

Trotsky Leon

The Bolsheviki and World Peace



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INTRODUCTION

The voice that speaks in this book is the voice of Leon Trotsky, the Bolshevik Minister of Foreign Affairs for Revolutionary Russia. It is expressing ideas and views which lighted him on the course of his policy toward the War, Peace and the Revolution. It throws light, therefore, on that policy; it helps to an understanding of it, if one wishes to understand. But that isn't all. The spirit that flames and casts shadows upon these pages is not only Trotsky's. It is the spirit also of the Bolsheviki; of the red left of the left wing of the revolutionary movement of New Russia. It flashed from Petrograd to Vladivostok, in the first week of the revolt; it burned all along the Russian Front before Trotsky appeared on the scene. It will smoulder long after he is gone. It is a hot Fact which has to be picked up and examined, this spirit. Whether we like it or don't, it is there; in Russia; it is elsewhere; it is everywhere to-day. It is the spirit of war; class war, but war. It is in this book.

Nor is that all.

The mind in this book—the point of view from which it starts, the views to which it points—Trotsky's mind is the international mind. We have heard before of this new intelligence; we have read books, heard speeches, witnessed acts demonstrative of thoughts and feelings which are not national, but international; not patriotic, but loyal only to the lower-class-conscious war aims of the workers of the world. The class warrior is as familiar a figure to us as the red spirit is of the red left of revolution. But the voice which utters here the spirit and the mind, not only of the Russian, but of the world revolution is the voice of one having authority.

And Trotsky, in power, has been as red as he is in this book. The minister of foreign affairs practised in Petrograd what he preached in Switzerland, where he wrote most of the chapters of his book. And he practised also what all the other great International Socialist leaders talked and wrote.

That's what makes him so hard to understand, him and his party and the Bolshevik policy. We are accustomed to the sight of Socialists and Radicals going into office and being "sobered by the responsibilities of power." French and Italian Socialists in the Liberal ministries of their countries; British Labor leaders in Parliament in England or in the governments of their Colonies; and the whole Socialist party in Germany and Austria (except Liebknecht in prison) — all are examples of the effect of power upon the International Mind. The phenomenon of compromise and surrender is so common that many radicals oppose the taking of any responsible office by any member of their parties; and some of the extremists are advocating no political action whatsoever, nothing but industrial, economic or what they call "direct action." (Our I.W.W.'s don't vote, on principle.) This is anarchism.

Leon Trotsky is not an anarchist; except in the ignorant sense of the word as used by educated people. He is a Socialist; an orthodox Marxian Socialist. But he has seen vividly the danger of political power. The body of this book was addressed originally to the German and Austrian Socialists, and it is a reasoned, but indignant reproach of them for letting their political position and their nationalistic loyalty carry them away into an undemocratic, patriotic, political policy which betrayed the weaker nations in their empires, helped break up the Second (Socialist) International and led the Socialist parties into the support of the War.

Clear upon it, Trotsky himself does not illustrate his own thesis. He not only detests intellectually the secrecy and the sordid wickedness of the "old diplomacy"; when he came as minister into possession of the archives of the Russian Foreign Office, he published the secret treaties.

That hurt. And so with the idea of a people's peace. All the democratic world had been talking ever since the war began of a peace made, not by diplomats in a private room, but by the chosen

representatives of all the peoples meeting in an open congress. The Bolsheviki worked for that from the moment the Russian Revolution broke; and they labored for the Stockholm Conference while Paul Milyoukov and Alexander Kerensky were negotiating with the allied governments. When the Bolsheviki succeeded to power, Lenine and Trotzky formally authorized and officially proposed such a congress. Moreover Trotzky showed that they were willing, if they could, to force the other countries to accept the people's peace conference.

This hurt. This hurt so much that the governments united in extraordinary measures to prevent the event. And when they succeeded, and it was seen that no people's peace could be made openly and directly, Trotzky proceeded by another way to get to the same end. He opened negotiations with the Kaiser's government and allies; arranged an armistice and agreed tentatively upon terms of peace.

This act not only hurt; it stunned the world, and no wonder! It was like a declaration of war against a whole world at war. It was unbelievable. The only explanation offered was that Trotzky and Lenine were pro-German or dishonest, or both, and these things were said in high places; and they were said with conviction, too. Moreover this conviction colored, if it did not determine, the attitude the Allies took toward New Russia and the peace proposals Trotzky got from the German government. Was this assumption of the dishonesty of Trotzky the only explanation of his act?

This book shows, as I have said, that Trotzky saw things from the revolutionary, international point of view, which is not that of his judges; which is incomprehensible to them. He wrote it after the War began; he finished the main part of it before the Russian Revolution. It is his view of the War, its causes and its effects, especially upon international Socialism and "the" Revolution. These are the things he holds in his mind all through all these pages: "the" Revolution and world democracy. Also I have shown that, like the Russians generally, his mind is literal. The Russians mean what they say, exactly; and Trotzky not only means, he does what he writes. Putting these considerations together, we can make a comprehensible statement of the motive and the purpose of his policy; if we want to comprehend.

