

I saw Frank Smith later in the dark little office in Cliffords Inn and put to him a question, restless in my mind :

"He wrote to me that he had not 'mind control.' What did he mean?"

"He had delusions."

"What sort of delusions?"

"With Lloyd George riding in a motor car," Frank Smith answered, with a gesture of misery.

A meeting to honour Keir Hardie was held in the Memorial Hall. I remember the hoarse, deep roar of applause which greeted J. R. MacDonald when he rose. Men sprang to their feet and cheered him, and cheered again because he was the target on whom the attack of the conscriptionists and the jingoes mainly centred. He spoke tenderly of Keir Hardie, as did all that night. The spirit loomed over us of our leader and friend, who had loved humanity as others love their immediate families, and, feeling more deeply than the many can, had been stricken unto death by the Great War, in which he had neither kith nor kin of his blood, but the shattered brotherhood of the world whereon his hopes were set.

Among the leaders of the Socialist International none had foreseen so urgently and painfully as he, the approaching menace of the World War; none more clearly conceived its prevention by a general refusal of the workers in all countries to assist in the conflict.

The proposal for the international general strike of the workers against war had been pioneered in the international Socialist congresses by the Dutchman, Domela Nieuwenhuis, since 1891 and by Hervé, the French "anti-patriot," as he called himself. Bebel, the German Socialist leader, and the majority of his party had opposed it as "impossible and beyond discussion." Hervé's propaganda had found large support in the French Socialist Party. Jaurès, its leader, at the Stuttgart International Socialist Congress had given his assent to a resolution of the French party in which the general strike and insurrection was mentioned as one of the means by which the workers might oppose war. That this assent, though sincere, was mainly academic later events were to indicate. The Stuttgart Conference eventually adopted a formula in which direct endorsement of the general strike against war was avoided and the differences in the opposing policies glossed over. At the Copenhagen Conference in 1910 Keir Hardie and Edouard Vaillant of France moved an amendment, drafted by Hardie himself, declaring for the general strike against war, "especially in the industries which supply war with its implements (arms and ammunition, transport, etc.)." Vandervelde of Belgium, the skilful diplomatist, who was to find a seat in the Belgian Coalition War Cabinet, persuaded Hardie and Vaillant to accept the reference of their proposal to the International Socialist Bureau, for study and report to the next conference. The report should have been presented at the Conference which never was held, for the World War had come and found the Socialists unprepared. Like Hervé, the "anti-patriot," who at the first trump of war had become patriot of the patriots, jingo of the jingoes, the battalions of the International had turned to rend each other.

To Keir Hardie the International general strike against war was an article of profound faith. Once he had accepted it, in his clear-minded definite way, it became one of the great objects of his life to work for it steadily, persistently. Advocating it and defending it through Press and platform in this country, again and again he tore himself from the pressure of home politics, to pioneer for it abroad—in France, Belgium,