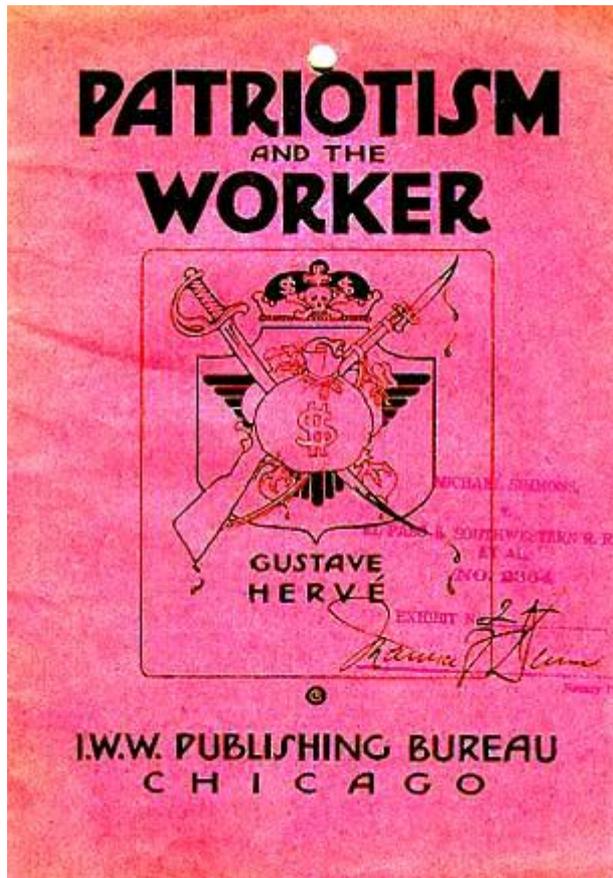


Patriotism and the worker - Gustave Herve



A pamphlet put out in 1912 by the IWW Publishing Bureau, consisting of Gustave Hervé's speech to the jury at his 1905 trial for "anti-militarist" activities. Hervé later became a nationalist and apparently a convert to fascism in France during the 1920s.

INTRODUCTION BY THE PUBLISHERS.

In issuing this well-known speech of Gustave Herve's as one of the publications of our Bureau we are contributing to an agitation that is now universal in the capitalist world, and is of prime importance as well in the United States as in France. The universal character of Herve's appeal will be apparent to the American reader, notwithstanding the author's illustrations and allusions are drawn from European experiences alone. We have only to substitute the name America for France, Germany or Russia in order to observe the same process of "making a patriot." Here, as in France and in all other countries, the child's brain is stuffed with stories of alleged "heroes" of American history from George Washington to Theodore Roosevelt as a preparatory schooling for the future slave to acquire the necessary respect for and obedience to his master--whose mastership, in America as in Europe, has resulted from fraud, cunning, financial manipulation, land steals, and by fishing in troubled waters during and after wars of conquest or expansion, as well as through the merciless exploitation of the working class in industry. All the facts of American history stand out in bold relief to sustain Herve's masterly expose of "capitalist patriotism" and of the baneful effects of the "patriotic" illusion upon the minds of the toilers.

However, there appear to be some differences between the United States and France--the patriotism of the latter is perhaps intensified by a greater weight of tradition and by the fact that the "enemy," though near at hand, is still outside the national boundaries; while on the

other hand the United States dominates a continent, and in its development has become like a sea into which have emptied the streams of all nationalities. The patriotism of the American worker, then, has more the characteristics of a shallow "jingoism" combined with race and nationality prejudices born of proximity rather than of distance. The "foreign enemy" is not beyond our boundaries, but in our midst. Although carefully nurtured by the capitalist in his own interest, this form of "patriotism" is likely to prove less deep-rooted and enduring than that in France, on account of fewer traditions here and of the enforced association of native with foreign workers in American industry.

This association of workers on the job, combined with the agitation for ONE BIG UNION of all slaves against all masters, will shortly break down the walls of race and nationality prejudice in the United States, and unite the slaves of all nationalities for emancipation from their "patriotism" and masters of whatever nationality.

The INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD is peculiarly pledged to this task. It aims to unite all wage-workers, without distinction of race, nationality, sex or any other consideration except that they are exploited by a master, into One Big Union of the Working Class, "to take possession of the earth and the machinery of production and abolish the wage system," thus putting an end forever to the rule of the robber class. Then shall we see the dawn of that day dreamed of by the poet Tennyson:

"When the war drums throbbed no longer, and the battle flags were furled

In the Parliament of Man--the Federation of the World."

Note--The above introduction was written in 1912.

PATRIOTISM By GUSTAVE HERVE

GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY:--

This trial nearly came to an end yesterday, after the speech of Urbain Gohier. 1 We were overjoyed to recognize in that speech the genuine Gohier of the Dreyfus case, who was a tower of strength to all of us in that trying time; our own Gohier, who has not gone over, as some for a moment feared, to anti-semitism--that stupid and sanguinary anti-semitism which has just dishonored Russia.

Our lawyers told us, and we have no doubt about the matter ourselves, that after Gohier's formidable indictment of militarism, after so much spirit, such good humor, such an array of facts, and such logic, acquittal was certain for all of us. And, in fact, if we had come here with the sole object of getting acquitted, then, after Gohier's speech, the interests of all of us would have been best served by silence.

I must tell you the reason why we decided to prolong these proceedings, at the risk of prolonging your fatigue and of keeping you here some days longer, at the time of your monthly settlement of accounts for the end of December and the family festivities of New Year's Eve.

It is certain that our friend Gohier--I can say it without offending him--by his origin, his education, and by his language, is the one among us who is the least removed from yourselves; he is the only one among us in whom there still remains, perhaps, a grain of patriotism.