To all the other secretaries of state or of foreign affairs in the world, the Russian Revolution was an incident, an interruption of the War. To Minister Trotzky it was the other way around.

The World War was an incident, an effect, a check of "the" Revolution. Not the Russian Revolution, you understand. To Trotzky the Russian Revolution is but one, the first of that series of national revolutions which together will become the Thing he yearns for and prophesies: the World Revolution.

His peace policy therefore is a peace drive directed, not at a separate peace with the Central Powers; and not even at a general peace, but to an ending of the War in and by "the" Revolution everywhere.

Especially in Germany and Austria. He said this. The correspondent of the London *Daily News* cabled on January 2, right after the armistice and the agreement upon peace terms to be offered the Allies, that "Trotzky is doing his utmost to stimulate a revolution in Germany... Our only chance to defeat German designs is to publish terms (from the Allies) ... to help the democratic movement in Germany."

Trotzky is not pro-German. He certainly was not when he wrote this book. He hates here both the Austrian and the German dynasties, and his ill-will toward the House of Hapsburg is so bitter that it sounds sometimes as if there were something personal about it. And there is. He shows a knowledge of and a living sympathy with the small and subject nations which Austria rules, exploits and mistreats. He blames his Austrian comrades for their allegiance to a throne which is not merely undemocratic, but "senile" and tyrannical. That he, the literal Trotzky, would turn right around and, as the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, do what he had so recently criticized the Austrian Socialists for doing is unlikely.

Trotzky is against all the present governments of Europe, and the "bourgeois system" everywhere in the world. He isn't pro-Allies; he isn't even pro-Russian. He isn't a patriot at all. He is

for a class, the proletariat, the working people of all countries, and he is for his class only to get rid of classes and get down or up to-humanity. And so with his people.

The Russians have listened to the Socialist propaganda for generations now. They have learned the chief lessons it has taught: liberty, land, industrial democracy and the class-war the world over. This War was not their war; it was the Czar's war; a war of the governments in the interest of their enemies, the capitalists of their several countries, who, as Trotsky says, were forcing their states to fight for the right to exploit other and smaller peoples. So when they overthrew the Czar, the Russians wanted to drop his war and go into their own, the class war. Kerensky held them at the front in the name of "the" Revolution; he would get peace for them by arrangement with the allies. He didn't; he couldn't; he was dismissed by them. Not by the Bolsheviki, but by the Russian people who know the three or four things they want: land and liberty at home; the Revolution and Democracy for all the world.

I heard a radical assert one day that that was the reason Trotsky could be such an exception to the rule about radicals in power. He came to the head of the Russian Revolution when his ideas were the actual demands of the Russian people and that it was not his strength of character, but the force of a democratic public opinion in mob power, which made him stick to his philosophy and carry out his theories and promises. I find upon inquiry here in New York that while he was living and working as a journalist on the East Side, he left one paper after another because he could not conform, to their editorial policies and would not compromise. He was "stiff-necked," "obstinate," "unreasonable." In other, kinder words, Trotsky is a strong man, with a definite mind and a purpose of his own, which he has the will and the nerve to pursue.

Also, however, Trotsky is a strong man who is ruled by and represents a very simple-minded people who are acting like him, literally upon the theory that the people govern now, in Russia; the common people; and that, since they don't like the War of the Czar, the Kaiser, the Kings and the Emperors, their government should make peace with the peoples of the world, a democratic peace against imperialism and capitalism and the state everywhere, for the establishment in its stead of a free, world-wide democracy.

That may be the true explanation of Trotsky's Bolshevik peace policy in the world crisis of the World War. That is the explanation which is suggested by this book.

"Written in extreme haste," he says at the close of his preface, "under conditions far from favorable to systematic work ... the entire book, from the first page to the last, was written with the idea of the New International constantly in mind-the New International which must rise out of the present world cataclysm, the International of the last conflict and the final victory."

LINCOLN STEFFENS.

New York, January 4th, 1918

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The forces of production which capitalism has evolved have outgrown the limits of nation and state. The national state, the present political form, is too narrow for the exploitation of these productive forces. The natural tendency of our economic system, therefore, is to seek to break through the state boundaries. The whole globe, the land and the sea, the surface as well as the interior, has become one economic workshop, the different parts of which are inseparably connected with each other. This work was accomplished by capitalism. But in accomplishing it the capitalist states were led to struggle for the subjection of the world-embracing economic system to the profit interests of the bourgeoisie of each country. What the politics of imperialism has demonstrated more than anything else is that the old national state that was created in the revolutions and the wars of 1789-1815, 1848-1859, 1864-1866, and 1870 has outlived itself, and is now an intolerable hindrance to economic development.

The present War is at bottom a revolt of the forces of production against the political form of nation and state. It means the collapse of the national state as an independent economic unit.

