

Soldiers and workers, strike!

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It is a generally accepted fact that today's economic life serves firstly not meeting the needs of everybody, but offering profits to a relatively small class of capitalists. Our society is overall separated into two clearly divided main groups: on the one hand millions of propertyless, the proletarian class, whose members own only their physical and mental labour force; on the other hand a few hundred thousands, the capitalist class whose members are master of the capital. That is: the land which holds coal, ores, diamonds and on which grows grains, vegetables, fruits, flowers, trees, and animals; the houses, factories, and machines; the instruments and tools; the horses, cows, and sheep; the ships and boats; the money — in short: land, resources, tools, products and exchange goods, which they use to offer themselves ever more wealth, power and prestige. Numerous members of this class do nothing. They're parasites. They make others work for them. They live off interest — that is: the profits off other people's labour — as they please. But many others work, at least part of their lives. Some even work very hard. But even if they worked without rest, day and night, they still wouldn't be able to work the land, mine the coal, produce the iron, steel, gold, make trains and cars and boats, assemble engines and make them run, to mow, to harvest, to weave, to build — that is: to produce all the products that we know in the civilised world-, to transport them via train and boat, to market them, etc. To turn its capital into an inexhaustible source of profits, the ruling class requires enormous amounts of labour. And that is what it uses the working class for. The propertyless class toils in wage slavery for the capitalists. It works for them in ten thousand ways, and usually receives much less value than it gives in labour. And everything that is produced is kept by the owners — every one of them, as much as each of them is able to — in order to sell it for profits to each other or mostly to the propertyless multitude that produced them in the first place, brought them into the world by the sacrifice of their brains, nerves, muscles, blood and life, so that they — forced by need — give their meagre wages back to the ruling class in exchange for shelter, clothing, luxuries, etc.

Between those main groups there are endless intermediates. Within the capitalist class endless variations in wealth and power. Within the proletariat there are those with big yearly incomes while there are collectors of meagre interests among the capitalists. It would take an elaborated description only to briefly describe all the ranks and subclasses. But that is not necessary. It's a simple fact that social life is increasingly torn apart in two direction: big capitalists and proletarian masses. Also, generally accepted is the fact that the owners of the biggest capitals control the whole of the social process — a few hundred people lead the economic life of Europe and America,

of the world-, and that their interests are served by millions of earthlings in gruesome labour day and night. Some of them may live in relative comfort — as there were always privileged slaves-, the big majority lives in physical and mental misery: the needs of the international proletariat are without end.

It is also no secret that — and the history of the world confirms it over and over, so much so that it is almost mind-blowing — that the capitalist class as a whole, under the command of its most powerful and able members, works towards maintaining, confirming and expanding this perverse, wrongly directed social process. No means is beneath it, no method too despicable, to grimly enforce its privileges. Keeping what it has, it tries to get more — whatever it can. There is no fiercer and conscious class warrior usually than the maintainers and defenders of their own class privileges, no matter how unjust that is to the propertyless. The modern bourgeoisie has succeeded in the last centuries to serve its business interests in every — even the lowest — way, to the moral detriment of itself, to mental and physical damage to the proletariat.

But the bourgeoisie of the world, united against the proletariat of the world, is internally divided in all kinds of opposing interests. In recent times those oppositions revealed themselves mainly in national groups, ruling over national capital. The proprietors collaborate already and in a multitude of ways — and they will increasingly do so — against the proprietors in other nations. They want to expand their own dominion over as large a part of the earth as possible. To that end they use the nations they control in any way they can imagine. They use the state they live in not just as a means of coercion (against the proletariat) directed inward, but also as a means of coercion (against competing groups) directed outward. The secret diplomacy serves them. Army and fleet are under their control. The governments are willing servants of the bankers and big entrepreneurs, of the mighty landowners and the genius speculators. The world war turned out (even for the most blinded people) to be nothing more than one horrible wrestle between groups of capitalists that tried to push each other aside, that tried to subdue each other to exploit — each for themselves — as large a portion of the world as possible, with all the plants, animals, and people that populate it. Never was the word of Sombart more true than in these times (that even the *N. Rotterdamse Courant* called a time of wars without ideals) that ‘under capitalism all the virtues are subjected to one vice’. All the mental and physical forces of the peoples are put in motion, mobilized in the business interest of national seigneurs who only care for the conquest or defence of business areas, markets, regions with natural resources, investment opportunities, etc. All the ‘civilised’ states — the Christian ones first — are systematically turned into giant barracks in which even women and children hustle and slave so that the glory of the one national bourgeoisie could flourish and flower, alienated more and antagonized deeper from the proletariat within the same borders, regardless of a shared language, official religion, race, etc. by opposed interests, than are a painter’s assistant in Amsterdam or Berlin, a docker in Yokohama, a driver in Chicago and a porter in Constantinople.

But how is it possible that the proletariat lend themselves to this? How can the ruling class again and again bring the proletariat to toiling in mines, clearing ships, working in factories, workshops, offices, in fields and roads, overseas? How can the ruling class bring tens of millions of proletarians of all possible races and religions that generally don’t want war — and even less a business war — to the trenches for its most hideous plans, to drive them into opposed groups that shoot, thrust, hew, maim and slaughter each other? How doe the capitalists push them into a struggle that is one big hellish curse against the interests of the millions that writhe through the bloodied mud? How is a relatively small clique of political-economic powerful people able to

treat the big mass of people — that are the large majority — like one growling populace of slaves — sometimes a little better, sometimes a little worse — and instrumentalize them ruthlessly like a work machine in peacetime and like a murder implement?

We can point to three main reasons.

NEED.

The proletariat is born in the world outside the world. As for baby Jesus there is no place in the stable for the proletariat. In fact the proletariat belongs to the cattle of the ruling class, to the order of useful beasts. Most often not treated as well as the pet dog of the billionaires daughter, the racing horse of the lord, the bull of the farmer. But the interest of gain implies that they remain capable — at least insofar as it is being catered for the mental and physical development of the propertyless — of their productive labour in peace time, their productive and destructive labour in wartime. Whatever was installed as legal protection was either extorted by the exploited that were whipped into desperate rage, or by the demands of the modern production process. Land needs to lie waste from time to time; a horse or cow need to be stabled; a sled dog needs feeding. And so was understood that the new technology demanded that the work-time was to be lowered precisely to increase the intensity of production; that generally speaking the living conditions of the proletariat must be improved from time to time.¹ This — and the struggle for self liberation of the modern workers — is the reason for the increasing number of laws to protect the prole more or less that were voted since the 1850s on, to somewhat spare the pregnant women and the toiling children, to raise the standards of popular education slightly, etc. In the absence of a strong working class movement nothing happened other than the technology required; where a strong labour movement a little more was achieved. That's how strong the bourgeoisie was. That's how the bourgeoisie insisted on its rights(?), hereditary controlling the wealth of the earth, excelling by ability and knowledge, with the 'pastorship' of degenerate churches, the press apparatus, the school system, etc. Sure there were always among the ruling class a few who felt, who knew, that this was not how things should be, who didn't want this to carry on. Here and there some noble thinkers resisted the tyranny and exploitation that their class subjected the proletariat to. But how few they were! And opposite of them the capitalist classes bought and bribed hundreds of the most able from the propertyless mass with her gold, her offices, and positions of power. They often became the most zealous enforcers and endorsers of the social order...

