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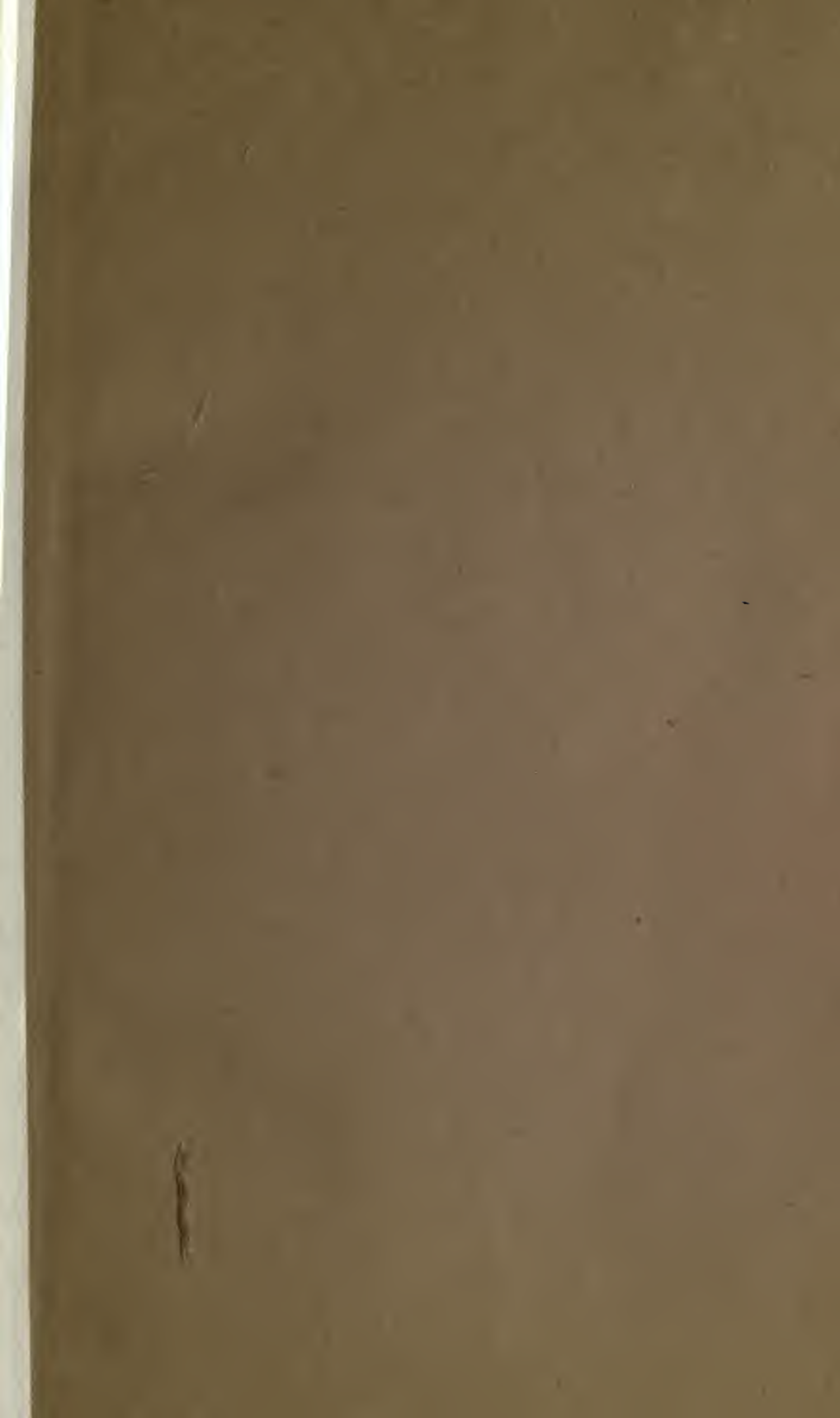


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THE POLICY OF THE INTERNATIONAL

A Speech of and an Interview with
the Secretary of the International,
CAMILLE HUYSMANS,
Member of the Belgian Parliament
and the Brussels City Council.



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THE POLICY OF THE INTERNATIONAL

A Study of the International
League of Nations
First published in 1916
The League of Nations
and the British Empire

THE
INTERNATIONAL

LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD
1916

AS INTERVIEWED WITH
CAMILLE HUYSMANS

NOTE.—The attitude and policy of the International
has been so often misrepresented that we feel the neces-
sity of publishing two authentic documents, explaining
clearly what the International has done and will do.
Judgment on the attitude or policy we leave to the reader.

CAMILLE HUYSMANS.



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AN INTERVIEW WITH CAMILLE HUYSMANS.

[From the "Petit Parisien" of March 25th, 1916.]