The nation must continue to exist as a cultural, ideologic and psychological fact, but its economic foundation has been pulled from under its feet. All talk of the present bloody clash being a work of national defense is either hypocrisy or blindness. On the contrary, the real, objective significance of the war is the breakdown of the present national economic centres, and the substitution of a world economy in its stead. But the way the governments propose to solve this problem of imperialism is not through the intelligent, organized coöperation of all of humanity's producers, but through the exploitation of the world's economic system by the capitalist class of the victorious country; which country is by this War to be transformed from a great power into the world power.

The War proclaims the downfall of the national state. Yet at the same time it proclaims the downfall of the capitalist system of economy. By means of the national state capitalism has revolutionized the whole economic system of the world. It has divided the whole earth among the oligarchies of the great powers, around which were grouped the satellites, the small nations, who lived off the rivalry between the great ones. The future development of world economy on the capitalistic basis means a ceaseless struggle for new and ever new fields of capitalist exploitation, which must be obtained from one and the same source, the earth. The economic rivalry under the banner of militarism is accompanied by robbery and destruction which violate the elementary principles of human economy. World production revolts not only against the confusion produced by national and state divisions but also against the capitalist economic organization, which has now turned into barbarous disorganization and chaos.

The War of 1914 is the most colossal breakdown in history of an economic system destroyed by its own inherent contradictions.

All the historical forces whose task it has been to guide the bourgeois society, to speak in its name and to exploit it, have declared their historical bankruptcy by the War. They defended capitalism as a system of human civilization, and the catastrophe born out of that system is primarily *their* catastrophe. The first wave of events raised the national governments and armies to unprecedented heights never attained before. For the moment the nations rallied around them. But the more terrible will be the crash of the governments when the people, deafened by the thunder of the cannon, realize the meaning of the events now taking place in all their truth and frightfulness.

The revolutionary reaction of the masses will be all the more powerful the more prodigious the cataclysm which history is now bringing upon them.

Capitalism has created the material conditions of a new Socialist economic system. Imperialism has led the capitalist nations into historic chaos. The War of 1914 shows the way out of this chaos by violently urging the proletariat on to the path of Revolution.

For the economic backward countries of Europe the War brings to the fore problems of a far earlier historic origin—problems of democracy and national unity. This is in a large measure the case with the peoples of Russia, Austria-Hungary and the Balkan Peninsula. But these historically belated questions, which were bequeathed to the present epoch as a heritage from the past, do not alter the fundamental character of the events. It is not the national aspirations of the Serbs, Poles, Roumanians or Finns that has mobilized twenty-five million soldiers and placed them in the battlefields, but the imperialistic interests of the bourgeoisie of the Great Powers. It is imperialism that has upset completely the European *status quo*, maintained for forty-five years, and raised again the old questions which the bourgeois revolution proved itself powerless to solve.

Yet in the present epoch it is quite impossible to treat these questions in and by themselves. They are utterly devoid of an independent character. The creation of normal relations of national life and economic development on the Balkan Peninsula is unthinkable if Czarism and Austria-Hungary are preserved. Czarism is now the indispensable military reservoir for the financial imperialism of France and the conservative colonial power of England. Austria-Hungary is the mainstay of Germany's imperialism. Issuing from the private family clashes between the national Servian terrorists and the Hapsburg political police, the War very quickly revealed its true fundamental character—a struggle of life and death between Germany and England. While the simpletons and hypocrites prate of the defense of national freedom and independence, the German-English War is really being waged for the freedom of the imperialistic exploitation of the peoples of India and Egypt on the one hand, and for the imperialistic division of the peoples of the earth on the other.

Germany began its capitalistic development on a national basis with the destruction of the continental hegemony of France in the year 1870-1871. Now that the development of German industry on a national foundation has transformed Germany into the first capitalistic power of the world, she finds herself colliding with the hegemony of England in her further course of development. The complete and unlimited domination of the European continent seems to Germany the indispensable prerequisite of the overthrow of her world enemy. The first thing, therefore, that imperialistic Germany writes in her programme is the creation of a Middle European League of Nations. Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Balkan Peninsula and Turkey, Holland, the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, Italy, and, if possible, enfeebled France and Spain and Portugal, are to make one economic and military whole, a Great Germany under the hegemony of the present German state.

This programme, which has been thoroughly elaborated by the economists, political students, jurists and diplomats of German imperialism and translated into reality by its strategists, is the most striking proof and most eloquent expression of the fact that capitalism has expanded beyond the limits of the national state and feels intolerably cramped within its boundaries. The national Great Power must go and in its place must step the imperialistic World Power.

In these historical circumstances the working class, the proletariat, can have no interest in defending the outlived and antiquated national "fatherland," which has become the main obstacle to economic development. The task of the proletariat is to create a far more powerful fatherland, with far greater power of resistance—*the republican United States of Europe*, as the foundation of the United States of the World.

The only way in which the proletariat can meet the imperialistic perplexity of capitalism is by opposing to it as a practical programme of the day the Socialist organization of world economy.

War is the method by which capitalism, at the climax of its development, seeks to solve its insoluble contradictions. To this method the proletariat must oppose its *own* method, the method of the Social Revolution.