The proletariat is born in a situation of complete and total dependence. The non-proprietor has only their body, their respiration, their beating heart, their muscles, their thinking head. No food, no clothing, no dwelling. Even the very first conditions for life are lacking. Growing up, nothing but closed doors, gates, and fences. 'No trespassing' grins back at them at every turn. What they're left with is the way to the office, factory, workshop, the meadow, and the field, a church here and there, a little brush, a small park. Total misery drives them irresistibly towards the capitalist for food, clothing, housing. And the capitalist holds the threat of hunger to their heads and says "Do you want to work for me or not? Of course, you're free not to, as slavery was abolished. We live in a free world. But if you don't, then I can't satisfy your hunger; then I don't have clothing for you, no roof for you to sleep under... Unless in a jail or colony. So decide!" The capitalist not always uses words — many of them wouldn't or couldn't speak this way, they make

¹ Just how widespread this opinion still is, is shown in the following words of the Notary-Overseer of the Parliament in the 'Noord-Rotterdamse Courant' of last March 1: "Malnourishment surely needs to be prevented by any means necessary; an exhausted, emaciated people is surely weaker in the competitive struggle of the future."

others speak for them instead and have no idea in what way those people actually speak for them – this is how the capitalist speaks in facts; by his very existence; by his acts: by employing only those who are profitable to him at a given moment. As a plougher of his lands. As an extension of his machine. As a profit producing force, in whatever fashion. So the capitalist has no choice to speak like this if he wants to live according to the principle of today's social system. If he refuses he gets into trouble himself (and the less he owns, the sooner he gets in trouble). So he himself and his family will sink down in the proletariat – one of the greatest disasters imaginable. So there is a bounty for heartlessness for the proprietor. The less consilience he has, the richer he can become; the more opportunity to satisfy his hunger for profit; but also to indulge in cultured pleasures: provide his wife and children with a dignified life, arts and sciences, philosophy. But there are grave penalties for acts of care. The more conscious, the poorer. The poorer, the less chance for intellectual development and providing for his family. That is why the capitalists raise their children from birth to be able to take position in society. That is their life task: to make it big in the world. Firstly to 'stay on top' (of the proles). And then climb higher and higher. It's true that one crushes multitudes with every step. But that's just the way things are. The financial and business interest decides. Direct and indirect murder, lies and deceit are deemed normal, when profit demands it. Engels and Tolstoy didn't exaggerate in the least when they said that humanity in political-economic respect lives in the realm of beasts. Factually they sunk even beneath that level because humans have subjected their moral capacity to their greed. Today's social order is ruled by intellectual predators, and can rule only by such predators.

Born in the world outside the world the proletariat will be even more impotently dependent on the proprietors the weaker it is in insight and mental strength. And how weak it is. The capitalist class is ahead of the proles in every possible way. It not only commands all the world's wealth, but also its knowledge. And knowledge is power. The physical and mental need of the people is used as levers to force them into any work at all, into the production of what is vulgar and even evil, malign, mean. She necessitates the people to building miserable houses to live in and the manufacture of surrogates to buy and feed on. Life and the possibility to live in limitless abundance for the ruling classes, for the ruled nothing than a gruelling life, monotonous, always under threat by death.

How many have accepted distress as their fate? Generations were deluded into thinking that it was just the way things were, that there was no other way; that God wanted it like this; that this was ordained by Jesus Christ himself. Even today there are hundreds of thousands, even among the proletariat, that think they have to accept this 'social order': on religious ground even. Even in the name of Christ, even if Christ says:

“(Matthew 20:25, 26) You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their superiors exercise authority over them. It shall not be this way among you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,”

How many never thought and never think, and are moved by nothing but the most immediate lust for life. As long as their hunger is satisfied, their thirst is quenched, they're content. How many endeavour to earn all they can on the blind road. They rent themselves to whatever. There are still today women who prostitute themselves, forced by need and with the good intention of feeding their old mother, their sick child; but many are driven by evil. They seek pleasure, peacockery, wealth, lust, power. Those women throw away their humanity, their divine value. One feels pity for them. One cannot venerate them: human would be to choose hunger, suffering,

death before such a life. But what do decent men, proper workers not lend themselves to! To the production of what is one massive onslaught on body, soul, and spirit of the people.

But there were always women who rather die than to waste away body and soul and spread corruption! Men who didn't want to live at any cost. Who had an understanding of the Chinese saying:

“We desire life and we desire justice. If we cannot keep them both, we will dispense with life and choose justice. We desire life, but there is something that we desire more than life, and so we don't want to live by unpure means. We abhor death, but there is something that we abhor even more than death, and so there are situations in which we will confront danger.”

Men who preferred walking around hungry, falling by the roadside, before earning their living in the most disgusting way possible. Sure, capitalism weaves an iron net around us. Essentially all labour is more or less prostitution. But there is labour that has a social side, that is essential for the growing and blossoming of body, soul and spirit of us all and therefore relatively good, even if the result of it is foremost used to make profits for the capitalists. There is labour that should be preserved and expanded in a normal society, only directed differently: not for the profit of the few but for the benefit of all. Even if capitalism is our fate — we are all born in it — it is not an unescapable fate. We don't have to lend ourselves to just anything. Against fate we pose the act. Mankind and its inner disposition is an active force in the world process. The conditions don't just act upon mankind; mankind acts upon the conditions. We can start now with accepting only good labour; refuse to lend ourselves to bad labour. We can wage a fight for a new society, for freedom, for a dignified life.

Unfortunately very few dedicate themselves to this struggle with the sacrifice of their whole life any more. And yet in times gone, long gone, in times of slavery and oppression there were here and there, in Judea, in India, in China, — hundreds of years before Christ — in the Roman Empire 19 centuries ago, who understood how deeply human it is to rise above the most difficult circumstances out of the strength of our inner impulse; that we uplift the world and revolve it with our inner strength; that we create better than ourselves and give birth to new times, even if we perish ourselves in doing so; that we engage in battle for a society in which — like Kong Tse said — the only relation that exists will be the relation of friendship. Deep religious understanding, feeling of divine life calling pushed thinkers, dreamers, poets and wise towards holy war; brought them into conflict with rulers, oppressors and exploiters of their day; into resisting tyranny. They refused to serve as power tools for the capitalists. Oh no! They wanted to be fighters for godly peace through their whole lives. They called for a heroic struggle for a new time, that had to be born from and by the people themselves; but that could only be born if the people themselves were born again in the ideal that pushed them on. The idea of the international brotherhood awoke among the peoples. First in the few, here and there. But then ever more and spreading over the earth. And in the end in the many. Surely, mostly yet as a dream, a vague vision, more floating above life than impacting on it. But for many heroic men, for many firm women this idea became so much only the reality so much so that they voluntarily sacrificed their lives. Oh they understood that — against the blind proliferation of those driven by greed, hunger for power, need and fear we could only oppose purposeful collaboration and voluntary organisation of each in the service of all.

