

WHEN WAR COMES

Article 5.

THE younger generation of the toilers, who had no experience of the last war and who, having received a military training, look upon war in some measure as a jolly adventure (as an escape from the monotonous routine in the rationalized plants and from the privations of unemployment) will be thrown headlong into the war and it will not be long before they get rid of their illusions.

That section of the older generation of the workers, to be found even among the active rank and file of the reformist parties and unions, who, far from the fray, urged "a war to the finish," will now have to "smell the gases" and this in a short while will have a decidedly dampening effect on their social-patriotic enthusiasm.

Military Dictatorship.

In spite of the mailed fist of the military dictatorship, whose weight will be felt in each and every enterprise, the economic contradictions maturing in every branch of industry will lead to spontaneous movements among the workers, compelled by sheer circumstance to struggle for their elementary standards, if not for their very existence. And this struggle, quite apart from conscious aims, will inevitably become a fight against war and thus against imperialism, against the entire capitalist system as a whole. It is this that will prompt the bourgeoisie and the military clique ruling in its name, to stamp out resolutely and ruthlessly all signs of such a movement. But since the original causes will in no way be modified by such bloody measures, they will only give birth to new "uplures" as time goes on, tempered by the added experience gained by the masses, a higher level of political consciousness and a realization of the connection between the phenomena of every day life and the "secret" of war.

In a hundred and one ways, these uprisings will flow out in ever widening circles to the front, through all those numerous channels of communication and support (which will connect the front with the rear to a greater degree than hitherto), will crystallize and coordinate the dissatisfaction and discontent of the troops in one broad movement.

Behind the outward tranquility, under the hermetic seal of the military dictatorship, all the accumulated hatred, antagonism and indignation will gain increasing pressure.

The "habit" to expect all possible contingencies, created by the war atmosphere, the feeling that will overwhelm each man under arms that he is trapped, that he is being driven to the wall, will make the soldiers ready for any sacrifice, to risk any danger. The army will no longer be a contingent of hirelings, schooled into discipline and obedience over a period of years; it will be a mighty section of the toilers hurriedly "trained" in the apparatus of the "man-slaughtering" industry. In spite of all disciplinary and censorship barriers, this section of the army will be in close contact with the workers' army in the rear, will register and react to all its moods, and will rapidly influence the rear with its own revulsions to the carrying of arms and its hatred of the inspirers of the imperialist blood-bath.

The Front and the Rear Armed.

All kinds of arms, unprecedented in their range of action, will be in the hands of everyone both at the front and in the rear. And the broad masses will know how to handle the bulk of the weapons, will know how to use the knowl-

edge which the bourgeoisie, whether they liked it or not, were forced to give them (for otherwise no war could have taken place). Marx said: "The weapon used by the bourgeoisie to overthrow feudalism is now being used against the bourgeoisie itself. But the bourgeoisie has not only forged the weapon that will kill it, but has created the people who will shoulder the weapon. They are the present-day workers—the proletarians." These words can be appropriately applied to the present situation.

In spite of all the obstacles and repressions, an extremely favorable field for revolutionary activities is created by these conditions. Engels once wrote: "The Prussian army in peace time might under ordinary circumstances allow itself to be used by the government inside the country—but in wartime, never." This prophecy was fulfilled in every respect in the Russian army in 1917, and to a less degree (since the bourgeoisie made use of the social-democrats) in Germany and Austria of 1918. The imperialist war of the future will pave the way for its fulfillment on yet a wider scale.

Organization of Fascist Corps.

True, we should not forget that the bourgeoisie will be able to recruit its hirelings ("loyal to the death") from fascist contingents made up of the professional officer class, bourgeois students and other groups for the various strategically important sections of the army, especially since with present-day mechanization and technical progress such sections need not be large numerically. The armaments with which these contingents will be furnished will have a range of action never witnessed before. This applies especially to aviation whose relatively small complements will be recruited and deployed just from this point of view. This, too, refers to the tank crews, poison-gas squads and electric ray operators, and others, who will be used to suppress any sign of sedition among the troops and the workers and to frustrate any revolutionary move.

These fascist contingents will cause much damage and undoubtedly will again and again drown the uprisings in a sea of blood.

A considerable section of these contingents will be held in reserve all the time, will be spared from the holocaust at the front to deal with any mutiny in their "own" army or among the workers.

But significant as they are, these contingents will comprise only a small section of the mass armies of the future and in the long run will be unable to act without these armies and without the support of the industrial services. We have already shown that in modern warfare available supplies and large numbers of trained airmen have no value whatever unless they can be constantly supplemented and renewed by the continuous and uninterrupted operation of industry. The same consideration applies to chemical warfare, tanks, etc., not to speak of mechanized and automatic appliances handled by the infantry, artillery, etc.

The punitive and expeditionary operations of these picked contingents will only provoke a new storm of protest and hatred against themselves and as the movement becomes extended this fascist "bulwark" of the bourgeoisie will (in all likelihood after much sacrifice) be swept aside by the rising tide of the revolutionary action of the troops and workers.

(To be continued)