The Balkan question and the question of the overthrow of Czarism, propounded to us by the Europe of yesterday, can be solved only in a revolutionary way, in connection with the problem of the United Europe of to-morrow. The immediate, urgent task of the Russian Social Democracy, to which the author belongs, is the fight against Czarism. What Czarism primarily seeks in Austria-Hungary

and the Balkans is a market for its political methods of plunder, robbery and acts of violence. The Russian bourgeoisie all the way up to its radical intellectuals has become completely demoralized by the tremendous growth of industry in the last five years, and it has entered into a bloody league with the dynasty, which had to secure to the impatient Russian capitalists their part of the world's booty by new land robberies. While Czarism stormed and devastated Galicia, and deprived it even of the rags and tatters of liberty granted to it by the Hapsburgs, while it dismembered unhappy Persia, and from the corner of the Bosphorus strove to throw the noose around the neck of the Balkan peoples, it left to the liberalism which it despised the task of concealing its robbery by sickening declamations over the defense of Belgium and France. The year 1914 spells the complete bankruptcy of Russian liberalism, and makes the Russian proletariat the sole champion of the war of liberation. It makes the Russian Revolution definitely an integral part of the Social Revolution of the European proletariat.

In our war against Czarism, in which we have never known a "national" truce, we have never looked for help from Hapsburg or Hohenzollern militarism, and we are not looking for it now. We have preserved a sufficiently clear revolutionary vision to know that the idea of destroying Czarism was utterly repugnant to German imperialism. Czarism has been its best ally on the Eastern border. It is united to it by close ties of social structure and historical aims. Yet even if it were otherwise, even if it could be assumed that, in obedience to the logic of military operations, it would deal a destructive blow to Czarism, in defiance of the logic of its own political interests—even in such a highly improbable case we should refuse to regard the Hohenzollerns not only as an objective but as a subjective ally. The fate of the Russian Revolution is so inseparably bound up with the fate of European Socialism, and we Russian Socialists stand so firmly on the ground of internationalism, that we cannot, we must not for a moment, entertain the idea of purchasing the doubtful liberation of Russia by the certain destruction of the liberty of Belgium and France, and—what is more important still—thereby inoculating the German and Austrian proletariat with the virus of imperialism.

We are united by many ties to the German Social Democracy. We have all gone through the German Socialist school, and learned lessons from its successes as well as from its failures. The German Social Democracy was to us not only *a* party of the International. It was *the* Party *par excellence*. We have always preserved and fortified the fraternal bond that united us with the Austrian Social Democracy. On the other hand, we have always taken pride in the fact that we have made our modest contribution towards winning suffrage in Austria and arousing revolutionary tendencies in the German working class. It cost more than one drop of blood to do it. We have unhesitatingly accepted moral and material support from our older brother who fought for the same ends as we on the other side of our Western border.

Yet it is just because of this respect for the past, and still more out of respect for the future, which ought to unite the working class of Russia with the working classes of Germany and Austria, that we indignantly reject the "liberating" aid which German imperialism offers us in a Krupp munition box, with the blessing, alas! of German Socialism. And we hope that the indignant protest of Russian Socialism will be loud enough to be heard in Berlin and in Vienna.

The collapse of the Second International is a tragic fact, and it were blindness or cowardice to close one's eyes to it. The position taken by the French and by the larger part of English Socialism is as much a part of this breakdown as the position of the German and Austrian Social Democracy. If the present work addresses itself chiefly to the German Social Democracy it is only because the German party was the strongest, most influential, and in principle the most basic member of the Socialist world. Its historic capitulation reveals most clearly the causes of the downfall of the Second International. At first glance it may appear that the social revolutionary prospects of the future are wholly deceptive. The insolvency of the old Socialist parties has become catastrophically apparent. Why should we have faith in the future of the Socialist movement? Such skepticism, though natural, nevertheless leads to quite an erroneous conclusion. It leaves out of account the good will of history,

just as we have often been too prone to ignore its ill will, which has now so cruelly shown itself in the fate that has overcome the International.

The present War signalizes the collapse of the national states. The Socialist parties of the epoch now concluded were national parties. They had become ingrained in the national states with all the different branches of their organizations, with all their activities and with their psychology. In the face of the solemn declarations at their congresses they rose to the defense of the conservative state, when imperialism, grown big on the national soil, began to demolish the antiquated national barriers. And in their historic crash the national states have pulled down with them the national Socialist parties also.

It is not Socialism that has gone down, but its temporary historical external form. The revolutionary idea begins its life anew as it casts off its old rigid shell. This shell is made up of living human beings, of an entire generation of Socialists that has become fossilized in self-abnegating work of agitation and organization through a period of several decades of political reaction, and has fallen into the habits and views of national opportunism or possibilism. All efforts to save the Second International on the old basis, by personal diplomatic methods and mutual concessions, are quite hopeless. The old mole of history is now digging its passageways all too well and none has the power to stop him.