How alive the idea was in the old Christianity. Brotherhood in action to do God's will was the great, world revolutionising principle. And even if it couldn't be implemented by all kinds of external circumstances and internal contradictions, even if need, fear, greed and power hunger of

the old church was victorious, there were always people and groups that remained faithful to the Highest and proved by deed that there is a source of happiness for all in their holy principle. By the sacrifice of their existence they brought us closer to a dignified life. Even now the churches say with right that the gospel is the only adequate cure against sin and greed, against the urge to have and rule, from which the enormous, endless misery of this society was born and is born. If only they implemented it. But in reality the churches are on the side of the capitalists. The big orthodox churches most of all. Priests defend the strongboxes with Christ's cross. Preachers deify the authority everywhere. Even if there always were priests — and there are still some-, even if even now there are many preachers who speak differently, speak better — the churches as a whole are at complete peace with the existing order. They protest some details. But the main issues, the core principle, they leave untouched. Their servants serve Mammon in God's name, deliberately or unconsciously, with whatever intentions. Now that the world war, this business war, broke out, they stand in line around the flags and thrones. In Jesus's name they inflame the peoples with dated slogans and phrases. They preach the Book of Judges as if Simson, who killed more enemies at his death than during his life, were the real Christ — and Jesus just an imposter — or Gideon, Barak, Jephta, and as if we had to follow in their footsteps...

It is the achievement since the second half of the 19th century of the atheist anarchists and social democrats, that they accepted the social ideal of the original Christians and medieval dreamers and used the new, scientific knowledge to pragmatically implement socialism. Even if we're convinced that Christianity is much, much deeper than modern social democracy or anarchy, and infinitely richer of life possibilities, we gladly recognize that — if socialists had remain true to their principles of brotherhood, that they used to bring forward time and again, most often directly against official Christianity — the world war would not have been possible, even with all the (mis)leading churches. But socialism as well turned out to be empty talk and phrase-mongering. The men of the International parade around in uniforms in their hundreds of thousands. They serve domestic capital in the most despicable way.

What is the cause of all this?

It is mainly the FEAR, the urge for self-preservation: egoism and group egoism. The urge for immediate life of individual and people, and the urge to preserve before all else the privileges of the own party or national interest at all and any cost, makes Christians and socialists fratricidal murderers by their millions.

A philosopher called the animal incarnated fear. He was right. Because fear means: fearing suffering, grief, need, fleeing death. Fear is in essence a dread for what endangers immediate life. It is the flipped coin of the desire to live forever, the instinctive urge for self-preservation. The animal is always intent on saving itself and its species from suffering and death. It cannot will otherwise. And it is a similar fear — feral if not sub-feral — that keeps the millions in their trenches and into the ammunition factories. Without doubt there are many among them, blinded by delusion, who live in a trance, deluded by themselves or by others like 'I defend my home and hearth!', 'The fatherland is in danger!', 'We were wrongly attacked!', 'We serve the culture!', etc. Nevertheless many — tens of thousands certainly — who would take their Christianity or their socialism seriously, for whom their vision on life and the world are not just phrases, but... the fear. Disobey and get shot. Everybody agrees that if there were no death penalty or jail for conscientious objectors, if they could be certain that the enemy would also defect, then... then... The press especially act on the fear. It depicts the enemy as beasts and demons: against their animal rage the fatherland, the women and the children must be protected, yes the whole wide

world! The press excites the instinct of self-preservation. And the governments give the example in phrases and deeds. No-one attacks. Everyone is a defender. Austria-Hungary had to defend itself from Serbia; Russia had to defend the Slavs against Austria-Hungary; Germany had to defend itself against Russia; England had to defend democracy... The fear took on the persona of self-sacrifice and courage. As if it was really all about the rights of the small countries and the glory of the French culture. The fear was whipped up and at the same time glorified as courage... Oh! that happened on all sides. Didn't Germany protect Western Europe from the attacks of Russian barbarians? Didn't Austria-Hungary just endeavoured to create order and peace in the Balkans? Isn't America fighting for the rescue of the whole world? But behind everything lurks the fear. Fear of the rulers — born from greed and power mania — funnelled the fears of the peoples by all disposable means. It turned into a peoples psychosis, one giant world nightmare into madness. And those who were not completely possessed, those who remembered that it was mainly disguised power hunger and masked greed, and all the other things that were born from animal blind hunger for life, — alas, most of them used their more or less remained clear brains... to justify everything. Or to say that now — just now! — was not the best time to resist. Out of fear. Fear for their own life and limb. Fear for their wife and children. Fear of losing the masses that they had led for years. Fear of being chastised, imprisoned, killed by the rulers. Tens of thousands of Christians, social democrats and anarchists now very well that in this moment they act against what they hold most dear — especially among their leaders there must be some who know-; and hundreds of thousands, millions could know it if they wanted to know it; but almost none of the leaders of the peoples dare to want to know. Why are they fighting? Why do they arouse others to fight? Why are they mobilising? Why are they saying: "The national thought overrule the national differences"? Out of fear. In God's name kill in order to stay alive. Destroy other's countries to save one's own. Beleaguer, starve, maim, kill other's women and children just to protect their own women and children. And woe! How protected they are. If you want to protect your women and children, then give everyone in the world the practical example, and stay home. Don't leave your own wife and children to attack other's wife and children, whose men attack yours also to protect theirs. Even the conquering Germans were unable to protect their women and children: such misery amongst the people! And has the Belgian army protected the women and children? Can even the American army protect the American women and children? Is not the world threatened by world famine? Fear makes people short-sighted. Fear makes blind. Blinded by fear the peoples go for each other's throats and carve up each other's bodies, red with blood.

And here in the Netherlands, what is it that rules? The fear. The fear of the capitalist class for Germany, for England, for Japan. Fear in the first place, that the millions of people in equatorial lands are stolen that have to yield so much profit to the Dutch capital? The thief fears the other thief, the robber fears the other robber! Fear drove and drives the mobilisation forward. Fear of the Dutch Indies becoming resilient. The whole people was caught up in fear. The press, the school teacher, the priest, the preacher, the leader, the president of the government. Even the queen was grabbed by fear. And all of that fear was disguised as courage: "We will proudly maintain neutral!" — The truth is that the Netherlands behave spinelessly. It crawls and bends to all sides. It smuggles and profiteers from the war without end. The country is unable to maintain its neutrality if it is attacked. The queen knows; the generals know; the cabinet knows; the parliamentarians, the people's leaders; even the priests and preachers can know that. And still they bluffed on — until the factual situation became so clear and open that even the leaders of the S.D.A.P. could no longer maintain the phrase — out of fear.

As policy.

“The national unity (says Troelstra) dominates the national differences. The moment has not yet come to maintain faithful to our principles of solidarity and brotherhood. The conditions don’t allow for it. We will support the government in its task. That is the interest of the Dutch proletarian class.” The truth is that Troelstra got carried away in the flood of fear that forced itself through Germany and The Netherlands. The Dutch social democrats actively participated in the mobilisation. They supported the war funds; out of fear in one place or out of worries for something else. They hoped to appease the government of the bourgeoisie with their loyalty... The ruling class took this and ran with it. And now, after supporting the bourgeois regime for three and a half years, even Troelstra has to recognize that the government betrayed the people, and are starving it.

As faith.

In the churches one could and can still hear this: “We stay loyal to the kingdom. We serve the trinity God, country and the King of Oranje.” They chose the fatherland over the father; the Dutch state over the great holy Christian church. They betrayed the supreme ‘Or else...’ Out of fear.