" M. Camille Huysmans, deputy of Brussels, Secretary of the International Socialist Bureau, is in Paris for a few days. He has had interviews with the Executive Committee and the Parliamentary group of the French Socialist Party. It will be remembered, by the protest in this journal from our collaborator Jules Destrée, that the 'Social-Demokraten,' of Copenhagen has represented M. Huysmans and the International Socialist Bureau as disposed to facilitate a bringing together of the Socialists of the allied countries and the German Socialists, with the object of convoking a congress which would pronounce on the possibility of peace.

" It was in order that M. Huysmans could explain this matter that we have interviewed him. 'The war,' M. Huysmans has informed us, 'has no more destroyed the International Socialist organisation than it has caused the

Catholic Church to disappear. The fate of both is independent of the position of belligerent nations. The Centre has maintained its contact with all the groups.

THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU.

“ ‘ The working of the International Bureau had, moreover, been provided for, before hostilities, by resolutions which, it may be noted, emanated from the French group.

“ ‘ Therefore, we could, after the example of the Zimmerwaldians—those franc-tireurs of parties without troops—have pronounced a general condemnation on all those who have, in the various countries, voted the credits of war, and included them all in a common accusation of Imperialism.

“ ‘ M. Huysmans pauses for a moment, then slowly continues: ‘ That position we have not wished to take because it would have been unjust. We decided to remain at our post, and to keep up relations with all the organisations without distinction, with the intention of acting only when agreement had been established between all the interested parties, the opposition of any one involving inaction.

“ ‘ The International Bureau comprises 27 parties, consisting of 12,000,000 members.’

“ ‘ A meeting of the Bureau is, at the present time, demanded by certain affiliated parties; it is accepted by the Germans and rejected by our French and English sections, It is, therefore, impossible at this moment, and we are doing nothing to bring it about.’

“ ‘Have you not been accused of seeking to bring this about over the heads of the organisations?’

“ ‘These are calumnies of which I know the aim. I know whence they come and I have only contempt for them. What have they insinuated?’

“ ‘The Zimmerwaldians have condemned me possibly because I did not desire to make myself a tool of those whose complaint against me is that I would not urge upon certain parties the demand for an inconclusive peace. The German Party declares itself to be ready to give its explanation at a meeting of the International Bureau, which the French proletariat rejects. We have no desire to coerce the will of France. We will only summon a meeting of the Bureau with the assent of all. My personal action confines itself to the functions of intermediary, and nothing else.

“ ‘Moreover,’ continues M. Huysmans, ‘the working class is scarcely likely to stop a war it was powerless to prevent. What is of importance is that, when peace comes, it shall be determined that the return to so bloody and costly a struggle shall be provided against by an agreement to submit henceforward all differences between nations to arbitration. It is in this sense particularly that Socialist action is directed.

“ ‘The *moment* of peace is not our business. The *terms* of peace are what interest us. It is to this end that the working class should direct its policy.’

“ ‘Is the report of the “Social-Demokraten,” of Copenhagen, against which our contributor Jules Destrée has protested, correct when it says that the Belgian Socialists are ready for conciliation?’

“ ‘I have written to the “ Social-Demokraten ” that the Belgians have come to The Hague to place their views before the Executive Committee, composed of Belgians and Dutch. I have said no more.’

“ ‘What is the object of your visit to Paris?’

“ ‘Only to learn the opinion of the French Socialists. As the mountain does not come to Mahomet, Mahomet has come to the mountain. I have explained my position to the Administrative Committee and to the Parliamentary group, and I can say that the French delegation approves in every respect the action I have taken. I am about to do the same in London, where I meet on Monday the English and Australian Socialists.’

“ ‘However ardent may be the convictions of an International Socialist, M. Huysmans is a Belgian. He has seen the horrors of the invasion. What does he think of the shameful aggression let loose on his country? Though measured and carefully-chosen his words, they do not conceal his feelings.

“ ‘One does not discuss,’ said he, ‘the lot of a victim. As Belgians we have been attacked, we defended ourselves, and if the task recommenced to-morrow we should meet it with the same resolution.’

“ ‘Were you not the only Belgian deputy who did not vote the war credits?’

“ ‘Yes, but only because I was away when the vote was taken. I had been called to Paris to the funeral of Jaurès. Had I been there I should have voted them.’

“ And the militant Socialist went on with a voice which betrayed his emotion :—

“ ‘ The Germans have made many mistakes. They thought at first, wrongly, that they would gain time by invading Belgium; then they hoped to terrorise our population by massacring civilians, under the pretext of the existence of “ franc-tireurs.” Nothing excuses their cruelty; they are covered with shame.’ ”

AN ADDRESS BY

CAMILLE HUYSMANS,

Secretary of the International Socialist Bureau
and Depute for Brussels, at an Extraordinary
Congress of the Social-Democratic Party of
Holland, held at Arnheim, 9th January, 1916.