By letting the trial close, while you were still under the impression produced by his speech, we should have seemed to be retreating, to be screening ourselves behind Gohier. There have been enough calumnies flung at us already; we do not want to lay ourselves open to that one.

And, besides, we have another reason for speaking. It is not every day that the government furnishes us with such a sounding-board as this trial affords. In the ordinary way, our public

speeches are deformed and unrecognizable when they reach you. Here we speak before the pick of the reporters on the Paris press. We could never forgive ourselves if we let slip by such a chance of making known to the general public our exact ideas.

I leave to my friend and advocate, Lafont, the task of defending my person; a necessary task, for my bad reputation must not be allowed to cause prejudice to my fellow-culprits, but also a difficult task. For the last four years you have been reading in your papers every morning that I pass my time in planting the national flag on the dunghill, or in calling army officers, in the lump and without distinction, blackguards in gold-laced uniforms; as if among the great body of officers, as in all professions, there were not honest men as well as black sheep. An error, or a falsehood, which you hear repeated day after day for four years, is likely, I fear, to have become for you an indisputable fact.

I have reserved for myself the more interesting task of presenting to you our anti-patriotic conception, incorrectly called "Herveism," as if propagandists like Yvetot, and other militant syndicalists² who stand by my side, had waited for me to throw myself into the fight before starting their propaganda. I say this not to diminish my share of the responsibility, but in order to pay homage to the truth. My role has been limited to interpreting the ideas and sentiments which I have seen spring up among the proletarian and peasant class, and of which I have only been the doctrinaire, the theorizer, and, latterly, in spite of myself, the standard-bearer and symbol.

These anti-patriotic ideas, moreover, are somewhat new among the masses of organized workers. And, like all new ideas, they shock public opinion; they seem shocking to you. That was the fate of early Christianity, and also of the republican idea, at the time when republicans were regarded, in the remotest parts of the country, as monsters gorged with blood, dividers-up of property, and incendiaries.

There was once a heretic named John Huss. A century before Luther he proclaimed and demanded the Protestant Reformation. For this crime a Council condemned him to be burnt. At the moment when the first martyr of Protestantism was mounting the pile of fagots, an old woman, a devotee from the town of Constance, brought a fresh fagot to the pile, which, doubtless, she did not find high enough. "Sancta simplicitas!" exclaimed John Huss, shrugging his shoulders in kindly pity.

That was the sentiment which I felt yesterday when, in this hall where the advocates rarely raise their voices except in defense of the accused, a young licentiate of the Bar said that we deserved the guillotine. It was not the guillotine, it was the stake this good young man meant.

And it is really the stake which we, like all heretics, deserve: we who are the heretics of the patriotic religion. For it is a religion this patriotism of modern peoples, a religion inculcated in us from the cradle by the same methods employed in all times to inculcate all religions.

You know how a Catholic is made? The child is taken while yet in the cradle. While fondling him the mother teaches him prayers, which he repeats like a parrot. She tells him there is a God, a Heaven, and a Hell. His brain, like wax, receives all these impressions without reacting.

When he is seven years old his well-meaning mother hands him over to the priest, who sows in his young brain with unstinting hands, the naive Biblical legends which were believed in ancient Judea two or three thousand years ago, at the time when the Jewish people had about as much intellectual culture as the negroes of Behanzin.

At the same time, the theatrical pomp of religious ceremonies, the music of the organ, the dim light of the churches, the incense diffused on the altars, the gorgeous vestments of the officiating priest, all these things strike the imagination and excite the nerves. After that,

although the child may grow up into a great scientist like Pasteur, his brain will shrink from all discussion and reasoning on religious matters.

It is by no other method that we, and perhaps you, gentlemen of the jury, are made into patriots.

HOW A PATRIOT IS MADE

At an age when the critical spirit is not yet developed in us, we hear, as children at the family table, accounts of horrible misdeeds committed by the Germans or the English, or feats of valor accomplished by the French. The little Germans, at the same moment, hear about all sorts of crimes committed by the French, the English, or the Russians.

We are taught that France is the land of the brave, the country of generosity and chivalry, and the refuge of liberty; the same things are said of their countries to the little Germans, the little Russians, and the little Japanese; and we all, in the innocence of our hearts, believe them.

For New Year's gifts our fathers, and even our mothers, give us lead soldiers, toy guns, drums, clarions and trumpets.

And when this beautiful education has already made us patriots in embryo, the school--the secular public school quite as much as the schools of the religious orders --puts the finishing touch to the work of driving patriotism into our heads. Do you remember those little school books in which the Loriguets³ of patriotism manipulated the facts of national history for the greater glory of the French fatherland? The little Germans have put into their hands books similar in kind, but exclusively celebrating the German fatherland.

Do you remember those History manuals in which on every page some scene of carnage or the portrait of some warrior was cynically displayed? You were not spared the sight of a single one of them, all were there: Vercingetorix, Charles Martel, Duguesclin, Bayard, all the generals of Louis XIV, including those who set fire to the Palatinate, all the generals of the Grand Army who went forth to stain in the blood of all the peoples the flag of Valmy, and not forgetting the vulture himself, Napoleon, on the top of his perch in the Place Vendome.

And the commentaries under each picture reek with race hatred, national vanity and idolatry of the sword--fine sentiments which the reading of the "Petit Journal" (five million readers!), the "Petit Parisien," and other papers with big circulations will do nothing but maintain and develop.

To complete the work of making the perfect patriot, to poison his whole system, nothing more is necessary than to let him become intoxicated with military pomp, which is still more impressive than the pomp of religion.

This time the impression is not produced by priestly vestments, resplendent with gold and precious stones; these are replaced by costumes of gaudy colors, with gold lace, plumes and feathers.

