

# War, Patriotism, Religion And Commercialism

By Daniel De Leon

At some later day we shall treat the readers of *The People* to the full text of the magnificent speech delivered by Comrade Jean Jaures in the French Chamber of Deputies, and out of which this week's quotation at the head of these columns is taken.\* Today, we shall limit ourselves to furnishing an illustration of the truth of the above quotation taken from more recent historic events.

How largely did not the word "patriotism" figure in the late war between Greece and Turkey! From whatever source information came, "patriotism" was the point of departure and the ultimate aim. On "patriotic" grounds some nations supported Greece, and on "patriotic" grounds others befriended Turkey; and, most wonderful of all, these various "patriots" always shoved forward their "Christianity" and their "religion."

Among the governments that took a most pronouncedly "patriotic" and "religious" stand during that war was Germany. Even during the war the wicked Socialist, who refuses to be duped by words, looked behind the curtain, and saw the German holders of Turkish bonds anxious to safeguard their property. The sight explained the source of the "patriotism" and "religion" of the German government. Now, since the war, further facts have appeared that throw light upon the connecting links of all these bourgeois virtues and bourgeois-ism, or commercialism itself.

Germany has had an eye on the indemnity money that Turkey received. And how? The German government, out of "patriotism," etc., has been maintaining that Turkey should have a navy; as Turkey has none, that she should build one; and—that *German shipbuilders should have the contracts.*

Here is the cat all out, from whiskered nose to tasseled tail. Commercialism deals in war as it deals in potatoes, rum, bibles, etc. It matters not that the effect of owning a navy is to render a nation readier for war; what of it? War feeds commerce, commerce feeds war, and the end of the song is larger wealth for those to luxuriate in who neither bleed on the battlefields nor swelter on the industrial fields of toil.

The ideologists who strive at "one thing at a time"; who in one place pass "peace resolutions"; at another address themselves to the task of removing some other one iniquity, and so on should concentrate their thoughts, if they have any to concentrate, upon this little fact of the German government's schemes, and they will discover that the mechanism of capitalism is such that it is indestructible unless attacked and fought all along the line.

DANIEL DE LEON

Capitalism means war; one plank of capitalism means the whole of capitalism. To oppose one plank only is to leave all others standing, and thus render abortive all seeming success against the monster.

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\*Jean Léon Jaures (1859–1914) was a leading Socialist in France’s Chamber of Deputies from 1893 until his assassination by a nationalistic zealot in July 1914, on the eve of World War I. The passage from the speech mentioned by De Leon was as follows:

“This social system of today, kept in constant ferment to defend itself against the disorders that rise out of its own lap, is compelled perpetually to strengthen force against force: in this century of unlimited competition and overproduction, there is also competition among armies and an overproduction of militarism; industry itself being a battle, war becomes the leading, the most exciting, the most feverish of all industries.”—SLP