It is particularly agreeable to me to greet you in the name of the Executive Committee of the Bureau.

I have been told often, in these days, that the International is dead. Our comrade, Gustave Hervé, notably has interred it solemnly in several articles. Wolfgang Heine has delivered the funeral oration of our organisation, in Germany, and even in Holland, where thought is generally calmer, and where the situation, we can truly say, is less tragic, I have heard the same opinion enunciated.

Dear Comrades, the International is not dead. The International has never given up its soul. The International cannot die. While there exists a revolutionary working class, with the object of establishing a movement throughout the world for the abolition of the domination of capitalism, it will be necessary to establish and to maintain an international bond between the organised workers of all countries.

The International is dead, say some, because it could not prevent the war. The answer to that is very simple. The International alone has done its duty. But it has not yet the power to hinder and prevent war. Better still, we all knew, in 1914, that it had not that power. It has deceived no one, and wished to deceive no one.

Others say, the International is dead because the German Social-Democrats voted the war credits. Neither is this argument decisive. The attitude of part of an association can indeed break the common unity, but that disagreement does not wipe out the organisation. Has the Catholic Church ceased to live because some German Catholic soldiers found themselves face to face with Catholic Belgian soldiers, on the two banks of the Yser?

There are again those who pretend that the International is dead because Socialists defend their country. That Quaker opinion is even propagated in certain Social-Democratic quarters, where they seem to forget that defence against aggression is not only recognised as legitimate by all international congresses, but rests upon simple human right.

Finally, others say that the International is dead because it gives no sign of life.

This is truly the gravest reproach. But I know an old Dutch proverb which says, "a dumb fish is not yet a dead fish." I know a Latin translation of that in the Holy Scriptures. *Tempus tacendi, tempus loquendi.* "There is a time to be silent, there is a time to speak."

The Executive Committee of the Bureau is of opinion that the time to speak has come. But if we have been silent, that does not mean that we have not acted. The Executive Committee has missed no favourable opportunity of acting in conformity with its duty.

What, in effect, do the resolutions of Stuttgart, Copenhagen, and Bâle say?

They say:—

(1) When the danger of war menaces, the Bureau should do all that is possible to avoid it. ✓

(2) When war breaks out, nevertheless, the Bureau should do what is possible to bring it to an end quickly. ✓

What have we done?

I will go through the record of our activity. Here are, for example, some extracts from the agenda of the months of October and November, 1912, when the danger of the Balkan war also menaced Western Europe:—

Oct. 7.—Interpellation in the Bavarian Parliament.

Oct. 10.—Protest of Sakanoff in the Bulgarian Parliament.

Oct. 10.—Demonstration against war at Prague.

Oct. 16.—Demonstration against war in Italy.

Oct. 17.—First demonstration against war with Troelstra at Prague.

Oct. 20.—Demonstration for peace by the German and English Socialist and Labour Parliamentary representatives.

On the same day meetings at Düsseldorf, Dortmund, Bremen, Kiel, Leipzig, Berlin, Hamburg, Dresden, Spandau, Cassel, Frankfurt, and Stuttgart.

Oct. 22.—Interpellation of Nemeč and Pernerstorfer in Austrian Parliament.

- Oct. 28.—Meeting of International Socialist Bureau at Brussels to organise our Bâle Congress.
- Meeting at Brussels with Jaurès, Adler, Haase, Bruce Glasier, Roubanovitch and Agnini.
- Oct. 30.—Demonstrations in all Hungarian towns.
- Oct. 31.—Meeting at Dresden.
- Nov. 1.—Manifesto of Austrians against the war.
- Nov. 4.—Demonstrations in Vienna and throughout Austria.
- Nov. 10.—Fresh demonstrations in Vienna and throughout Austria.
- Nov. 17.—Meeting at Amsterdam with Vliegen (Dutch), Molkenbuhr (German), and Deswarte as speakers.
- Nov. 17.—Meeting at London with Anseele (Belgian), Ludwig Frank (German), Drakoules (Greek), Barnes, Quelch, and Keir Hardie as speakers.
- Nov. 17.—Meetings at Bremen and Hanover.
- Nov. 17.—Meeting at Christiania with Branting (Sweden) as speaker.
- Nov. 17.—Meetings at Stockholm, Malmö and several other Swedish towns.
- Nov. 17.—Meeting at Copenhagen.
- Nov. 17.—Meeting at Paris with Scheidemann, Vandervelde, Pernerstorfer, Roubanovitch and MacDonald as speakers.
- Nov. 17. Meetings in twenty other French towns.

Nov. 17.—International meetings at Strasburg, where Cachin (French) spoke; at Rome, with Hervé (French); at Milan, with Compère-Morel (French); at London, with Longuet and Rognon; and at Berlin, where Jaurès was to have spoken.

Nov. 21.—French Party's Congress at Paris.