The music of the church organ is replaced by the still more intoxicating music of drums and trumpets.

Instead of religious processions, we now have those imposing military reviews, which we have all run after in our time in order to see the march-past, in the heat and dust, of those interminable ranks of instruments of slaughter and of young men, the flower of the nation, marked for future butcheries. Then, when the rag on the end of a stick, which represents the sacred emblem of the country, passes by, a wave of religious emotion passes over the throng of patriots, and they devoutly bare their heads, just as their great-grandfathers bared their heads before the Holy Sacrament.

Ah! I know that I am hurting your feelings, gentlemen of the jury, and that you feel all the more hurt because you know that I am saying what is true. I know that I am wounding the "universal conscience," of which the Paris Bar has made itself such an eloquent interpreter. But do you think that Voltaire, Diderot, and the other encyclopaedists hurt nobody's feelings? It is a lamentable fact that whenever a nascent society is emerging from the womb of the old order, it is always with prolonged and agonizing birth-pangs, causing, to the adherents of the ancient system, distress and anguish which the innovators would fain have spared them.

As for us, the revolutionary socialists, we have repudiated the flag on which are displayed in letters of gold the names of so many butcheries.

WHAT IS A COUNTRY?

Flags are only emblems; they have no value beyond what they represent. What, then, do we mean by a country or a nation? What are all the countries of today?

Allow me, gentlemen of the jury, to make use of an illustration, a sort of parable, which will enable you better to understand our sentiments.

Countries--all countries or nations, whatever may be the governmental ticket with which they are labeled--are composed of two groups of men, one by far the less numerous, the other embracing the immense majority of the people.

The first group is seated at a well-spread table, where nothing is lacking. At the head of the table, at the place of honor, are seated the great financiers. Some are Jews, yes; others are Catholics; others, again, are Protestants or Freethinkers. They may be in disagreement on religious or-philosophic questions, and even on questions of interest, but, as against the great mass of the people, they work together like thieves at a fair.

On their right and on their left are the cabinet ministers, the great officials of all the state services, civil, religious and military, not forgetting the paymaster-generals, at salaries of thirty, forty, or sixty thousand francs a year; a little farther away, the Council of the Order of Advocates (that glorious interpreter of the "Universal Conscience") and the gentlemen of the courts of law, including their precious auxiliaries, the solicitors, notaries and bailiffs.

And then there are the big shareholders of the mines, factories, railways and shipping companies, and the big stores, great squires and great landed proprietors, they are all at that table; all those who have only a few sons are there also, at the end of the table; they are the small fry, who have, however, all the prejudices and all the conservative instincts of the big capitalists.

Ah! gentlemen of the jury, I trust that you are among those privileged ones seated at that table. One is not badly off there, in truth. In return for one's work--when one does work--work which is often of an intellectual character, frequently pleasant, and which always leaves plenty of leisure; directorial work which flatters a man's pride and vanity, one enjoys a full, rich life, embellished by all the comfort and luxury that the progress of science places at the service of the privileged ones of the earth.

Far away from that table I perceive a herd of beasts of burden, condemned to forbidding, dirty, dangerous and mindless toil, without respite or repose, and, above all, without security for the morrow; small tradesmen, nailed to their counters on Sundays and holidays, and more and more crushed out every day by the competition of the big stores; small industrial employers, ground out of existence by the competition of the big factory owners; small peasant proprietors, brutalized by long hours of labor, 16 to 18 hours a day, and only working to enrich the big middlemen, flour merchants, wine agencies and sugar refiners. Still farther

off from the table of the prosperous I see the great mass of the proletarians, those who for their whole fortune have only their arms and their brains; working men and women of the factory, exposed to long periods of unemployment; petty officials, clerks, and other employee, obliged to bow their heads and hide their opinions; domestic servants of both sexes, flesh for toil, flesh for cannon, flesh for lust.

Behold your countries!

Monstrous social inequality, monstrous exploitation of man by man, that is what a country is nowadays, and that is what the workers take off their hats to when the flag is carried by. They seem to say: "Oh, how beautiful is our country! Oh, how free, sweet and just she is!" How you must laugh, Mr. Advocate-General, when you hear them sing:

"To die for one's country

Is of all the fates the most beautiful,

The most worthy of envy."

You believe, perhaps, gentlemen of the jury--a natural illusion among the privileged classes--that it is by labor and thrift that one arrives at the table of the happy ones of this world. We know that one does arrive there sometimes by labor and by the spirit of organization and economy; and we are quite willing to believe that it is thus that you, gentlemen, have managed to find your way there. But we others, who are all manual or brain workers, we know very well that if occasionally a man gains fortune and ease by his own labor and privations, it is ever so much more often by the work and the privations of others.

THE ROBBER CLASS!

And if you, gentlemen, are ignorant of the history of your class, we, here, are not. We know that in the Revolutionary Assemblies of 1789 and 1793 there was not a single workman, not a single peasant, but only members of the bourgeoisie, big and little, who worked for the interests of their class.

We know how they seized upon the six billion francs worth of property of the clergy and the nobility, and we know how so many of the great fortunes of the bourgeoisie were piled up by fishing in troubled waters during the whole of the revolutionary period.

We know how your class as soon as its appetite was satiated, as soon as the Revolution was over, in mortal dread of our Baboeuf⁴ and the poverty-stricken proletariat whose anger and hopes he interpreted, sheltered its digestion behind the sabre of Napoleon and the concordat of the Pope of Rome.

We know how the upstarts of your Revolution, having become prefects, state councilors, and senators of the Empire, manufactured Codes which rule us still, and which are so favorable to property, so hard on the workers and the poor.