How few are the people who know that war and Christianity are like water and fire; that world war and social democracy are at odds with each other; that anarchy and imperialism are not compatible? Toiling under the national scourge, with the militarist weaponry on shoulder and hip, heavily loaded and tired troops shuffle along the borders drawn in blood, singing The International without fire. Ambulatory preachers are on horseback in their majors uniforms and preach the gospel of the Saviour of Peoples who rode a mule to Jerusalem to suffer and die for the salvation of the world. Out of conscious an unconscious fear: an urge for self-preservation; at least the preservation of this miserable country. As if this little Dutch state that does not even exist for more than a century would be the purpose of the world, and hallow all means, even the abdication of Christianity and socialism. The Netherlands, a small, fiercely imperialist country, leech of the Dutch Indies. The Netherlands that — as little as Germany, France, England, America — knows no national unity that everyone keeps speaking of. Everybody knows. Not just Troelstra, but even the president of the Chamber of Commerce in Rotterdam, who spoke very clearly at the beginning of the year. And why wouldn’t the proletariat know it then, who experiences it first hand? And the preachers who have to see it on their house calls? And the priests who hear it at confession? And the school teachers who can read it from the bleak cheeks of their pupils while they sing the ‘Wilhelmus van Nassauwe’ and the other nationalist hymns! And the ladies in the central kitchen? Still they praise the national unity very poetically, no matter how the mass sinks into misery and war profiteers rise in wealth and richness. It is recognized that the world war is a business war — yes, even that Christians are not allowed amongst each other — and continues to mobilise, ever ready to participate in the madness of the world as soon as the leaders of the political-economic process in Berlin, London, Washington or Paris deem the moment has arisen: always in fear. For not the Dutch people, not even the Dutch big capitalist, but foreign powers decide in our place about war and peace. Fear rules The Netherlands. Fear rules the world.

The proletariat is guilty just like the ruling class is guilty. It is not only fear and need but mainly DESIRE that drives it into service of the nationalist Mammon. The average proletarian is in essence not better than the average capitalist. Again and again the capitalists, businessmen, shopkeepers, clerks in all kinds of trades and businesses, workers on ships and in factories, that in today’s social life nearly everyone — at least the big, big majority — stealing is more or less

normal, from the highest elites down to the lowest cesspools. For the proletariat as well there is a bounty for ruthlessness, and a heavy fine for being faithful to one's conviction. First of all the state, that serves the interest of the ruling class, demands that a Christian, a socialist will violate their consciousness routinely. And the employer keeps chasing those 'difficult' workers from his premises, his workshop, their fields and estates. School teachers are not allowed to speak out for applied antimilitarism or revolutionary socialism — not even in their free(!) time. Driven by need on the one hand and on the other hand dragged along by the example of the ruling class, the proletariat had almost no other choice than to become materialistic, deceitful, greedy and power hungry. And that's what it became. It's not just weakened physically, but even more so morally. There lives in the soul of the people an urge for more and more, just like in the soul of the ruling class. Again and again one can see how one working-man suppresses the other; the one group climbs the pyramid at the expense of the other; and so on. And even when they cooperate for the interest of their trade, this cooperation all too often misses the moral value, as they struggle in the first place (if not completely) for their own material interest. The care for the trade one works in, for the work one lives off. The words of Tr. Kruyt-Hogerzeil ring true:

"The workers no longer feel the all-encompassing will in them, to liberate themselves from the capitalist yoke. The worst evil capitalism has done to them is that it has perverted the worker's mind, that it has killed their soul. The workers don't recognize themselves any more as people with human value and responsibility towards each other. The workers got used to doing everything for the money of the capitalist; they sell their labour, they have to do this and the capitalist misery has imprinted it on them by making their misery so awful, that they cannot think of anything else than to labour for a wage; that they no longer remember their humanity; that they no longer wonder if their labour doesn't destroy their humanity. The workers got used to no longer taking responsibility for their work; it doesn't matter what the produce as long as the pay is good."

The ruling class exploits this desire. With the high wages it bribes the workers to turn against their faith or their socialism. It incites their mammonistic rage into war service. The assistant secretary of the American Labour ministry explains (according to 'The Telegraaf'):

"Those who dare deny or seriously doubt that the American wage earners as a class are truly loyal to the cause for which their country fights? Whatever the trepidations in the past, they were born from distrust, not of the country's cause, but of those profiteering elements who from tradition were dishonest against them. Now that the dishonesty is less, the distrust diminished as well.

By the miraculous force of the workers, in the last four months forty new cities have risen from the earth that will house a million workers, and a thousand new ships will soon cruise the seas — as a testament of the loyalty of the workers. Our monster cannons will soon make themselves heard on the Western front in Europe in the interest of the American workers.

The workers can stop the war tomorrow, but still the war continues. What better proof can one ask for the loyalty of the workers? What better proof has any other class provided?

Look at the wharves? No man is unemployed: even hundreds of thousands of stuccoes and sailors faithfully pay their dues. This is even more significant because there was confusion and chaos because of the necessity to shift the labour army radically, because of a few employers who used wrong methods, and because of the disgraceful rejection of workers by other employers and their unreasonable demand that the workers should be forced by the government to work for the employer's own profit.

The workers have proved themselves to be more than patient because they knew that this irritating situation would soon be over and because in their hearts they feel the weight of their country's need in this fight for democracy and against the ambition of Germany to become a modern Roman empire. The American wage earner knows that our country — a developing democracy — went to war for self-defence; and he knows the democratic possibilities too well not to defend them. He also knows that not the peoples of enemy countries threaten us, but the military caste that rules the people by autocratic means.

The American workers know that they have nothing to fear from free peoples, but everything to fear from almighty governments. The call for a half-hearted or unsecure peace has certainly not come from the workers, as we know that such a peace would imply a continuation of the militarism, at home as well as abroad. They understand that the interests of those who threaten them abroad, are in sync with those who threaten them in their own country, and that they will beat the enemy at home at the ballots after they have beaten the enemy abroad with guns.

The best proof that the American wage earner understands these things is in his actions. Of all the American social interests, his own are the least represented in the government and yet he answers the call instantly when heavy and dangerous work is to be done. He suffered the most from the rising costs of living and the basic goods and yet did not hesitate in his dedication to the national cause, even with his distrust because these prices profit a few groups that think of him like the old slave states thought of their human cattle.

All of his actions demonstrate that the American workers do not shrink back from any burden that their citizenship imposes on him. The labour conflicts that arose were related exclusively to pay matters. There was not a single strike against the war. In the hundred cases where men and women expressed their fair grievances they have all voluntarily submitted them to arbitrators and are meanwhile back at the job.”

It's not necessary to reply to those phrases one by one. They have already been unmasked after what we described above and elsewhere. What matters here is the unsettling truth about the English workers, that one can also find in the 'Noord-Rotterdamse Courant': that the proletariat in the diverse countries profiteers from the war as much as it can. That it used the conditions and immediately tries to take as much advantage as possibly can at the expense of the miseries that inevitably result from war. That it endeavours to make its own lives more bearable within the borders by serving death and destruction to those who live in 'enemy states'.

Need, fear and coveting drive men, women and children into the ammunition factories. Need, fear and coveting support the national resilience and in so doing the international world war. The majority of armies are proletarians. And they hurt mainly proletarians. They shoot their arms and legs and eyes. They poison them with toxic gasses. They starve them. They tear their guts from their bellies with their bayonets. They crush their skulls with the butts of their guns. Whatever noble thought the brains of the 'enemy' produced just now — their brains that splash from their heads already. 'Long live the International! Away with the weapons of the barbarians! Praise Jesus Christ! Proletarians spill the blood of proletarians; Christians the blood of Christians; priests the blood of priests. The earth drips with blood. There is a stain on its cloth, a bloodstain that spans thousands of square kilometres. And she cannot wash it from her green dress. The stench of blood rises to heaven.

