by hunger and unbearable misery. This is the underlying cause for the growth of reformism in Europe, for the indifference of the masses, for their unwillingness to adopt revolutionary measures, for the stagnation of the whole labor movement.

In such circumstances the International itself was bound to degenerate. The congresses, which were at one time the scene of passionate discussion on tactical questions, degenerated into bureaucratically organized theatrical performances staged by reformistic politicians and bureaucrats. There was but one force that could make of this international union of Social Democratic Parties a living, necessary thing. That was the international policy of imperialism with its ever growing menace of world-war.

In opposition to the Old International, whose center of gravity lay in the international policy of the proletariat, the New International lacked a clearly defined international policy. It was concerned with questions of internal politics, questions and struggles that were caused by the development of capitalism in each individual country. This had to change when imperialism, with its militaristic armaments, its endless conflicts among the various States, its ever-present menace of war, raised its head. The new international policy must needs be entirely different from that of Marx and Engels. At that time the defense of European democracy against Czarism was the aim of the International. To-day, after the Russian Revolution, it could only be to defend the proletariat against world-war, to preserve world-peace. The Inter-

national should, therefore, have become a firm union of the working class parties of all countries against war. The party has always striven toward this end, has always emphasized this phase of its activity. The highest expression of this effort was reached in the International Congress at Basel, where Social Democratic representatives from all countries protested against war and declared that they would do everything in their power to prevent it. But behind this declaration there lay much more fear of war than firm determination to take up the fight against it. Its outward form, the session in the church, the ringing of bells, the avoidance of all discussion as to *how* and with what means war was to be prevented—all these things betrayed the effort to mesmerize the governments with words and outward appearances, instead of trying to organize the real strength of the proletariat and preparing it for a struggle so difficult and requiring so many sacrifices. And when finally the governments really wanted war, there was neither the strength nor the courage to take up the fight. Internationalism went up in smoke and the International lay in ruins.

#### IV.

The Austrian Social Democracy has always ranted vigorously over the stupidity of the ruling politicians in Vienna, because they could not win the confidence of the Balkan peoples by adopting a sensible policy towards the various nationalities; but in theory and in practice it itself supported nationalism and instead of fighting nationalistic passions in reality supported them. Thus, when the conflict between Austria and Servia broke out, the Vienna *Arbeiterzeitung*, instead of vigorously attacking its own government, took up the cudgels against the Servian government and thus played into the hands of the warlike Viennese government. Naturally anti-war demonstrations in Vienna were entirely out of the question. The despised Servians, on the other hand, were the only ones who loyally did their duty as Social Democrats, although, if anywhere, a nationalistic attitude on the part of the Balkan workers in their desire to uphold the independence of their awakening nations would be perfectly intelligible. Comrade Lapschewitz declared that, while the attack of Austria was an outrage, yet he was of the opinion that the Servian government was in part to blame because of its policy. The Social Democracy, therefore, as an unalterable opponent of this policy, must protest against it by voting against all war credits. This is an example of courage that may well be compared with the memorable stand taken by Bebel and Liebknecht in 1870.

The German working class has been, through its organization and Socialist education, the strongest cohort of the International; if anywhere, it should have been possible here to arouse an energetic opposition to the war plans of the government. Beyond a doubt the government as well as the bourgeoisie was at first somewhat uneasy as to the attitude of the German workers. But this uneasiness was soon dispelled. The party was not willing to fight the government, and immediately used the argument employed by the government itself to create a war sentiment among the people: "We have been unwillingly forced into a war of defense against Russia, which has insolently attacked us and threatens our culture." And the Social Democratic press showed that the war against Russia was a sacred bequest from Marx. In its ignorance of the imperialistic character of modern war, together with the fear of taking up the fight against the terrible power of the militaristic State, the German proletariat has allowed itself to be harnessed to the car of German imperialism. The Social Democratic parliamentarians voted war credits to the government; long years of Socialist opposition against militarism were thus wiped out.