We know how they drew up the functionaries of their class and for those of ours the scandalously unequal scales of pay still in force; and our system of taxation, so light a burden on the shoulders of the strong, so heavy on the shoulders of the weak. We know how they put their hands on coal mines, national wealth, collective property, which was appropriated by a few thousand shareholders, who saw their shares of 500 and 1,000 francs jump up to 10,000, 20,000, and a few, those of Anzin, even up to 500,000 francs each!

We know how, on the downfall of Napoleon, the upper classes laid hold of the law-making machine, the Parliament, where 90,000 electors from 1815 to 1830, 300,000 from 1830 to 1848, arrogated to themselves the right of sending representatives, refusing universal suffrage to the mass of the nation. We know how, taking advantage of this seizure of the governing powers to increase its privileges, your class took possession, on onerous terms for the

taxpayers, of the railways; how, during the whole of the nineteenth century, the military laws made by them were the expression of privilege and oppression.

Since your Revolution of 1789, for a whole century your class has built up its fortune on the ruin of the weak, all in accordance with the Code; and today a few hundred thousand men, of whom many are mere drones, have monopolized all the principal means of production, mines, factories, railways and banks, levying directly or indirectly, on the toil of the great mass of the disinherited a tribute heavier than any impost of the past.

"RIGHTS" OF THE WORKERS.

But our country is much superior to all others, it appears. It is you, the Advocate-General, like so many others, who tell us that. Did you not hear him, gentlemen of the jury, complacently enumerate all the liberties which the French fatherland bestows on us? "You have universal suffrage," he said, "you have the liberty of labor combination, the right to strike, the freedom of meeting, the liberty of the press. If our country is in a bad way, it is for you to make it better!"

Universal suffrage? Just look at it! Corrupted by the intimidation of the employers in the districts dominated by the factory of the country mansion, corrupted everywhere by the ignorance of the electors, who leave school too early with only a rudimentary instruction, universal suffrage is led by the nose by your journals with big circulations, which are all in the hands of the capitalists, and which systematically falsify the facts in order to manufacture public opinion to their liking. Under the capitalist system Capital remains sovereign, even under the republican label.

The right of labor combination? It is tempered by the power of your class to subdue the workers leaders by starvation through dismissal.

The right to strike? The witnesses whom you have heard, witnesses from own class in many cases, come to tell you how strikers, even inoffensive strikers, are sabred and horsewhipped, and how, after strikes, even victorious ones, the powerful employers thin out the ringleaders in order to terrify the rest.

The right of meeting? Ask Bousquet and Garney what they think about it, they who have been lying in prison for two months without trial for remarks made at a public meeting, and who would be free, like M. Jaluzot, if they had been able to find the 2,000 francs bail which, by a cruel irony, they were asked to furnish.

The liberty of the press? Look at us, at us on these benches! We are all old offenders; there is not one of us who has not been prosecuted for press offenses.. We are known at all the district courts in France. The Advocate-General has boasted to us of the liberalism of the press laws which enable us to be tried before a jury of our peers, according to his expression. Our peers! Our equals! You, gentlemen! Really! Among you I see house owners, merchants, an engineer, an inspector, a bailiff; show me, Mr. Advocate-General, the manual and intellectual proletarians, who are seated on those benches opposite us, among the jury?

No! No! It is in vain that you deny the existence of classes, Mr. Advocate-General; they are there all the same, they stare you in the face. Just look at them. Here is one class, here on the benches of the accused. It is the proletariat; and there is another class, there opposite us--the bourgeoisie, which is there to try us.

You deny the existence of classes, Mr. Advocate-General, but I am sure that even among the municipal guards who are in this hall there was not a single one who, when our comrade Bousquet, with that grand popular eloquence which makes the crowd vibrate like the violin under the bow, voiced yesterday the aspirations of the universal proletariat--there was not a

single one who did not vibrate in unison; and at the present moment there is not a single one who does not feel that he is of our class and that he is the enemy of yours, Mr. Advocate-General.

Ah! you put yourself forward as the advocate of society as a whole. You are under an illusion, Mr. Advocate-General. Here you are nothing but the official advocate of what is really the principal culprit in this trial, the bourgeois class, the capitalist fatherland.

CAPITALISTS HAVE REASON TO BE PATRIOTIC.

That those of your class should love their country, gentlemen of the jury, nothing is more natural. That you should burn to die for it, citizen Advocate-General, I can quite understand. The country is for you and for yours a tender mother; she pampers you in childhood; she gives you a rich education; she makes your youth a happy one; she assures you honorable work, richly remunerated, long holidays, security for the morrow and for old age.

You would be monsters of ingratitude, unnatural children, if you were not ready to rush to her defense when she calls upon you.

I go further. I understand even that you should seek to communicate to us, the workers, your holy patriotic flame.

It would suit you very well, eh! if we were to remain patriots, so that, should your country be threatened, as it was sometime back at Fourmies, at Limoges, and at Longwy, we might constitute ourselves, in opposition to our own brothers in toil and poverty, the watch dogs of your moneybags and of your privileges?

How pleased you would be to see us, the proletariat, remain patriotic, and continue to go light-heartedly to steal, for your financiers, another Tunis, another Tonkin, another Madagascar, or to pillage Peking once more in the name of your civilization.

If tomorrow your financiers and your diplomats were unable to come to terms with those of Germany, your patriotism (at 8 per cent) would be only too happy to see us, the French and German workers marching against each other, butchering each other by the hundred thousand, in order to find out whether Morocco should belong to the capitalists of Paris or to those of Berlin.

We know, as you see, the mysterious and interested sources of your patriotism. Yes, you are quite right, from your point of view, in trying to cultivate among the enslaved workers the worship of your countries and of your flags; to maintain the domination of your class you are well-advised in propagating among the masses those patriotic sentiments which veil class antagonisms and make the sheep believe that they are of the same race, the same family, and the same country as the wolves who devour them.