Nov. 24.—Extraordinary International Congress at Bâle.

Nov. 26.—Manifesto of Bâle signed in Austria.

Nov. 28.—Adler protests in Austrian Parliament against the seizure of the Bâle manifesto.

Etc., etc.

'And it went on like that up to the eve of July 24th, 1914.

Three weeks before that it was stated in the parliamentary circles at the Reichstag that towards the end of the harvest an ultimatum would be sent by Austria to Serbia. But no one believed in this statement, so the Bureau was informed. Fresh demonstrations were, however, organised at Vienna, Berlin, Buda-Pesth, Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris and elsewhere.

I ask you in all sincerity, what party, what organisation, what political group, social or religious, has done as much against the coming of war as we have done?

I answer, none.

We have not only spoken.

Our action against war has resulted in hundreds of comrades being sent to prison, to the accompanying jeers of all those who to-day reproach us for not having been able to prevent the war.

The judges who, in past years, have condemned us to severe punishment, wish now to make us responsible for an act that they themselves have committed.

The capitalist governments made the war. They prepared the mind for it. They sounded the war trumpet. They created the conflict. And when the results of their action went farther than they wished, the rulers in arms hypocritically reproached the unarmed feeble for not having had the power to defeat and to annihilate what their rulers had willed.

On July 24th Austria sent her ultimatum.

On July 25th the Executive decided to take counsel as to whether it was necessary to summon the Bureau, by telegraph with Jaurès, Adler, Molkenbuhr, Vaillant and others.

July 26th the Executive decided unanimously, in agreement with the comrades whom they had consulted, to summon the International Bureau for July 29th.

At that meeting it was agreed to strengthen again the action against war, and to support the proposition that the Austro-Serbian dispute should be submitted to arbitration. The German and French members went home with the mission, on the one hand, to insist at Berlin, that the Austrian Government should be reasonable in its demands, and, on the other hand, to insist at Paris that Russia should not take part in the conflict. The English and Italian sections had authority to do all that they could at London and Rome to support this pacific action.

That same evening there took place in Brussels the great International meeting against war, where Vandervelde, Troelstra, Roubanovitch, Morgari, Keir Hardie, and Haase spoke, and where Jean Jaurès made his last speech.

In the afternoon of July 31st I received a telegram from Berlin informing me that Müller (one of the secretaries of the German party) wished to confer with me on behalf of his Executive. That evening at 11.0 I learnt by telephone that Jaurès had just been assassinated.

On August 1st, at 3.0 in the morning, Müller was at my house, and after a consultation in the course of the morning with the Executive Committee Müller and I took train for Paris, with de Man as translator. At 6.30 in the evening we had a meeting with the Parliamentary group at the Palais Bourbon, and, at 9.30, with the Executive Committee of the Party.

What Müller said, you know through the articles which have appeared recently in the French and German Press. He gave the impression, even at that time, that they, the parliamentary party in Germany, would probably not vote the war credits. The French Socialists declared that if France were attacked they must vote their war credits. My personal opinion then was—and I expressed it twice—that the German party ought at least to abstain. My conviction was that France would not attack, but I felt the difficulty of the position of the Germans, a difficulty which was recognised later by Vandervelde. On the one side France, democratic France, on the other side Russia, Czarist Russia. I thought of the position of Bebel in 1870:—"If I vote for the credits," he said, "I support the Prussian policy. If I vote against the credits, I give the impression that I approve of the policy of Bonaparte."

That seemed to me to be the situation of the German Social-Democrats in 1914. In my judgment it was necessary, after the vigorous propaganda of our German comrades against Czarism, of which they felt the reaction in Germany, to take note of the Russian peril. I was also mindful of the definite pronouncements published by the German Socialist

journals just prior to the month of August, 1914, and directed, not only against the German policy, but also against the criminal carelessness of the Austrian Government.

Comrades, you are not unaware that, latterly, Kauřsky has also declared that he was in favour of abstention,

War broke out on the 4th of August.

In all their statements, in every country, the Social-Democrats have been able to say that they had no share in responsibility for the crime.

Belgium was devastated, and she was invaded in spite of her determined resistance.

We were isolated from the whole world. But the first direction issued by the Executive Committee was for the maintenance of relations between the centre and the affiliated parties. This was in conformity with the last resolution of Bâle: "The Congress instructs the International Socialist Bureau to maintain, whatever happens, communications with the Parties of all countries." We realised that, at that moment, there was no time to think about the intervention or the meeting of the Bureau, neither from the side of Germany nor from that of any of the other nations at war. It was a time of war madness. However, little by little some projects saw the light in other places, to save the International, which truly had no need of saviours. Some comrades thought that they knew better how to manage things, and that fresh pronouncements were sufficient to put an end to the war. Others felt themselves called upon to play an international role. We let all that pass, and, after the occupation of Brussels, we, on our own initiative, transferred the Bureau to The Hague.