This determined the course of the Socialists all over Europe. True, the Russian Socialists refused to vote war credits, and in England the Labor Party—according to ancient pacifist-Liberal tradition—attacked the government bitterly for its interference. But in Belgium, Emil Vandervelde, former Chairman of the International Bureau, was made a member of the Cabinet, and in France that old uncompromising fighter of the class struggle, Jules Guesde, who always championed the German radical tendency, accepted a place in the Cabinet. In a manifesto published by the French Party, the workers are called upon to defend the democracy and Socialism of France against "German imperialism"—as if the French armies were not fighting for French and English imperialism! Not a whit better are the Syndicalists and Anarchists, whose hatred of the German Social Democracy has now become a fruitful ground for jingoism; thus at the burial of Jean Jaurés, Jouhaux expressed himself in a purely nationalistic sense. German Social Democrats are now going to the neutral countries as commissioners, so to say, of the German government, to soften the hostility of the Socialists against the German government; thus Südekum in Sweden, Scheidemann in Holland, a whole deputation in Italy. And everywhere they are repulsed, not because they have violated their Socialist duty to the International, but because they speak in the interests of that Germany which is held in fear by the middle class of all other nations. In Sweden Branting spoke, as if he were the representative of the Swedish middle class: "We

can never forgive you the violation of the neutrality of Belgium." While the proletarian masses, obedient to the rulers, dissolved into national armies, are slaughtering one another in the service of Capital, the International Social Democracy has broken up into groups of jingo politicians who bitterly attack one another.

The second International is dead. But this ignoble death is no accident; like the downfall of the first International, the collapse of the second is an indication of the fact that its usefulness is at an end. It represents, in fact, the downfall of the old fighting methods of the epoch. Not in the sense that they will disappear or become useless, but in the sense that the whole world now understands that these methods cannot bring the Revolution. They retain their value as preparation, as auxiliary means. But the conquest of power demands new revolutionary forms of struggle. To have pointed these out, to have put before us the new problems which it itself was incapable of solving—this is the bequest to us of the second International. These will be fully developed by the new capitalist world that will grow out of this world-war—a world of mightier capitalist development, increased oppression of the proletariat, more pronounced antagonism of the three great world-powers, Germany, England and America. And out of these new conditions a new International of Labor will grow, more firmly founded, more strongly organized, more powerful and more Socialist than the one that now perished. Looking beyond the terrible world-fire, we revolutionary Socialists boldly erect upon the ruins the standard of the new, the coming Internationalism:

*C'est la lutte finale, groupons nous, et demain  
L'Internationale sera le genre humain.*

## FREEDOM OF WILL AND WAR

BY JACQUES LOEB

### I

It is a platitude to state to the readers of the NEW REVIEW that the only persons directly interested in war are mediæval elements; groups of traders who wish to exploit the industrially less developed colonies or countries; groups of armament mongers, and prospective army contractors; the military caste and their friends to whom war means economic and social advance; "rulers," adventurous statesmen, and diplomats to whom war means "glory," "power," and a place in "history" or who by a war can extricate themselves from an unpleasant situation.

But all these constitute a very small minority of humanity. The question is: What induces the masses, even the Socialists, to become the dupes of these destructive elements? For there can be no doubt that in the present war the masses in Germany, Austria-Hungary, France and possibly even in Russia went to war with amazing unanimity. This is generally explained psychologically. The writer will try to substitute a kindred but somewhat more physiological explanation.

Organisms differ in their conduct from a steam engine or any other machine by possessing a greater number of degrees of freedom. Under ordinary circumstances a swarm of certain small water crustaceans in a jar shows an apparently absolute freedom (strictly speaking, a limited number of degrees of freedom) in their movements; *i. e.*, nobody would be able to predict the direction in which any of the individuals will move in the next moment. They are as "free" and incalculable in their movements as human beings. If we put into such a jar, containing a swarm of these crustaceans, a trace of a weak acid, *e. g.*, carbonated water, the picture changes in a few seconds. The whole mass of animals is filled with *one* will, all rush madly to the side of the dish from where the light comes. If the position of the dish in regard to the window is changed, the masses will rush again to the window-side of the dish. We can now predict precisely how each individual will act, the machine-character of their conduct is obvious. What has the carbonated water done to these animals? Has it destroyed their "freedom of will"? Not exactly, since they never possessed it, but it has diminished the number of their degrees of freedom, by making their sensitive-