But you must understand, Mr. Advocate-General, that we of the manual and intellectual proletariat have quite other sentiments towards your countries.

For you, the country is a mother; for us, it is a cruel stepmother, a shrew whom we detest.

For you, patriotism is a sentiment which is natural and profitable; for us, it is a snare.

We may have conserved a certain predilection for the town or the village where we were born, where we grew up, and where we have loved and suffered. This is a natural and instinctive feeling which has nothing in common with your patriotism. But we have lost all feeling of love for such countries of privilege and iniquity as are the great countries of today.

For us there are only two countries in the world: that of the privileged and that of the disinherited, or rather that of the conservatives and that of the rebels, whatever language they may speak, or whatever the land may be which chanced to give them birth. Our compatriots

are not the capitalists here, who would have us massacred if they could, just as they massacred our fathers in the Commune. Our compatriots are the conscious proletarians, the socialists, the revolutionaries of the whole world, who wage everywhere the same battle as ourselves for the establishment of a better society. And in full agreement with them we only await the opportunity in this Europe, where the railways, the telegraph, cheap newspapers, and the same capitalist system have suppressed distance and rendered uniform the conditions of life, to found that free European federation, prelude to the great human federation, in which the countries of today will be absorbed, just as the ancient provinces became absorbed in the France, England, and Germany as we know them now.

Socialism, founded the class struggle, has so thoroughly killed in our hearts all national sentiment that we could not help smiling the other day when our friend Gohier, not quite cured of his old patriotism, spoke to us with emotion of the affront over the Fashoda affair. Your government, your country, may go on receiving affronts like that over Fashoda; we, here, shall not feel in the least offended, we are strangers to your country and to everything which touches it.

The Advocate-General wanted, the other day, to interest us in the defense of "our" liberties, the liberties we ourselves enjoy in this country, which is, as we have already been told, "the freest and the sweetest of countries." I thank the Advocate-General for his solicitude about our liberties. We know well enough what we have to do to defend our liberties, liberties which, as a matter of fact, were not graciously granted by your class to ours, but which our elders were obliged to wrest from you by force. I have already told you how these political liberties seem to us illusory, so long as we are economic serfs, so long as our bread for the morrow is practically at the discretion of the class who hold the instruments of labor.

THE KAISER BOGEY MAN.

But whatever is real and profitable to us in those political liberties nobody in the world can take away from us. In the height of the storm raised by the anti-patriotic declarations which I made in the name of the Socialist Federation of the Yonne a few months ago in the meeting at the Tivoli Vaux-Hall, some comrades of my party objected, like the Advocate-General himself, that, if my ideas spread on this side of the frontier, the German Kaiser would just make a mouthful of France he would annex it, and then there would be an end to all our liberties. Let us follow them in this fantastic hypothesis, of which I will shortly show you the impossible character.

You seem to think that if we became tomorrow the subjects of the Kaiser, all our political liberties would disappear, and with them the right to speak our native language. Come, now! Mr. Advocate-General. You are unaware perhaps that universal suffrage exists in Germany for the elections to the imperial parliament, the Reichstag; that labor organizations are twice as numerous on the other side of the Rhine as they are here; that public meetings are as numerous as they are here; and that the German socialist daily papers are "redder" than those labeled "socialist" in this country.

And you imagine that the Kaiser, who, in this German nation which you represent to us as politically backward, cannot even hinder the exercise of these political liberties, you imagine that he would be able to prevent them among us, who, on your own showing, are more unruly than the German workers. And if he tried to, do you suppose that we should not resort to secret propaganda, the most powerful and efficacious form of propaganda?

But listen to the sounds which reach us from Russia, a country still more backward, economically, intellectually and politically, than the Germany of the Kaiser. Listen, and you will hear the sounds which foretell the ignominious[sic] downfall of the autocracy. As a consequence of the old patriarchal Russia, agricultural and Czarist, having tasted of the

capitalist system, as a consequence of the investments of the French, German, and English capitalists--we are not the only internationalists!--having gone to create a Russian industrialism and to furrow the old-world land of the Muscovite with railways, the Russia of the knout[sic] has begun to totter; and tomorrow, even if our revolutionary friends over there are partially vanquished, the Russian rulers will no longer be able to refuse to the people the liberty of meeting and of the press, the right to strike, and other economic and political liberties of which the capitalist system itself stands in need for its own subsistence, and which it cannot refuse anywhere to the workers of the twentieth century.

What! the hangman of all the Russias--your ally, gentlemen of the jury--can no longer refuse to the Russian moujiks the essential elements of political liberty, and yet you imagine that the German Kaiser, on becoming master of France, or the greater part of it, would be able to wrest these liberties from us!

Your ally, the butcher of all the Russias, has not succeeded after a century of occupation and attempts at Russiafication, in stopping the Poles from speaking their mother tongue, and yet you believe that the Kaiser would be able to stop us from speaking ours!

You see, then, Mr. Advocate-General, that it is quite useless to keep on trying to frighten us with this bogey of the Kaiser, for to us the question of being French or German is quite a matter of indifference. What does it matter to us whether we are labeled French or German, so long as we still have to suffer; either as industrial workers, from irregular employment and exploitation, or as peasants, from the grinding usury of the mortgage-holder and from cut-throat competition in the sale of our produce? What difference can it make to us whether it is a French or German advocate-general who prosecutes us, or whether the police who brutally ill-treat us and the soldiers who shoot us down in strikes are of one nationality or the other?

"But suppose that the Kaiser attacked us?" objected the Advocate-General. And one of the witnesses, easily nonplussed, allowed himself to be embarrassed by this question. He stammered out that in that particular case he, personally, would fight.