That horror is only possible because behind the frontline not just the men, but also and foremost the socialist and Christian women proletarians work in the ammunition factories; because the proletariat of multiple countries — insofar it doesn't march to the trenches — casts the can-

nons and bullets, fills the grenades with explosives, produces air planes and bombs, guns, sabres, bayonets, — everything.

It has nothing human any more, even nothing animalistic. This big duel of the war industries for capitalist interests, in which Christians and socialists betray all their love and their ideals, is beneath the animal. It is hell on earth.

But away with it then! Let there be need and fear? Wasn't there always amidst the need of the world LOVE, and despite thousands, billions of fears COURAGE? Does really no-one see love as stronger than death? Will the lowest of desires win, and is there absolutely no RESTRAINT? What makes man human cannot be that he is driven by blinded sub-animalistic instinct, always fleeing death to which he will succumb anyway in the end as a miserable victim, — what makes man human is that he places an Ideal above his own brief life and sacrifices himself for it. As a reasonable moral creature he chooses his own life; so he can abdicate his life when necessary?

There are indeed those who will sacrifice themselves for their faith, their brother, their mother, sister, their child. And others whose love broadened far beyond the boundaries of the family. Still caught up in the naïve idealistic delusions, they leave their beloved families 'when the fatherland calls' because — when push comes to shove — lesser makes way for more. Yes, are there not ever more in the world for whom the interest of the whole proletarian class comes first; and thus of the whole coming humanity; and yet others who recognize all the lower and more narrow, and feel the instinct to let it take over, yet make subject it to the demands of the bigger whole? There is still love and idealism in the world, sacred self-respect, moral pride! And does not love demonstrate itself in such way that — to save others from unmeasurable need — take on need and death ourselves? Isn't it essential to be human that one dedicates himself to the noblest they can think, the best he can want, the purest he can feel? And in dedicating himself to this, he breaks the ever depressing circumstances; he arouses in his struggle the world to rise with him! How else could the ideals of Christianity and socialism ever even be approximated when the people were always unfaithful at the crucial moment? Since forever there were those who refused to even the grain of incense to the bust of the Caesar. They have advanced the world. But not those who bowed meekly in fear, or blinded by desire, and entered the service of the worldly powers. And therefore, fellow socialist, fellow Christian, if there burns even an ember in you of the holy fire, do not kneel for Mars and Mammon. Don't bow even in the harshest of circumstances. Do what you can to rise above those circumstances! Oh if you fight so hard for the new dawn of man that you can see just before you, that already lives within you, if doing so you are so perfectly human, and fights for the freedom of the peoples, then you will permeate the rescuing realization that the source of freedom is within us. Socialism is not in a red coat, no dress that one wears today and takes off tomorrow. You cannot simply betray your Christianity when it matters. If it is true that this war is a business war, then no good socialist can participate. If the German is right, who said that war is only possible for a Christian when a moral moratorium is instituted, then Christians should ban war and not their Christianity, even if that costs them their life. Why choose to sacrifice your existence for the fatherland rather than for the Father who is a Sun to all the fatherlands, and a mild rain?

The real social struggle is not the lengthy skirmishes for immediate little gains here or acting patiently hoping for eternal bliss there, but to be inspired by universal love, and daring to loose if needs be; not in searching happiness for oneself, but finding happiness in the realization itself of the principle of camaraderie. It is a struggle that blooms from the inside out. Out of the abundance of life: one cannot contain one's own fire and enthusiasm: one has to! Like a tree in spring cannot

contain its life inside, but bursts out in buttons, leaves, flowers; and like the flowers that will offer their hearts to the sun and become fruits, — that is how truly social deeds spring from very deep, strong, indestructible persuasion, from love, that propulsion and source. Knowing is not enough. Knowing only increases the fear of the greedy. Love alone increases courage. Oh, only then would the bloodstain of the green cloth of the world be cleaned, if the peoples — out of a burning passion for the Highest — sacrifice themselves for self-discipline. Need and fear perish before love and courage. Desire bows before self-discipline. Don't give in to animalistic fears and subhuman urges. Control yourself before anything else. How will you liberate others if you are still slaves yourselves? What would you accomplish? A people has the government it deserves. A slave people will sigh under tyrants despite Christian phrases or socialist slogans. Those who are dominated by urges and desires destroy themselves even quicker under the best circumstances. Nothing more dangerous than freedom for the debauched. A new world will only be born from new people.

Because is all know all that very well, we are moved deeply by the actions of Liebknecht and Adler. Yes, Adler too. There is in his defensive speech, his whole demeanour, such a strong revelation of an honourable disposition that every moral human must honour this man. His action was — according to us — not the highest possible. But how much higher was it than the action of the millions of Austrian Catholics, who abhor war unless they realize that it is a lawful holy war; who understand perfectly well that it cannot and should not continue this way and still can't break free; than the pious babbling and praying of the pope; the phrases of the World League of Churches and the 'study' of the Anti-War Council. His morals resisted even a murder attempt. He evaluated everything and then made himself available in the service of justice as a reasonable, moral being while he was well aware that it would be life against life. And yet even in the end he testified before his judges:

“Following my convictions the killing of a human being is a non-human, an inhuman act; but I knew that all around me barbarianism vanquished and the people were forced to kill each other. The war is, according to me, inhuman, just like the revolution because that also implies bloodshed. But even more abhorrent than than is premeditated murder. It is our moral duty to — according to the words of Marx — give birth to a new society, whose only purpose is labour and peace.”

“A double moral rips the world apart today. One is revealed by the beautiful teaching of Christ: ‘Thou shalt not kill!’ It is the teaching of the true representatives of Christianity, not of those who dishonour Christianity; it is the teaching of Tolstoy”...

It is a violation of both Christianity and socialism to shoot each other for miserable ends. Therefore we are grateful for the actions of French, English, German, Austrian, Russian, American rebels: everywhere there are those who remained faithful in the end! Their hearts beamed like stars of bravery and courage! Their light permeated the walls of the dungeons, far beyond petty borders and sombre trenches. Proponents of the deepest revolution, Christianity, that renews the whole person and thus the whole life, proved their inner freedom. Social democrats and anarchists here and abroad remained focussed with their whole lives on the world encompassing goal. And now it awakes everywhere. In Russia awesomely. But also in Austria-Hungary, in Germany, in France, in England, even in America. People are disgusted with the bloody craft. People demand peace. Something of a new spring finally spreads over the world. People want to revolutionise the political-economic life; turn the slavery of peoples into the freedom of peoples.

In The Netherlands too the revolutionary spirit grows. But let us not be shallow in our judgement. Is it often much more than reacting to the immediate, ultimate need? A revolution can't be a stomach and gut reaction. The need grows immeasurably. But when the hunger of the people is satisfied, will it crawl back to its slums and alleys, ducking back into its shacks and huts? When the guts are satisfied, — what will be left of the unrest?

The suffering of the international proletariat has grown to the extreme. It bleeds from a myriad of wounds. It is exhausted. Even in The Netherlands that kept itself out of the actual war, the people groan. The national unity slowly falls apart internationally. Here too there is a rough fracture. It's narrow.