As the national states have become a hindrance to the development of the forces of production, so the old Socialist parties have become the main hindrance to the revolutionary movement of the working class. It was necessary that they should demonstrate to the full their extreme backwardness, that they should discredit their utterly inadequate and narrow methods, and bring the shame and horror of national discord upon the proletariat, in order that the working class might emancipate itself, through these fearful disillusionments, from the prejudices and slavish habits of the period of preparation, and become at last that which the voice of history is now calling it to be—the revolutionary class fighting for power.

The Second International has not lived in vain. It has accomplished a huge cultural work. There has been nothing like it in history before. It has educated and assembled the oppressed classes. The proletariat does not now need to begin at the beginning. It enters on the new road not with empty hands. The past epoch has bequeathed to it a rich arsenal of ideas. It has bequeathed to it the weapons of criticism. The new epoch will teach the proletariat to combine the old weapons of criticism with the new criticism of weapons.

This book was written in extreme haste, under conditions far from favorable to systematic work. A large part of it is devoted to the old International which has fallen. But the entire book, from the first to the last page, was written with the idea of the New International constantly in mind, the New International which must rise up out of the present world cataclysm, the International of the last conflict and the final victory.

LEON TROTZKY.

CHAPTER I

THE BALKAN QUESTION

"The War at present being waged against Russian Czarism and its vassals is dominated by a great historic idea. The impetus of this great historic idea consecrates the battlefields of Poland and of Eastern Russia. The roar of cannon, the rattling of machine guns, and the onrush of cavalry, all betoken the enforcement of the democratic programme for the liberation of the nations. Had Czarism, in league with the French capitalistic powers and in league with an unscrupulous 'nation of shopkeepers,' not succeeded in suppressing the Revolution of 1905, the present slaughter of the nations would have been avoided.

"A democratic Russia would never have consented to wage this unscrupulous and futile War. The great ideas of freedom and justice now speak the persuasive language of the machine gun and the sword, and every heart susceptible of sympathy with justice and humanity can only wish that the power of Czarism may be destroyed once for all, and that the oppressed Russian nationalities may again secure the right to decide their own destinies."

The above quotation is from the *Nepszava* of August 31, 1914, the official organ of the Socialist party of Hungary. Hungary is the land whose entire inner life was erected upon the high-handed oppression of the national minorities, upon the enslavement of the laboring classes, upon the official parasitism and usury of the ruling caste of large landowners. It is the land in which men like Tisza are masters of the situation, dyed-in-the-wool agrarians, with the manners of political bandits. In a word, Hungary is a country closest of kin to Czar-ruled Russia.

So what is more fitting than that the *Nepszava*, the Socialist organ of Hungary, should hail with outbursts of enthusiasm the liberating mission of the German and Austro-Hungarian armies? Who other than Count Tisza could have felt the call to "enforce the democratic programme for the liberation of the nations"? Who was there to uphold the eternal principles of law and justice in Europe but the ruling clique of Budapest, the discredited Panamists? Would you entrust this mission to the unscrupulous diplomacy of "perfidious Albion," to the nation of shopkeepers?

Laughter turns away wrath. The tragic inconsistencies of the policies followed by the International not only reach their climax in the articles of the poor *Nepszava*; they disarm us by their humor.

The present series of events began with the ultimatum, sent to Serbia by Austria-Hungary. There was not the slightest reason why the international Social Democracy should take under its protection the intrigues of the Serbs or any other of the petty dynasties of the Balkan Peninsula. They were all endeavoring to hide their political adventures under the cloak of national aspirations. We had still less cause to lash ourselves into a state of moral indignation because a fanatic young Serb responded to the cowardly, criminal and wily national politics of the Vienna and Budapest government authorities with a bloody assassination.¹

¹ It is noteworthy that these opportunistic Austrian and German Socialists are now writhing with moral indignation over the "treacherous assassination at Sarajevo." And yet they always sympathized with the Russian terrorists more than we, the Russian Social Democrats, did, who are opposed on principle to the terroristic method. Lost in the mist of chauvinism, they can no longer see that the unfortunate Servian terrorist, Gavrilo Princip, represents precisely the same national principle as the German terrorist, Sand. Perhaps they will even ask us to transfer our sympathies from Sand to Kotzebue? Or perhaps these eunuchs will advise the Swiss to overthrow the monuments erected to the assassin Tell and replace them with monuments to the Austrian governor, Gessler, one of the spiritual forerunners of the murdered archduke?

Of one thing we have no doubt. In the dealings between the Danube Monarchy and the Servian government, the historic right, that is to say, the right of free development, rests entirely with Servia, just as Italy was in the right in the year 1859. Underneath the duel between the imperial police scoundrels and the terrorists of Belgrade, there is hidden a far deeper meaning than merely the greed of the Kareorgoievitches or the crimes of the Czar's diplomacy. On one side were the imperialistic claims of a national state that had lost its vitality, and on the other side, the strivings of the dismembered Servian nation to reintegrate itself into a national whole and become a living vital state.