There we kept up correspondence, directly and indirectly, with all parties, so well, indeed, that even if rela-

tions among the parties themselves—from party to party—did not always exist, those with the Centre, with the Bureau at The Hague, did not cease for an instant. It is hardly necessary to say that it has not always been easy to achieve this result. It is not necessary to say, also, that to a Belgian it was not always very pleasant to find himself with Social-Democrats who had approved the credits which had served to put his country to fire and sword. But I considered it to be my duty not to write a word which would have wounded one of the affiliated parties. I did not wish that it could be said afterwards that through our fault we had allowed to be broken in our hands a proletarian weapon with whose care we had been entrusted. I thought that in an International alive and united oppressed and menaced nationalities would find their support and their re-establishment. Therefore, I considered it my duty to respect my trust more than my sentiments and my heart, and I do not regret having remained International Secretary of all the parties of the International.

That action has not wanted attack. At the beginning, it was insinuated that I was only an agent of the Entente, and that I had thus lost the confidence of certain parties. Lately, another tale has been heard. It is now insinuated that I am sold to Germany.

Dear Comrades, for the duration of the war we have organised the Executive Committee in such a way that it could rely upon the confidence of the parties in all the belligerent countries. The Belgian delegation has remained at its post since it had the confidence of the parties and because of the express request of numerous affiliated parties. It was necessary to act so, inasmuch as those who had been entrusted with a task, by International Congresses, were bound to accomplish their task. The Belgian delegation has also remained because it would have been a shameful act to strike the Belgians twice—once as Belgians and a second time as Socialists. The Belgians have not desired the war. The

Belgians are the victims of the war, and to take away from them a position of trust because they are victims would have been an act of injustice. That expropriation has not taken place.

We have not permitted it to take place. But, to give a guarantee of our impartiality to the comrades of the Central Powers, we have added, for the period of the war, to the Executive Committee a Dutch delegation, which enjoys equal rights. That has been agreed to unanimously by the Executive Committee. We have also had this *modus vivendi* confirmed by a vote of all the affiliated parties. The proposal was approved by all parties, except one, France, which abstained from voting. The French abstained not from hostility, but because they were of opinion that the Executive Committee ought to have remained where it was and what it was.

The Secretariat and the Executive Committee, as they are constituted to-day for the duration of the war, function with the authority of the whole International.

The first duty of the Executive Committee was to act.

From all sides a meeting of the Bureau was demanded. We could not comply with these requests. Suppose that we had summoned the Bureau. We knew with certainty that some representatives would not come. Could we, at such a moment, play off a majority against a minority? The majority itself would never have consented. It would have been a waste of time. It would have meant, in all probability, a complete break-up. We did not want to follow this franc-tireur policy.

Our aim is, indeed, to bring the parties together at the proper time, but not by hasty action. Our duty is to bring together the Bureau with the consent of the responsible parties

of the belligerent nations. A meeting, without the adhesion of France, of Germany, or of England—is it possible? Our reply is “No.”

We take full responsibility for this policy.

This method of action has been strongly criticised in certain quarters, in which there have been voted resolutions of censure. Impatient comrades have summoned International Conferences, but you have seen that the interested principals have been conspicuous by their absence. They have even disavowed the Conferences. With such a result a body of amateurs, who do not understand that patience is a political virtue, can be content, but we cannot expose ourselves to such a result since we are representatives of an International which knows how to make its laws respected, and which, whatever some may say or think, has a certain political experience.

I will not enlarge on this subject. I will only say that the intention may have been good, but that I persist in declaring in the name of my colleagues that in spite of all plans of expropriation the Bureau is and remains fixed at The Hague.

To be in a position to act, we had to make the situation clear. To attain that aim, our plan was twofold:—

1. To secure separate and successive deliberations, of the Socialist Parties of the neutral countries, of the Entente countries, and of the Central Powers, upon the four points which constitute the basis of all our resolutions relating to militarism and peace;

2. To call separately at The Hague the various delegations with the object of elucidating and making concrete these four points.

As you are aware, the neutral Socialists met at Copenhagen on January 17th and 18th, 1915, the Entente at London on February 14th, 1915, and the Central Powers at Vienna on April 20th, 1915.

Some resolutions were voted at these Conferences, and it is true that they do not agree on all points.

But at Copenhagen, at London and at Vienna, the Social-Democrats demanded, for all nationalities, the right to dispose of themselves freely.

At Copenhagen, at London and at Vienna, the Social-Democrats demanded the democratisation of diplomacy and the strengthening of Parliamentary control.

At Copenhagen, London and Vienna, the Social-Democrats declared themselves in favour of compulsory arbitration in all wars.

At Copenhagen, London and Vienna they demanded reduction of armaments, with the ultimate aim of general disarmament.

