

# WHEN WAR COMES

## Article 4.

This is the fourth of a series of articles (compiled by the Social and Economic Department of the Red International of Labor Unions) which give in clear outline, the forecast of what war will bring, the conditions that will ensue and the historic developments that will mark the transformation of the capitalist war into civil war, developments in which every worker will find it necessary to act as an agent of that transformation. Let all understand, then, that the developments which are today but forecasts, will tomorrow be grim realities—which must be faced—Editor.

\* \* \*

It will be absolutely impossible to foresee how it will all end and who will come out victorious—only one result is unmistakable—there will be general exhaustion and the creation of conditions that will bring about the final victory of the working class.

Such are the prospects in store for us if the system of mutual competition in armaments is carried to the extreme and yields its inevitable fruits. There, kings and statesmen, that is where you are leading old Europe with all your wisdom! And if you feel that there is nothing left but to start the last war dance—we have no objection. Let the war even throw us back perhaps for a decade. Let some of the positions we have won be taken from us. But if you release the forces which will later be beyond your control, then no matter how things may go, you will be overthrown at the end of the tragedy, and the victory of the proletariat will either be won or be still as inevitable.

Despite all the "plans" of the war economy, the preparation of reserves, etc. (rather as a result of these "plans" subordinated to serve capitalism during imperialist war), the pressure on the broad masses of the toilers will become absolutely intolerable soon after hostilities have commenced.

### How "Civil Peace" Is Maintained

As each month goes by more efforts will be made to beat down wages, to use "civil peace," patriotic "enthusiasm" and "scares" that the mobilization and militarization of the enterprises are menaced to cut and keep on cutting the nominal wages of the basic masses of the workers. Simultaneously, there will be a steady and rapid rise of prices (an inevitable result of the

financings of wars) and consequently a corresponding fall in real wages.

An insufficiency of the first articles of necessity will soon make itself felt in the bulk of the countries and their illicit sale to the bourgeoisie at fabulous prices will be seen. For the working class, employes and the wide strata of the petty bourgeoisie the "planned" economy will soon become simply "organized starvation."

Simultaneously, rationalization and intensification of labor will be speeded up to an unheard of degree. The new impetus will start from that degree of intensification of labor which it would appear could not be intensified further, and at many enterprises the workers will utterly exhaust themselves literally during the space of a few years. All that will be left of the labor protective measures, as well as all limitations on working hours, etc., will be annulled and forgotten.

### The Dispersed Front

Further, we must remember the influence the "dispersed front" (which had no place in the last war) will have, e.g., the constant risk and danger to which everyone will be exposed. The whole country will experience the tension and nervous strain of the front, will live in constant expectation of a sudden attack. One prominent American chemist has said that directly war is declared he will hasten to the front, as this will be the safest, the quietest place during the war of the future.

The latter part of this statement is hardly true, for monstrous engines of mass extermination will be set in motion at the front too; but it is true that there will be no great difference in this respect between the front lines and the rear. Indeed, the close and numerous connections between the rear and the front will rapidly tend to equalize the feelings and the general mood obtaining in the armies and among the workers "at home."

Despite the vigilant efforts of the military dictatorship, despite, too, the powerful influence capitalist and reformist agitation and propaganda will exercise (which undoubtedly will again successfully convince a considerable section of the toilers at the beginning of the war that they are fighting for the "motherland"), all these factors will gradually, but steadily and irrevocably, undermine the "civil peace," unstable as it already is.

(To be continued)