You believe, then, Mr. Advocate-General, that when a war breaks out there is on one side a Government entirely in the wrong, which attacks, and on the other a Government which has all the right on its side, and which suffers a cowardly aggression? You believe that it is easy to know who is in the wrong when a war breaks out! Look at the Boer government and the Japanese government! It was they who declared war. But are they for that any more the aggressors than the English and the Russian governments which provoked them into war?

In 1870 it was the French government which declared war for an alleged insult to its ambassador, although the ministers knew from the ambassador himself that there had been no such insult. But was the German government, with its Ems telegram trick, any less blameworthy?⁵ When a war breaks out between two governments, the people never know which is the real aggressor. They do not find it out until long afterwards, when the war is over. If war had broken out six months ago between the French and the German governments over Morocco, we should have had to wait, probably for ten years, before we learnt all about the blunders and the blustering of your Delcasse. When a war breaks out, the big capitalist and governmental journals in each country always make out that the other country is the aggressor. As for us here, what we know is this, that if war occurs between France and Germany it will be a conflict between the capitalist classes for the markets of the world.

Therefore, whoever may be the apparent aggressor, we will not fight. You patriots will fight if your country is attacked and also, doubtless, if she attacks another country. You are logical.

We, the anti-patriots, will not sacrifice at your bidding the only possession we have, our lives, whatever may be the motives or pretexts put forward. If we must risk our lives, then we will risk them not in defending our country, but in attempting to found the socialist country which

we already carrying[sic] in our brains. The President of the Court said the other day to a witness, citizen Monneret, who came to give evidence in my favor on behalf of the Federation of the Yonne, that, if we did not obey the order of mobilization in the Yonne district, we should have to pay dear: that we should be arrested. My friend Monneret replied (as I should have replied myself): "We shall see who will do the arresting when that day comes."

CIVIL WAR!

O! I know, of course, that the Advocate-General is horrified by the idea of civil war; that, he finds, is criminal. The Advocate-General is logical; he knows very well that if we had a civil war and our class were victorious, it would be his class that would have to pay the damage; whereas in a war between nations, we, the people, whether victorious or vanquished, would have to pay. He knows perfectly well that the two governing classes, even the one which was beaten, would always make something out of the war. The contractors who provide papersoled boots and diseased meat for the soldiers, the manufacturers of armaments, the financiers who lend money to their vanquished country at five and six per cent, all these have nothing to lose by a war, even an unsuccessful war.

The Advocate-General may not like civil war, but we consider that it is the only sort of war which can possibly be of any advantage to us. From all times it has been so wherever a social revolution has triumphed.

Gohier pointed that out to you when he said: "It is owing to a revolution, that of 1789, completed by that of 1792, which was made in the face of the foreign foe, that you are able, gentlemen of the jury, to sit on those benches to try us, and that you, Mr. Advocate-General, who are of Jewish origin, are able to prosecute us."

Had it not been for the revolution of the 4th of September, 1870, also make[sic] in the face of the foreign foe, the public prosecutor, instead of indicting us in the name of the Republic, would have indicted us in the name of the Empire.

And you may be sure, gentlemen, that the Russian people will gain more by the civil war which they are waging at this moment against their rulers, if they win and even if they lose, than the Japanese people from their victories in Manchuria.

If ever we feel any interest at all in a war between nations, it is in that exceptional case where the war, under the guise of a war of nations, is really a civil war, a class war.

If our hearts go out to the soldiers of Valmy⁶, fighting against the banded monarchies and aristocracies of all Europe, it is because the wars of the French Revolution were only the extension throughout Europe of the duel which began in France between the Third Estate and the old absolutist and clerical order.

In the same way, if I said that in spite of my "near sight," which does not prevent me from using a rifle, I would set out for Russia--and other comrades with me who are not near sighted--in the event of the German government's sending troops into Poland to break down the Russian revolution, it is because, under the semblance of a war of nation on nation, a war between the Russian revolution and the German Kaiser would still be a civil war, a war from which we might, perhaps, bring forth the European Social Revolution.

In the event, then, of an order for mobilization, we shall attempt to bring about the Revolution, in order to lay hold of the social wealth usurped today by a minority. We shall transform the dwelling houses, now the property of individual landlords, into communal property.

THE NEW SOCIETY.

We shall work the factories, mines, all the great enterprises, by our unions and our engineers. Our unions of workers will administer, like great co-operative societies, the big stores of today. By a more rational and more equitable organization of production we shall create a society in which there will be well-being, knowledge, and beauty for all; a society which will be far better than that of today, even for your sons and daughters; a socialist country--a country which it will be worth our while to defend against the aggression of any bourgeoisie whatsoever.

I know very well that our collectivist or communist conception is repugnant to you; that, at the very least, it seems to you a mad Utopia. Utopia? It is thus that Louis XIV, Louis XV, and Louis XVI described the pretensions of your ancestors, the bourgeois revolutionaries, who dreamed of a society in which there would be no absolute king, no privileged nobles, and no state religion.

[The President of the Court: "Mister Herve, you are delivering a regular public lecture; you are trespassing beyond the subject. The gentlemen of the jury, by this time, quite understand your point of view.]

Herve (continuing): I am used to carrying on a discussion, and I assure you, Mister President, that I am in the very heart of my subject. It is necessary that the jury should understand exactly the basis of our ideas, and for that, instead of making use of grand phrases about the revolution, phrases which too often conceal the startling originality of our doctrines, I am obliged to explain precisely, by concrete instances, the ideal for which we contend.

Gentlemen of the jury, what ought to reassure you a little is the fact that we are in full agreement with our foreign comrades, particularly with our German comrades. They profess for the Germans of your class the same sentiments that we profess for you. The German capitalist class finds no more favor in their sight than the French capitalist class does in ours.