We deem that honest fracture to be infinitely better than the great lie of 'national unity' to continue, the war to rage, the women to starve and the children to die of misery all over the world: one giant bloody sacrifice without higher purpose. But now is the time to infuse the revolution with a new, pure persuasion. The strikes are spreading both abroad and domestically. Out of fear and despair surely, but also out of moral dismay, horror about the enormous human slaughter, deep inner hate against the capitalist regime. That is good! For the love of God please let it surpass the simple begging for 5 cents per hour pay raise — even if the raise is a life necessity-, not just for a bite to eat or some happiness for oneself and their close ones, for the own class or group; STRIKE BECAUSE YOU WILL NO LONGER TOLERATE THE VIOLATION OF YOUR PERSONALITY, NOR THE PERSONALITY OF YOUR SISTERS AND BROTHERS: BECAUSE DE PRINCIPLES OF HUMANITY AND OF THE DIVINITY ARE RIDICULES, AND BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT TAKE IT ANY LONGER.

That is how the strike becomes big and good. The proletariat, that has no other choice but to rent out its labour force, that lives in the daily drudge of slavery of Mars and Mammon, shows in the principled strike that awakens in all the countries something of its inner strength, its becoming freedom. It extracts one's personality from the despicable service to capital for one, three, ten or twenty days. It is prepared to suffer damage for it. It's even prepared to lose for the time being. It's even prepared — in its most noble form — to go down fighting if needs be. Rather dying free than living miserably.

*And maybe this way
Losing out after a short feast of freedom,
we perpare for comrades far away a victory
that doesn't fade...*

The proletariat comes into action, struggling for self-liberation. But how can it win? The whole machinery stands still if your mighty will tells it to. In all times there were some big, strong, gigantic slaves, physically amazing but mentally weak. But there have also always been those seemingly weak who proved to be so strong that they were able to rip apart their times by the sheer impact of their personality, and spread new joy over the whole of the earth. It is mental strength that we need, and want to awaken in the soul of the proletariat, in the heart of every person of good intent. And that is why we call for a principled strike.

Firstly for a DURABLE, LASTING, PERMANENT STRIKE. Produce no weapons of destruction. Refuse to work in the gin distilleries; in factories where toxic surrogates are produced. Refuse to typeset crude language and lies — because the poison of the mind is the worst poison of al. Make oneself available for truly useful labour at the service of the community, rather dying in misery

than to save one's miserable existence at the expense of the physical and mental wellbeing of one's fellow humans. Refuse to cheat and lie. Break free by any means possible from the moral damnation in which the unscrupulous profiteers want to capture you. And to honour them and yourself as personalities by cursing by your actions all the disgraceful work they try to make you do. If — in spite of yourself — you already do such labour, don't you believe that you are a prisoner of faith. Break out, if you can, of the mental chains. Know that there are those who already wrestled themselves free, and who depend on you. And that every new man of woman who joins them — freed from that very deepest of humiliating slavery — makes them even stronger and more free — and they you; and that the greatest revolutionizing strength emanates on the world from a group of people who are personalities and prove that they are through their lives. — Down with the war service! And therefore refuse to fabricate ammunition; build battle ships, cruisers, torpedo hunters, mines, howitzers, cannons, machine guns, guns, grenades, sabres, bayonets, military clothing, etc. Every bomb that you cast drives peace further away from your children and children's children. Every sword you sharpen is an attack on your consciousness. Again: it's the capitalists who make the war; but it's the proletarians who make the war possible. And vice versa: without the proletariat the ruling class is impotent in the war.

Don't be a tool in the war labour either. Be aware that the owners of your country can't unleash a war — even if they control all the tools of destruction you can think off — when the people doesn't want to fight. In the Netherlands there are as yet more than 300 permanent military strikers. That's not much but still more than many would think. Because their action radiates on all barracks and camps; it is debated in the parliament and in the cabinet; pondered by the queen; it awakens the consciousness of hundreds of soldiers. We know that there are many already who will never agree again to be weaponized against the 'domestic enemy'; and no fewer walk around with the outspoken plan to refuse if they ever face the 'domestic enemy'. The current rises more and more. Finally it will be unstoppable.

There are workers in the ammunition factories — in the Netherlands as well — who curse and despise their own work. They lack the strength to break free from it because of their wife, their child, their old mother. And their own gasping lives demand maintenance too. But although forced by need, still they don't accept their work as inescapable fate. Although driven by fear sometimes a ray of courage sparkles. In fact it means something — and sometimes a lot — if here or abroad men and women in the ammunition factories down their tools for a certain time. It's the first yank on the chain; a first flexing of the muscles: in the end their shackles will break and they will no longer serve the despicable forced work with their labour — following the example of that manufacturer here who refused to lend his factory to the government for the production of ammunition. For more and more people the moment will break for them to refuse their hellish task because they have so much different, better things to do: good work, and to sacrifice themselves for the salvation of the world.

In the permanent strike of the ammunition makers and soldiers we foremost honour the act of the independent personality that knows what they want to live and die for. But that act is a personal, life representing act that arouses others; it has the ability to inspire because we are all innately dispositioned for personality and we are all called to prove our mental independence amidst the hardships of life. That is why it resonates in the heart of the mass, in the barracks and beyond. The ever growing permanent military strike needs to be supported by TEMPORARY STRIKES in so-called civilian life, ever growing and growing in size, ever more interconnected become MASSIVE, and become in crucial moments, A GENERAL STRIKE. Just like the refusal of

military service we must understand the civilian strike not as a fight against the own employer for immediate gain, but as a struggle against all the employers of the world as far as small — Asia, Japan, Australia, the Cape colonies, and for a dignified existence of all human life all over the world; not against the own government alone, against all the capitalist governments together; a fight for all the workers and all the peoples and thus for the own people too; a fight for both friends and foes, even for the own oppressors and rulers, their children and children's children, the whole humankind; a fight for liberation of the world.

From the view point of the Christian socialist only the principled strike is permissible. But the smallest of strikes can be principled, and the biggest can be unprincipled. Everything depends on the motivation. For a conscious, moral human the smallest struggle for more wages stems from a deep, principled conflict, or rather: that's what it turns out on. It is our first task to bring this forward even in the smallest of strikes. This too must be part of the world's struggle for a new, dignified life. Moreover, it's possible that a seemingly irrelevant cause (when even just a few workers refuse to accept all too humiliating conditions based on a moral pride) a big and strong popular action is born.

But in the second place precisely Christian workers — along with whatever socialist proletarians — are obliged — **MEANS OF TARGETED MASSIVE AND GENERAL STRIKES ON CRITICAL MOMENTS — TO PREVENT THEIR GOVERNMENTS OF COMMITTING CRIMES.** Especially those who don't feel strong enough yet to refuse military service permanently, to break loose from the ammunition factories and other workshops of war — and the country is full of them at the moment — will find a possibility here to prove that their soul is not completely addicted; that their imprisoned comrades don't hope for this great event in vain: that finally the people shall come into motion. — If the soldiers in the Netherlands struck by the thousands and thousands just one day to protest the malnourishment of the mass, it would be forever documented in the history books of the country. Soldiers! who cannot yet break completely with militarism, who can still bear to wear your humiliating suits, strengthen your inner selves and prepare yourselves at least to join the workers to resist alongside thousands and tens of thousands the business of the imperialist government. **WITH A TARGETED STRIKE WE CANCEL THE SYSTEM OF VIOLENCE UNDER WHICH HUMANITY SIGHS.** Workers! it is NOT to your shame that you sometimes strike. But that you keep doing evil work. Or if you do good work, that your labour is misused to make profit for the owners to the detriment of humanity. Need, desire and fear have forced you to this. May love give you the self-discipline and courage to withdraw yourselves at least temporarily. And motivate in clearly outspoken manifestos the reasons for your action so that the ruling class may understand what offence it gives to you — and therefore in the end to itself too. No-one has the right to force another into labour. The capitalist class forces you into even the most despicable of labour. No-one has the right to force another into killing. The government trains you like bloodhounds; the ones in power can order you at any given moment to burn, destroy, plunder and murder. The state, that instrument of the ruling class, forces Christians and socialists 'if necessary' — and the secret diplomacy, that is the crude business interest, decides about 'necessity' — to betray their international principles, and to kill brothers and sisters beyond the borders. Every day, every second the people is subjected to violence and horror.