Is it for this that we have sat so long in the school of Socialism to forget the first three letters of the democratic alphabet? This absolute lapse of memory, moreover, made its appearance only after the fourth of August. Up to that fatal date the German Marxists showed that they knew very well what was happening in Southeastern Europe.

On July 3, 1914, after the assassination at Sarajevo, the *Vorwärts* wrote:

"The bourgeois revolution of the South Slavs is in full swing, and the shooting at Sarajevo, however wild and senseless an act in itself, is as much a chapter of this revolution as the battles by which the Bulgarians, Serbs and Montenegrins liberated the peasants of Macedonia from the yoke of Turkish feudal exploitation. Is it a wonder that the South Slavs of Austria-Hungary look with longing to their racial brothers in the kingdom of Servia? The Serbs in Servia have attained the highest goal a people can attain in the present order of society. They have attained national independence. Whereas in Vienna or Budapest they treat every one bearing the name of Serb or Croatian with blows and kicks, with court-martial justice and the gallows... There are seven and a half million South Slavs who, as a result of the victories in the Balkans, have grown bolder than ever in demanding their political rights. And if the imperial throne of Austria continues to resist their impact, it will topple over and the entire Empire with which we have coupled our destiny will break to pieces. For it is in line with historic evolution that such national revolutions should march onward to victory."

If the international Social Democracy together with its Servian contingent, offered unyielding resistance to Servia's national claims, it was certainly not out of any consideration for the historic rights of Austria-Hungary to oppress and disintegrate the nationalities living within her borders; and most certainly not out of consideration for the liberating mission of the Hapsburgs. Until August, 1914, no one, except the black and yellow hirelings of the press, dared to breathe a word about that. The Socialists were influenced in their course of conduct by entirely different motives. First of all, the proletariat, although by no means disputing the historic right of Servia to strive for national unity, could not trust the solution of this problem to the powers then controlling the destinies of the Servian kingdom. And in the second place—and this was for us the deciding factor—the international Social Democracy could not sacrifice the peace of Europe to the national cause of the Serbs, recognizing, as it did, that, except for a European revolution, the only way such unity could be achieved was through a European war.

But from the moment Austria-Hungary carried the question of her own fate and that of Servia to the battlefield, Socialists could no longer have the slightest doubt that social and national progress would be hit much harder in Southeastern Europe by a Hapsburg victory than by a Servian victory. To be sure, there was still no reason for us Socialists to identify our cause with the aims of the Servian army. This was the idea that animated the Servian Socialists, Ljaptchevitch and Katzlerovitch, when they took the manly stand of voting against the war credits.² But surely we had still less reason to

² To appreciate fully this action of the Servian Socialists we must bear in mind the political situation by which they were confronted. A group of Servian conspirators had murdered a member of the Hapsburg family, the mainstay of Austro-Hungarian clericalism,

support the purely dynastic rights of the Hapsburgs and the imperialistic interests of the feudal-capitalistic cliques against the national struggle of the Serbs. At all events, the Austro-Hungarian Social Democracy, which now invokes its blessings upon the sword of the Hapsburgs for the liberation of the Poles, the Ukrainians, the Finns and the Russian people, must first of all clarify its ideas on the Servian question, which it has gotten so hopelessly muddled.

The question at issue, however, is not confined to the fate of the ten million Serbs. The clash of the European nations has brought up the entire Balkan question anew. The Peace of Bucharest, signed in 1903, has solved neither the national nor the international problems in the Near East. It has only intensified the added confusion resulting from the two unfinished Balkan Wars, unfinished because of the complete temporary exhaustion of the nations participating in it.

Roumania had followed in the path of Austro-Hungarian politics, despite the Romanesque sympathies of its population, especially in the cities. This was due not so much to dynastic causes, to the fact that a Hohenzollern prince occupied the throne, as to the imminent danger of a Russian invasion. In 1879 the Russian Czar, as thanks for Roumania's support in the Russo-Turkish war of "liberation," cut off a slice of Roumanian territory, the province of Bessarabia. This eloquent deed provided a sufficient backing to the dynastic sympathies of the Hohenzollern in Bucharest. But the Magyar-Hapsburg clique succeeded in incensing the Roumanian people against them by their denationalizing policy in Transylvania, which has a population of three million Roumanians as against three-fourths of a million in the Russian province of Bessarabia; and they further antagonized them by their commercial treaties, which were dictated by the interests of the large Austro-Hungarian land-owners. So that Roumania's entrance into the War on the side of the Czar, despite the courageous and active agitation against participation in the War on either side, carried on by the Socialist party under the leadership of my friends Gherea and Rakowsky, is to be laid altogether at the door of the ruling class of Austria-Hungary, who are reaping the harvest they have sown here as well as elsewhere.