The confirmation of these four points, which form the basis of the resolutions of Stuttgart, Copenhagen and Bâle, constituted certainly a step forward. It is a commonplace to say that if the conduct of events had been in the hands of Social-Democrats the war would never have begun. Yet we may equally well point out that the bourgeoisie—on the day, when it sees to what madness it has been brought by its Imperialist policy—must seek its salvation in the direction of our ideas.

To complete our action it was important to determine precisely the different points on which we are agreed in theory. And to come to a practical result, we proposed to the Executive Committee, who agreed, to invite, from January and

February of 1915, the various delegations to come separately to The Hague, so that the Executive Committee could discuss with each delegation the general situation, and also the particular position of each one of them. It was only after such a series of consultations that it could be seen whether a meeting of the Bureau was useful and possible. That proposal was approved by nearly all the parties, but it met the opposition of one party, and later, of two parties. Belgium, although she was occupied, came officially and gave her point of view.

Germany came once officially, and then, a second time, officially. France replied that the sending of a delegation to The Hague would be considered as an indirect negotiation with the Germans. That policy seemed to her impossible while the German armies occupied a part of France, and all efforts were concentrated upon national defence.

At first the English were ready to come. But the appointment of Henderson as Minister compelled the delegation to postpone its visit. Afterwards they preferred to meet us in London, and that meeting is in course of being arranged.

But, I add, if you compare the resolutions and the declarations of the various parties, passed since August, 1914, with those adopted during the last few months, then it must be seen that they mark, from a Socialist point of view, a tendency towards a closer unity of idea.

I take, for example, the manifestoes and speeches of the Germans from August, 1914, to December, 1915.

On August 4th, German Social-Democracy, believing in the "Russian peril," bases its position on the ground of national defence.

On December 2nd they condemn with more firmness the annexationist tendencies and the propaganda of hatred which had swept over Germany.

On March 10th, 1915, they declare that the hour of peace has sounded, and that it must be a peace which does not contain in it the germ of new wars. They demand also that prisoners of war should be treated better.

On May 27th, 1915, they condemn anew, in opposition to Conservatives and National Liberals, all wars of conquest.

On June 26th, 1915, they publish a pacifist manifesto, and they exhort the other Socialist Parties to work for the re-establishment of peace in Europe.

On August 20th, 1915, the spokesman of the Party reproaches the enemy with pursuing a war of conquest, and the tone of his speech seems less pacific.

But on December 9th, 1915, we find more restraint. The speaker for the Party, who also spoke for the Austrians, declared that all nations desired the end of hostilities, and that Germany, free from occupation, ought to take the initiative in action in favour of peace. He asks the Government to declare upon what terms it is ready to conclude peace, a peace which should be based upon the integrity and the liberty of economic development of the German Empire. The German people, he says, ought not to live above the other nations, but by their side. In the course of his speech he also made an allusion to the aim of the enemy, who, according to him, seeks to annihilate German militarism, words that he interprets as synonymous with the annihilation of the German troops. Lastly, he rejects under any circumstances the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by France.

The resolution dealing with the aims of the war adopted by the Chief Committee and the Parliamentary fraction of the Party is still clearer. It condemns all annexation, as well as the weakening of the Austrian and Turkish Empires. Especially, it demands the freedom of the sea, the system of

the open door in all colonies, and the adoption of the most favoured nation clause. In one special paragraph it demands the restoration of Belgium. This paragraph was cut out by the censor, and was not made known abroad for some considerable time.

What are the ideas in France at present?

From August 4th the French Party takes its stand on national defence, and accuses Germany of brutal aggression. It proclaims the necessity of defeating the enemy in order to teach it a lesson.

On December 24th the Party refused all idea of annexation, but it asks "that Alsace-Lorraine should be allowed to return to the country of its own choice."

On July 14th, 1915, the Party demands justice for Alsace-Lorraine and the annihilation of Prussian militarism.

On December 25th, 1915, the Party definitely states its ideas on the conclusion of a lasting peace. And what are these ideas?

The small nations, such as Serbia and Belgium, must be restored and have complete independence.

Alsace-Lorraine must be restored to France, and the representatives of those provinces are then to have the right "to declare solemnly, as their representatives did formerly at Bordeaux, that they form part of the French community." The resolution rejects the idea that the annihilation of Prussian militarism signifies the annihilation of the German people.

The annihilation of Prussian militarism neither signifies political subjection nor economic dependence. These words signify the annihilation of a system which has trampled on the right.

Finally, the manifesto speaks of conditions which will make relations with German Socialists possible.

These are the conditions: That German Social-Democracy should show by its actions that it repudiates Imperialism and the policy of conquest, and that it should recognise the right of all nationalities to complete freedom of action, and that it protests against the violation of neutral countries.