OUR PROPAGANDA IS INTERNATIONAL.

The Advocate-General, either through ignorance or with the laudable object of terrifying you, gentlemen of the jury, has ventured to deny that our propaganda is a really international one, carried on from each side of the frontier.

He has dared to maintain that the German workers, at least--whose attitude naturally interests you the most--stand aside from our International.

Urbain Gohier has already read to you some extracts from the incendiary leaflets of which perhaps, Emperor William is ignorant, but which abound none the less in the German barracks.

Miguel Almercyda, secretary of the French section of the International Anti-Militarist Association, will quote other publications to you. He will lay before you the official organ of the German section of the Association.

Speaking for myself--a socialist before everything, and one who thoroughly understands the spirit of the German Social Democracy--I should like to add some supplementary facts which will edify and perhaps reassure those members of the jury who fear that this propaganda is confined to France alone.

The Advocate-General's argument is exactly the same as that put forward six months ago by certain comrades of my party: The argument is, substantially, this:

"In France, which is comparatively speaking, a land of liberty, Herve and his friends are able to propagate their anti-patriotic ideas.

"In Germany, where the authorities are better armed against the authors of subversive ideas, that propaganda cannot be carried on.

"Consequently, when war breaks out, there will be insurrectional communes in France on the day of mobilization, whereas in Germany, where it had been impossible to carry on the same propaganda, the workers will march, like one man, behind the emperor; with the result that France, just because she has a little more liberty than Germany, will be invaded, crushed, and dismembered."

And you trembled, in your patriotic hearts!

Reassure yourselves, gentlemen of the jury.

The Advocate-General, once again, is badly informed on the state of things abroad.

There is no propaganda, however subversive it may be, which the German government can prevent by repressive measures.

And of that I will give you a palpable proof.

THE "IRON BISMARCK'S" FAILURE

In 1878 there was at the head of the German government a man who was not without some reputation for strength. I have only to name him, for you to admit that at once. His name was--Bismarck.

Alarmed at the progress of Social Democracy, which at the election of 1877 had received a million votes, he resolved to employ strong measures to stem the movement.

He forged against social democracy the most terrible laws--laws similar to those which in a moment of panic were forged in this country against the anarchists. They called them over there the "Iron Laws."

All the German socialist groups were obliged to disappear; the journals of the party ceased publication; it was forbidden under severe penalties to write in a journal or to pronounce on a public platform a word about socialism. Infractions of these laws were brought before the correctional courts, acting under administrative rule, which were simply machines for distributing years of imprisonment. Hundreds of active socialists were struck down; thousands of years of imprisonment were distributed; and with what result, gentlemen of the jury?

At the very height of the persecution, the journal of the party, printed in Switzerland, penetrated even into the German barracks; leaflets, similar to those which our comrade Gohier read to you, were secretly circulated in all quarters, the forbidden fruit being greedily devoured by the German workers. Never before had the propaganda been so strenuous or so fruitful.

When in 1890, after twelve years of persecution, the Emperor consulted the political barometer, he was terrified to find that instead of one million socialist votes it registered two million-and-a-half!

Then he did what you would have done in his place, Mr. Advocate-General. He repealed the "Iron Laws," and in so doing he showed to all the world that the most arbitrary[sic] governments can do nothing against resolute men--men who are determined against all odds to propagate their ideas.

And what Bismarck could not prevent when Social Democracy was only in its infancy, do you think that the Emperor William will be able to prevent, now that there are three millions of socialist electors in Germany?

By temperament, and in order to avoid useless persecutions, the German social democrats have never shown any love for noisy demonstration of anti-patriotism, persuaded that their secret propaganda is quite as profitable to their cause as the more dangerous open propaganda. That is the reason why in our International Conventions, as well as in their own national conventions, the German socialists may at times appear somewhat timid in their attitude on anti-patriotism. But Emperor William is under no delusion on the subject. He knows to a marvel what the German workers think of him and of the German fatherland.

Moreover, a good many of our German comrades, especially among the younger ones, desire to see the social democracy take up a more combative, a more revolutionary attitude they follow with interest, some of them with passion, our anti-patriotic propaganda in France.

I had hardly finished writing my book, "Leur Patrie," before some of the comrades of the German Social Democracy asked to be allowed to translate it into German, which has now been done.

And, as a big book was not within everybody's means, they asked me to summarize in a pamphlet, which they would translate, the substance of our anti-patriotic ideas, and they assured me that they would willingly undertake to spread the pamphlet all over Germany, in the face of the judges, police, and soldiers of the Kaiser.

But you have had quite recently, gentlemen, a striking instance of the international character of our socialist movement; almost simultaneously in the French parliament and in the German parliament the same words rang out.

Ah! the parliamentary socialists, in France as well as in Germany, have no love for those members of their party who, especially at election time, scare the voters with brutal plain-speaking, instead of cajoling them with high-sounding but ambiguous phrases intended to reconcile opposing interests.

But when an idea has made its way in the revolutionary ranks, then even those in the parliamentary circles begin to stir.

In former times the parliamentary socialists of France and Germany were outspoken anti-militarists and internationalists. You all know that Bebel in Germany had to spend eighteen months in a fortress prison for having protested against the brutal annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. The German parliamentary socialists, more thorough going than ours, have even refused on every occasion to vote for the war supplies in parliament; but, in Germany just as in France, the parliamentary socialists have always been careful not to shock the patriotic prejudices of the voters. Yet, quite recently in the French Chamber and in the German Reichstag an entirely new tone was heard.

For the first time in the history of the French Chamber, by the voice of Marcel Sembat, an attack was openly made on the idea of country; and in the German Reichstag the voice of Bebel responded to him like an echo.