But the matter is not disposed of by fixing the historical responsibility. To-morrow, in a month, in a year or more the War will bring to the foreground the whole question of the destiny of the Balkan peoples and of Austria-Hungary, and the proletariat will have to have its answer to this question. European democracy in the nineteenth century looked with distrust at the Balkan people's struggle for independence, because it feared that Russia might be strengthened at the expense of Turkey. On this subject Karl Marx wrote in 1853, on the eve of the Crimean War:

"It may be said that the more firmly established Serbia and the Servian nationality is the more the direct influence of Russia on the Turkish Slavs is shoved into the background. For in order to be able to assert its peculiar position as a state, Serbia had to import its political institutions, its schools ... from Western Europe."

This prophecy has been brilliantly fulfilled in what has actually happened in Bulgaria, which was created by Russia as an outpost on the Balkans. As soon as Bulgaria was fairly well established as a national state, it developed a strong anti-Russian party, under the leadership of Russia's former pupil, Stambulov, and this party was able to stamp its iron seal upon the entire foreign policy of the young country. The whole mechanism of the political parties in Bulgaria is so constructed as to enable it to steer between the two European combinations without being absolutely forced into the channel

militarism, and imperialism. Using this as a welcome pretext, the military party in Vienna sent an ultimatum to Serbia, which, for sheer audacity, has scarcely ever been paralleled in diplomatic history. In reply, the Servian government made extraordinary concessions, and suggested that the solution of the question in dispute be turned over to the Hague tribunal. Thereupon Austria declared war on Serbia. If the idea of a "war of defense" has any meaning at all, it certainly applied to Serbia in this instance. Nevertheless, our friends, Ljaptchevitch and Katzlerovitch, unshaken in their conviction of the course of action that they as Socialists must pursue, refused the government a vote of confidence. The writer was in Serbia at the beginning of the War. In the Skuptchina, in an atmosphere of indescribable national enthusiasm, a vote was taken on the war credits. The voting was by roll-call. Two hundred members had all answered "Yes." Then in a moment of deathlike silence came the voice of the Socialist Ljaptchevitch-"No." Every one felt the moral force of this protest, and the scene has remained indelibly impressed upon my memory.

of either, unless it chooses to enter it of its own accord. Roumania went with the Austro-German alliance, Servia, since 1903, with Russia, because the one was menaced directly by Russia, the other by Austria. The more independent the countries of Southeast Europe are from Austria-Hungary, the more effectively they will be able to protect their independence against Czarism.

The balance of power in the Balkans, created by the Congress of Berlin in 1879, was full of contradictions. Cut up by artificial ethnographical boundaries, placed under the control of imported dynasties from German nurseries, bound hand and foot by the intrigues of the Great Powers, the peoples of the Balkans could not cease their efforts for further national freedom and unity. The national politics of independent Bulgaria was naturally directed towards Macedonia, populated by Bulgarians. The Berlin Congress had left it under Turkish rule. On the other hand, Servia had practically nothing to look for in Turkey with the exception of the little strip of land, the sandbag Novy Bazar. Its national interests lay on the other side of the Austro-Hungarian boundary, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia. Roumania had no interests in the south, where it is separated from European Turkey by Servia and Bulgaria. Roumania's expansion policy was directed towards the northwest and east, towards Hungarian Transylvania and Russian Bessarabia. Finally, the national expansion of Greece, like that of Bulgaria, collided with Turkey.

Austro-German politics, aiming at the artificial preservation of European Turkey, broke down not on account of the diplomatic intrigues of Russia, although these of course were not lacking. It broke down because of the inevitable course of evolution. The Balkan Peninsula had entered on the path of capitalist development, and it was this fact that raised the question of the self-determination of the Balkan peoples as national states to the historical issue of the day.

The Balkan War disposed of European Turkey, and thereby created the conditions necessary for the solution of the Bulgarian and Greek questions. But Servia and Roumania, whose national completion could only be achieved at the expense of Austria-Hungary, found themselves checked in their efforts at expansion southwards, and were compensated at the expense of what racially belonged to Bulgaria-Servia in Macedonia, and Roumania in Dobrudja. This is the meaning of the second Balkan War and the Peace of Bucharest by which it was concluded.

The mere existence of Austria-Hungary, this Turkey of Middle Europe, blocks the way to the natural self-determination of the peoples of the Southeast. It compels them to keep constantly fighting against each other, to seek support against each other from the outside, and so makes them the tool of the political combinations of the Great Powers. It was only in such chaos that Czaristic diplomacy was enabled to spin the web of its Balkan politics, the last thread of which was Constantinople. And only a federation of the Balkan states, both economic and military, can interpose an invincible barrier to the greed of Czarism.

Now that European Turkey has been disposed of, it is Austria-Hungary that stands in the way of a federation of the Balkan states. Roumania, Bulgaria, and Servia would have found their natural boundaries, and would have united with Greece and Turkey, on the basis of common economic interests, into a league of defense. This would finally have brought peace to the Balkan Peninsula, that witches' cauldron which periodically threatened Europe with explosions, until it drew it into the present catastrophe.