I allow myself therefore to draw attention to some paragraphs which are important to us from the point of view of the situation of the German Party.

The French Party thinks that the separation which is taking place between the Imperialist Socialists and the minority is a hopeful sign for the re-establishment of International Socialist relations.

It is the growth of the minority which will save the honour of International Socialism, and perhaps prepare, if the minority is energetic and far-seeing, the salvation of the German people.

In order to understand the different attitudes of the French and German Socialists it is necessary to realise the difference of their situation.

Germany is free from occupation, and the armies of the Central Powers are in Belgium, the North of France, Poland, and Serbia.

France, on the contrary, is occupied in parts, and German troops are only 40 miles from Paris.

Germany may desire peace, for she has in her hands a valuable prize.

France cannot wish peace now, unless she wishes to be considered and treated as a conquered nation. I know well

that the economic situation of these countries does not correspond exactly to their military situation. But in France—and that some of our Dutch comrades cannot forget—all their strength is given to national defence. In this state of mind every concession is looked on as a weakness. What would be the state of mind of Germany if the French Army were in Cologne and the Russian in Königsberg?

I may further add that the influence of these Socialist Parties is very different.

In England and in France the Labour and Socialist Parties possess a real influence, and the Governments of these countries would have difficulty in forcing a solution which would be strongly in opposition to the working class.

In Germany, on the contrary, the influence of the Party is more relative, and we cannot yet imagine M. Bethmann-Hollweg, like Lloyd George, appearing before a congress of organised Labour.

In comparing all these resolutions, one feels that the greatest difficulty arises from the problem of Alsace-Lorraine. Light has already been given on both sides. My aim, and that of my colleagues, was to make clear these points as quickly as possible, therefore it was arranged to assemble the delegations at The Hague.

This course, which would result in enlightenment and understanding, still remains open. It is apparent that if we compare the resolutions of the French Party with those of the group which one calls "the German minority," the possibility of this drawing together is still more hopeful, especially if one considers that it is asserted that this minority of the fraction at the Reichstag represents, in fact, the majority of the Socialist electors.

In any case, you will have noticed that, for the first time, the French Party has formulated conditions of a reconciliation, and better still, I am under the impression that several of these conditions are realised; at least, in a measure.

Comrades, I am of the opinion that we are on the right track. This opinion is still stronger if one takes into consideration that in France also we find ourselves before a minority, although it is only a small one.

Until now, the war has shown that it is almost impossible to crush a capitalistic nation, when this nation is organised and inspired with a modern spirit. If Germany occupies foreign territory, England is mistress of the seas. Until now the world-war has completely missed its mark. And for the massacres without end, the belligerent nations will have in the month of July, 1916, spent in military credits—according to the calculation of the "Economist," as reviewed and completed by Wibaut in the journal "Het Volk"—103 milliards of florins, or more than 214 milliards of francs (about 10,000 million pounds). And that is without counting the destruction of villages and towns, the pensions for invalids, widows and orphans, and without counting the fortunes of millions of people who have been ruined, and without counting thousands of soldiers who will come out of the war safe and sound, but who will in a few years die prematurely as a consequence of this war. The number of deaths and invalids in a few months reached four million men, and if one counts the others wounded and missing, sixteen million human beings. That is where an Imperial policy has led us.

Dear Comrades, I wish to show that the organisation, which was born at Paris in 1889, on the proposition of the Dutch delegation, is not dead just to please a bourgeoisie which remains a bourgeoisie, or Socialists who forget sometimes what they are.

I will state simply that this organisation has done all that was possible for it to do to fulfil the mission which was imposed upon it by the resolutions of Stuttgart, Copenhagen, and Bâle.

I want finally to show that the lines of political movement are not parallel lines which never meet, but are lines which approach and converge slowly in a direction which will ultimately see the re-establishment of a united proletariat and the creation of a durable peace.

The signs of this are many. On every hand it is said that the International should elaborate a policy, which, quite apart from the military situation, would become the guide of society in arriving at a solution. On December 17th last my friend Vandervelde wrote in the "Clarion" an article which I have read in a sympathetic translation in the "Arbeiterzeitung" of Vienna. It said:—

"I think that soon the moment will come when the true Socialist elements of the International will have to declare their views with regard to the problems of Alsace-Lorraine, of the independence or autonomy of Poland, or of the means which would prevent in the future the Imperialist and Colonial policy from seeking conquests and provoking new conflicts."

I consider these words to be an invitation to which a reply should be given.

I will say no more at this moment. It is not necessary to speak of other countries and other parties because the difficulties would seem to be less. Each feels also that the solution of the problem of the war and the final decision await solution in the West. The whole question of the East has been fully treated in the manifesto of Bâle, which has remained our guide even in existing circumstances.

We will continue, with patience, prudence and persistence, the action we have begun, in full consciousness of our responsibility.