Even forced to work, the workers are denied the necessary food. "No-one will go hungry in the Netherlands", said the minister Treub. But his colleague Posthuma seems to have understood 'in Germany'; that is to say: not in the German trenches and not among the German bourgeoisie.

And certainly not among the Dutch bourgeoisie. That is: among the war profiteers and other owners. National unity for the militia, class war in the distribution!

But how could so much be exported to Germany? Who loaded it on ships and trains? Who smuggled it over the border? That big, strong but soulless slave: the Dutch proletariat that – short-sighted – ask for a bit of pay. Even the N.V.V. And SDAP² lose the main goal out of sight more and more in this crucial juncture of the world’s history, now that imperialism tries to strengthen itself through war more than ever before – they delayed the the struggle for socialism until ‘after the peace’ – that is until to day when the world’s bourgeoisie has stabilized its relative balance of strength and balanced their system of violence with the economic fundamental relations and technical demands. Again and again they demand: “No export of necessary means of living for the people!” And that is good: it is a pure, internationalist demand. Thus speaketh every people to its own government, and urge it to provide the own people first of all with the supplies available, and to exchange the surplus against goods that are lacking that are abundantly produced by peoples outside of the country where they in turn need our surplus production. If this happens everywhere, then the international shortage is over. But if there is somewhere in the world a government that does not fulfil its duty – and show me one government that fulfils it? – out of the profiteering of the owners, out of the war necessities (and those two things are essentially the same-) or for whatever other reason, THEN LET THE PEOPLE STOP THEIR LABOUR. If the haulers refuse, if the rail workers refuse, then the government is impotent. It shouldn’t be necessary that people like signalman Alders to run the signals to ‘unsafe’ when trains with troops move towards Amsterdam: because there should be no train driver and no stoker in the Netherlands is to be found who will move the troops – and least of all to the capital, the heart of the country, where they will unleash them like Cossacks upon the hungry people. All the signals must be on ‘unsafe’, and all of the wagons should be empty, all the locomotives should stand idle when the export policy of the ruling class proves to be an onslaught on the welfare of the people.⁽¹⁾

Without any doubt need will drive workers into the arms of the ruling class as long as they prove to be unable to carry and lead the economic process. But precisely in the permanent struggle, not with the weapons of the barbarians but with the moral sword – with ever growing KNOWLEDGE that is power, with the strength of WILL that becomes stronger and stronger with exercise like muscles – grows the self-discipline and organisation, dedication and solidarity, those virtues that we need more than ever today. The economic conditions allow for socialism. People! if among you there was less sloth! Don’t let yourselves be forced into capitalism militarism and imperialism.

The big Demonstrative Congress last February 17th in Amsterdam made it grippingly clear how far it’s become in the Netherlands. It protested against the ongoing nationalization of the

² Christian and social democratic political parties in the Netherlands

⁽¹⁾ People may remark that the train personnel is not allowed to strike: it would be found futility of break chin contract. But when the rail personnel strikes on grounds of principle, then it starts in fact to correct the injustice, that it has subjected itself to this wrong, humiliating condition. 1st it is always unreasonable when those in power extort promises from those without power by means of threatening them with hunger; 2nd haven’t the railroad workers not been able to foresee the consequences of all this, especially in the context of the war. As reasonable, responsible, moral creatures they are, according to us, even obliged to break their bonds as soon as possible, and every responsible worker should try to stay away from a servitude in which this kind of inhumane conditions are imposed.

people; against the starvation of the mass; the disgraceful treatment of unemployed; the looming civilian service.

All of us know how the army is expanding; how hundreds of millions are spent to modernize the war equipment. That new fleet are being planned and developer, and started the arming of the Dutch Indies. Instead of finally breaking out of the hellish game with godly gravity, with human sense of responsibility; instead of pointing the nations in the direction of liberation by giving the example that all the peoples only have to follow in order to flourish themselves in natural and mental regard as well as do well for others; the small Dutch state howls with the big wolves of the world as loud as it can. In doing so it carries the responsibility for all the present and coming wars: it already prepares the next war. This country — according to many ‘chosen by God’ — behaves as if it answered the call of Satan. (And that is what it does, as the God of the Netherlands is Mammon; and his unholy Son, whose name is Mars is worshipped as Immanuël, praise God-with-us.) “Well plotted and carefully prepared for mass murder on foreigners and compatriots for the perpetuation and expansion of capitalism, whether offensively or defensively” — thus the truthfully depicted militarism the first Congress resolution fulfils the spirit of the Netherlands more and more. That is why they, who from the strength of their faith or their socialist conviction remained faithful to their internationalist stance and still fight for brotherhood, solidarity and world peace, who are prosecuted by the military hierarchy in all kinds of ways, who are being insulted, imprisoned, banished. When The Jong declared clearly — in his preachings and lectures end of August 1914 in Eindhoven — that it was his holy conviction that Christianity and war are irreconcilable, and had aroused his public — completely in accordance with his task as a preacher — to live according to their conviction, he was expelled from the territory of the 3rd division. When I — along with several allies and like-minded — ever more strongly resisted the growing war spirit and preached a simple truth for several communes of North-Brabant around Pentecost 1915 (that the Spirit of Pentecost is at odds with the raging war beast and Christian freedom is at odds with cadaver discipline), I was ousted from my commune and banished for years from the province of Limburg, North-Brabant and Zeeland. When in September 1915 a Manifesto was published in which humanists of different tenor condemned the war from the depths of their hearts, and instigated to be faithful to one’s consciousness and to the highest human laws, several of the subscribers were prosecuted for sedition. All of them who worked for the state were fired when they didn’t back out under threat. And the government didn’t hesitate to urge private employers to follow this example and do the same. In Christian schools it proved impermissible to warn against the international war fever. The teachers were not allowed — in their free time nor in their public function — to fulfil their social duties according to their own moral convictions. And when young people carried so much idealism and fervour that they went against public opinion and the immense force of almost the whole world and refused to serve as cogs in the war machine, they were imprisoned. While the government lures “volunteers” to India with misleading posters and promises of financial rewards; propagates army and navy even with music concerts, army days and cosy gatherings (where comedians and even retired generals paraded), the government of the land of freedom of consciousness violated systematically the freedom of speech of people who engaged against the madness of the world from the strength of their convictions and spoke out against it with lots of rational, sober arguments to call for actions according with that consciousness. Van Wijhe was again banished from Gelderland and Overijssel because his ‘propaganda in the spirit of the S.D.P. and so I myself was too, acting on behalf of the B.v.C.S. [Union of Christian Socialists, translator’s note]; Coenders, Schoel and