Up to a certain time the Socialists had to reconcile themselves to the routine way in which the Balkan question was treated by capitalistic diplomats, who in their conferences and secret agreements stopped up one hole only to open another, even wider one. So long as this dilatory method kept postponing the final solution, the Socialist International could hope that the settlement of the Hapsburg succession would be a matter not for a European war, but for the European Revolution. But now that the War has destroyed the equilibrium of the whole of Europe, and the predatory Powers are seeking to remodel the map of Europe—not on the basis of national democratic principles, but of military strength—the Social Democracy must come to a clear comprehension of the fact that one of the chief obstacles to freedom, peace and progress, in addition to Czarism and German militarism,

is the Hapsburg Monarchy as a state organization. The crime of the Galician Socialist group under Daszynski consisted not only in placing the Polish cause above the cause of Socialism, but also in linking the fate of Poland with the fate of the Austro-Hungarian armies and the fate of the Hapsburg Monarchy.

The Socialist proletariat of Europe cannot adopt such a solution of the question. For us the question of united and independent Poland is on a par with the question of united and independent Servia. We cannot and we will not permit the Polish question to be solved by methods which will perpetuate the chaos at present prevailing in Southeastern Europe, in fact through the whole of Europe. For us Socialists the independence of Poland means its independence on both fronts, on the Romanoff front and on the Hapsburg front. We not only wish the Polish people to be free from the oppression of Czarism. We wish also that the fate of the Servian people shall not be dependent upon the Polish nobility in Galicia.

For the present we need not consider what the relations of an independent Poland will be to Bohemia, Hungary and the Balkan Federation. But it is perfectly clear that a complex of medium-sized and small states on the Danube and in the Balkan Peninsula will constitute a far more effective bar to the Czaristic designs on Europe than the weak, chaotic Austro-Hungarian State, which proves its right to existence only by its continued attempts upon the peace of Europe.

In the article of 1853, quoted above, Marx wrote as follows on the Eastern question:

"We have seen that the statesmen of Europe, in their obdurate stupidity, petrified routine, and hereditary intellectual indolence, recoil from every attempt at answering the question of what is to become of Turkey in Europe. The driving force that favors Russia's advance towards Constantinople is the very means by which it is thought to keep her away from it, the empty theory, never carried out, of maintaining the *status quo*. What is this *status quo*? For the Christian subjects of the Porte it means nothing else than the perpetuation of their oppression by Turkey. As long as they are under the yoke of the Turkish rule, they look upon the head of the Greek Church, the ruler of 60 million Greek Church Christians, as *their natural protector and liberator*."

What is here said of Turkey now applies in a still greater degree to Austria-Hungary. The solution of the Balkan question is unthinkable without the solution of the Austro-Hungarian question, as they are both comprised in one and the same formula—the Democratic Federation of the Danube and Balkan Nations.

"The governments with their old-fashioned diplomacy," wrote Marx, "will never solve the difficulty. Like the solution of so many other problems, the Turkish problem, too, is reserved for the European Revolution." This statement holds just as good to-day as when it was first written. But for the Revolution to solve the difficulties that have piled up in the course of centuries, the proletariat must have its *own* programme for the solution of the Austro-Hungarian question. And this programme it must oppose just as strenuously to the Czaristic greed of conquest as to the cowardly and conservative efforts to maintain the Austro-Hungarian *status quo*.

CHAPTER II

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

Russian Czarism undoubtedly represents a cruder and more barbarian form of state organization than does the feebleness of absolutism of Austria-Hungary, which has been mitigated by the weakness of old age. But Russian Czarism and the Russian state are by no means identical. The destruction of Czarism does not mean the disintegration of the state. On the contrary it means its liberation and its strengthening. All such assertions, as that it is necessary to push Russia back into Asia, which found an echo even in certain Social Democratic organs, are based on a poor knowledge of geography and ethnography. Whatever may be the fate of various parts of present Russia-Russian Poland, Finland, the Ukraine or Bessarabia-European Russia will not cease to exist as the national territory of a many-millioned race that has made notable conquests along the line of cultural development during the last quarter century.

Quite different is the case of Austria-Hungary. As a state organization it is identical with the Hapsburg Monarchy. It stands or falls with the Hapsburgs, just as European Turkey was identical with the feudal-military Ottoman caste and fell when that caste fell. A conglomerate of racial fragments centrifugal in tendency, yet forced by a dynasty to stick together, Austria-Hungary presents the most reactionary picture in the very heart of Europe. Its continuation after the present European catastrophe would not only delay the development of the Danube and Balkan peoples for more decades to come and make a repetition of the present War a practical certainty, but it would also strengthen Czarism politically by preserving its main source of spiritual nourishment.

If the German Social Democracy reconciles itself to the ruin of France by regarding it as punishment for France's alliance with Czarism, then we must ask that the same criterion be applied to the German-Austrian alliance. And if the alliance of the two Western democracies with a despotic Czarism gives the lie to the French and English press when they represent the War as one of liberation, then is it not equally arrogant, if not more so, for the German Social Democracy to spread the banner of liberty over the Hohenzollern army, the army that is fighting not only *against*

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