We wish to bring about agreement between the Socialists of the whole world, so that there shall not be added, to our impotence to prevent the war, our impotence to create a peace secure from future conflicts, so that the working class, which will have to bear the burden of the crime of others, can itself master the world crisis. For that reason unity is necessary. That unity should be our aim and our strength.

I know well that numerous groups of capitalists hope that thousands of soldiers have given their lives to Moloch so that nations may be enslaved.

That hope will not be realised. When the present fury has gone the peoples will see where imperialist madness leads, and the conscience of mankind will be re-awakened. Our hope is that then it will be possible to deprive the monster of his teeth, in order that this war may be the last.

OFFICE OF THE
 SECRETARY OF THE
 ARMY AND NAVY
 WASHINGTON, D. C.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.—The translation of the Armheim speech has been made from a transcript revised by M. Huysmans.

My thanks are due to Miss E. R. Syme and Mr. W. T. Easty for assistance in translation and reading the proofs.

FRED H. GORLE.

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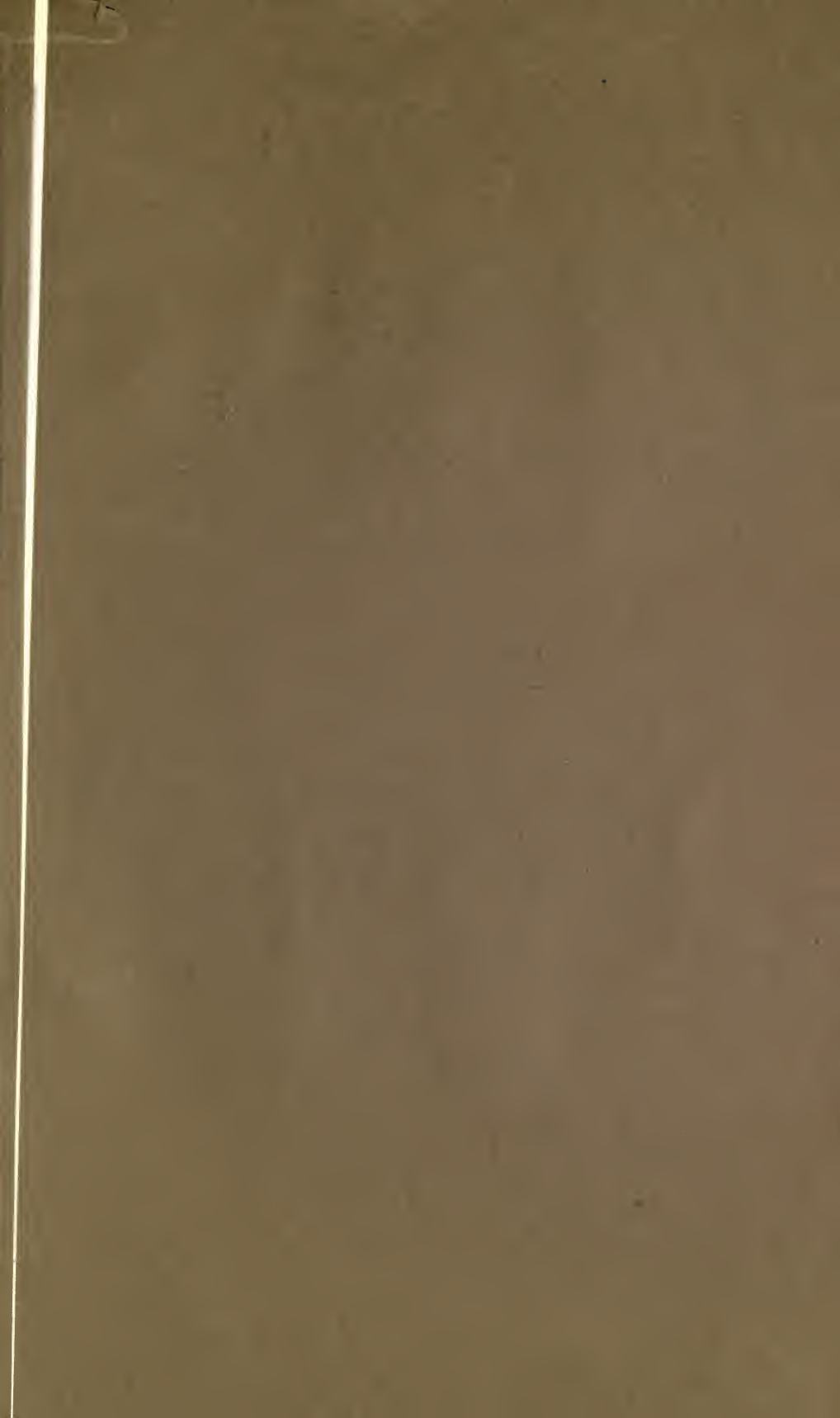
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