Jansen were banned from Arnhem for the dissemination of an antimilitarist pamphlet; Wijnkoop, chairman of the R.S.C. In Overijssel was banned without even a semblance of a reason. The same government that implements proportional representation and forces the people to the ballots, makes it impossible for candidates of revolutionary socialist conviction to come into contact with the people. The same government that allows for freedom of consciousness when it comes to the oath suppresses the freedom of consciousness when it comes to militarism, and systematically fosters spinelessness, not just with the postmen, but even with the teachers of our youths. The aim — the Dutch state — justifies all means. And the teachers in the Netherlands are already so degenerate that they let this pass. Always preoccupied with the struggle for pay raises, the big majority of them never think of stopping their despicable service once and for all as one man until that humiliating censorship is lifted. And the preachers are not really concerned with the fact that the generals exercise discipline over the teachings of the church. Most of them keep their mouths shut very solemnly, or... openly endorse the violence of the government. And the people allows all that to be done to it: partly in a nationalist daze, partly lulled by the leaders of the S.D.A.P. And the clergy of the Alone-beatific Church. Strike, workers! craftsmen and teachers, strike! and you, preachers, incite from your pulpits to forever stop any service of hell anywhere the personality is harmed.

THE CIVILIAN DRAFT LOOMS. Because — as it was strikingly formulated in the second resolution of the Demonstrative Congress — “only then can the insane war for world domination amongst the different national groups of big industrialists, colonial capitalists and imperialists be waged, when the military as well as the civilian part of the populace is completely subjected and enslaved by the imperialist project.” The country is transformed into one giant barrack. The last sparkle of civil liberties will be destroyed, the war will be ever more possible than ever, yes even probable. Workers! they are especially after you and your wives and children. Through the civilian draft men, women and children will fall under the military command. Don’t tolerate it. Cling to your right to self-realization and life.

And while they enforce so much on the people and want to enforce even more, while they steal its rights and freedoms, they won’t even feed it adequately. There is no doubt — as the third resolution says — “that the scarce life essentials as well as the driving up of prices could be prevented if major measures had been taken and the government had not chosen the interests of the imperialist capital over the interests of the big mass of exploited and economically downtrodden class of the proletariat;

that the government neglected those measures — by a criminal negligence according to the declarations of specialists — so that the production of life necessities (grains, potatoes, vegetables, beans, cheese, milk, eggs, meat, fish, etc.) would be advanced, while at the same time it facilitates a policy of export so that high prices and scarcity brought our countrymen to the brink of famine and increasing misery, weakening, disease and early death; while at the same time as this social disaster in the proletarian class coincides with an astounding accumulation of war profits by ruthless profiteering farmers, industrialist, trade capitalists and other speculators;

that this government policy has not only pushed the misery to unbearable heights, but also promoted the imperialism of warring countries and increased the war danger for our country.”

If the government was serious with its slogans, then why hasn’t it — as would fit its operating methods — confiscated stocks and distributed them according to the needs of all, especially the mothers, children, ill, ageing, weak and those who do heavy labour? Then at least there would actually be some ‘national unity’! The war profiteers live in wealth and disgusting pomp. The

'national wealth' is big. But for the people nearly everything is too expensive. Squander on the one side and on the other hand selfish accumulation of stocks. And all that enforced by the in the name of the Law, in the name of Justice, in the name of God, in the name of Jesus Christ. People! you cannot allow all this to done to you. You cannot do this to yourself. A people in uniform is its own tyrant. You are not only continuously being offended in your humanity, you hurt and humiliate yourselves too in every possible way; you insult the ruling class in Spirit by obeying its insane commands and by executing its most foolish, egotist decrees. Stop working for such a society. Pledge on your life to create a new society. You'll die anyway. See to it that you live and die for a good cause. So that your children and children's children no longer moan — desperately in the end — under this world misery. Strike, and defend your wife and child against YOUR domestic enemy; yes, protect this enemy against his own criminality. Strike, so that the ruling class understand better than ever, how its whole existence depends on you who empty its sewers and takes care of its bathrooms and hunting lodges, who build its houses and sows its grain, who make its clothes and luxury articles. So that finally your labour teaches it to respect, and to be disgusted by its own heartless violence.

Strike! so that others may work, or at least live. Tell the rulers by your actions: "We don't want to work for a class that threw our comrades on the cold streets as if they were dead tools when it could no longer 'use' them for their margins and profits. We demand — and we will not work for you if you don't comply — that you honour the human being in the working-man and the sacrifice in labour that you yourself says is 'noble'. Productive work for the unemployed; at least full wage payment for the unemployed!" — Because the capitalist system inherently makes so many unemployed that hundreds of families are now threatened by total demise; that same system that ensures that the wealth of the owners right now accumulates billions and billions.

Strike! mainly for the abolishing of the war plans: demobilization of the 'Wehrmacht'. That is how you actively support the struggle of the anti-militarists in all the countries.

Never lose sight of your Ideal.

Connect your struggle for pay with your class struggle, and your class struggle to your struggle for rights, and your struggle for rights to your struggle for a new humanity, and that struggle to the one for the Kingdom of God. Make everything subordinate to the Highest Of All. Firstly, STRIKE INNERLY: abandon the service of mammon; wage an uncompromising battle against the fear and the desire that you recognize now in the war of blood and fire, magnified without limit, raging outside of you all over the world. Did you know that this is how you were? That this potential is within you?

Christian workers especially, awaken! You dressed yourselves in the most beautiful of flags. But you turned it into a mockery. Do you want to be a kingdom, priestly, sacred people of workers, whose daily lives are lived in the service of God, then break with Mars and Mammon. Make exploitation impossible by your loyalty to the holiest of principles. Stop confusing worldly power with godly authority, dated and backward with eternal, slavish with Christian, the principle of the Roman Empire with that of the Kingdom of God. Arm your members with the weapons of justice. Fight the good fight. Christianity is standing up for freedom, — not the piety of lackeys.

Christian soldiers! it should be impossible to call you what I just called you. But now that you have made it so, will you as yet make it impossible again? I know that many among you recognize that what they do with their lives and what they allow to happen for years now is not good. If you feel the ability to act in you, can you allow yourselves to be held back by hardships and griefs that will certainly be your fate if you remain faithful to the *militia Christi* and withdraw

yourselves from the military service to Mars? The world awaits your action – every day and every morning.

And never forget that we have A VERY POSITIVE TASK to fulfil. That we say “no” because we gave our word in a holy “yes” to a new, dignified world. Christians stand up! and go to war – not just against a society whose fundamental principle is in opposition with the scripture – but for a new society in which one person honours the others like brothers; one people greets the others in admiration as a revelation of Spirit; where the economic process is centred around profits for the few to the mental detriment of all and to the physical detriment of the proletariat, but is focused on providing in everybody’s needs. Finally understand that your religion is the deepest, richest source of indestructible revolutionary energy. Moze was a revolutionary, Jesus Christ, Saint Paul – in fact all the greats of all ages.

Orthodox as well as unorthodox soldiers and workers – STRIKE!

Orthodox people because the Holy Scripture allows for all this not a moment longer. You know: the one you honour like the word of God’s Son:

“You wil love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all of your reason. This is the biggest and first commandment. And the second, that is of equal importance says: You will love your fellow human as you love yourself.”

Unorthodox people because the Spirit of Christianity does not allow for all this. Show in your actions that u are serious:

“The Lord now is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there freedom is.”

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Bart de Ligt
Soldiers and workers, strike!
1918

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