The veteran of the German social democracy declared, with brutal conciseness, to the chancellor of the empire: "Take care! If you maintain the German fatherland in such a state that the German workman begins to doubt whether it is to his interest to defend it, then take care not to land us in a foreign war, for on that day you are lost."

I have said enough, gentlemen of the jury, for you to see clearly that our propaganda, carried on as it is on both sides of the frontier, will not lead to an invasion or to a dismemberment of your country by the German army, but to a simultaneous rising of the French and the German workers against their rulers.

Mr. Advocate-General, you have said to me: "So much the worse for Herve if your ideas spread among the people."

No, Mr. Advocate-General, not so much the worse for me, but so much the worse for you and for your class.

Our threat, moreover, as you are all aware, is only a conditional threat, like our threat to the officers who give the order to fire on strikers, since it depends on the rulers, as it depends on the officers, whether our threats will be put into execution.

Yes, so much the worse for the ruling classes of France and Germany if they commit the crime of provoking an international war.

Gentlemen, I have spoken, as you have seen, without any anxiety to avoid prison, with not enough concern perhaps, for the liberty of my fellow-defendants. I beg them to excuse me.

Moreover, I do not ask you, gentlemen, to approve of my ideas, nor am I so simple-minded as to ask the Advocate-General to do so; but I am sure that you will carry away with you the impression that our ideas--which, once more, are not merely my personal ideas--form a solid body of doctrine which has behind it as its supporters men who are not lacking in courage, and who are more than a mere handful. It is not, as you tried to make out, Mr. Advocate-General, an individual opinion: it is the opinion of labor organizations which number thousands of militant workers, some of whom you have seen here as witnesses for the defense. For instance, it was on behalf of 85,000 organized woodsmen, the serfs of the forest, that our comrade Veuillat, secretary of the National Federation of France, spoke yesterday.

In spite of the somewhat offensive bluntness of my declarations, I count on an acquittal. Oh! you will need all your courage to acquit us. You will have to fight hard against the prejudice which your daily newspapers have instilled into you, and which has made you look on us as a lot of demoniacs who pass their time in insulting the officers of the army and in planting the national flag on the dunghill.

You will have to resist the temptation to strike down the adversaries who have fallen into your hands.

You will expose yourselves to the reproaches and the jeers of your friends, who will never forgive you for having acquitted the man of "the flag on the dunghill" fame.

To those who would reproach you for our acquittal, you will say first of all: "It was impossible for us to condemn people for their opinions, however freely, and even brutally, they may have expressed them; and we could not, in the twentieth century, incur the ridicule and odium of sending men to prison on the pretext that they were heretics, and that their doctrines seemed to us to be dangerous."

And you will add: "Besides, you did not hear, as we did, the evidence of the witnesses. If you had heard, as we did, the witnesses who described on oath how the cavalry officers had horsewhipped the strikers at Longwy, and how certain employers treat the workers, you would have understood and excused the exasperation of those who signed the anti-militarist poster."

And finally, if you cannot touch their feelings, you will tell them: "It was in our own interest, in the interest of our class, that we acquitted them; we did not wish to give them the glory of martyrdom, and thus increase their moral authority and their power of swaying the workers with their ideas."

Ah! gentlemen, I tell you sincerely, it is in the interest of your class itself that we should be acquitted. We may not be of the same class, we may consider your class to be the enemy of ours, yet, still the claims of class have not killed in us all feelings of humanity.

We know well that under your bourgeois garb there beats the heart of a man, like our own. In the interest of your class itself, in the interest of the men and the women of your class--our brothers and sisters in humanity--we would have you pause before further exasperating by a vindictive verdict, our class, which is already sufficiently exasperated against you. I wish to preserve you from ferocious reprisals. Today you are the stronger, but your domination will not be eternal. I have an idea that it will not last long. Perhaps you do not believe it. Neither did the Czar, when a few years ago he came here in all his pomp and glory, believe that the day was so near when he would have to settle accounts with his people. When the day comes for your class to settle its account with us, we shall be happy, we the prisoners at the bar, to be able to plead extenuating circumstances in your favor. Please do not misunderstand me; I do not threaten you with reprisals; I do not want to terrify you; I imagine that fear has no more influence on you than on us. But, as we do not hold you individually responsible for the evils of the present social system, we desire that the approaching Revolution should make as few victims as possible among your class. When the turn comes for our class to judge yours, we shall be glad to be able to say to the more exasperated and bitter of our comrades that, in the time of your might there were decent people among you, which is the truth; that there were judges, like the good judge Magnaud and the good judge Sere de Rivieres, among your justices; that there were courteous presidents of the court, like the one here today, to preside over the proceedings; that there were advocates-general who did not stoop in the mud to find insults to fling at the accused; and that there were jurymen, like those of Auxerre, of Troyes, and even of ultra-patriotic Paris, who did not hesitate to acquit their political opponents.

INSURRECTION RATHER THAN WAR

And, now that I have shown you the menacing side of our revolutionary socialism--the class war--let me in conclusion, gentlemen of the jury, point out to you the broadly humanitarian side of it, so that you may point it out also to those who might be led to reproach you for our acquittal. How is it that you have not felt that it is we who form your best rampart against the German Emperor? It is not your rifles that the Kaiser fears, but the rifles of the German social democrats, those comrades who, on the other side of the Rhine, are carrying on exactly the same propaganda as we are here!

All of you, even the most ultra-patriotic, desire peace, do you not? You would much prefer to see the big financiers of your capitalist class settle their differences with the big financiers of other countries by international arbitration. But perhaps you will say to yourselves: "These arbitration tribunals are nothing but a farce. They settle petty secondary questions, but when some big affair comes up the matter is settled by cannon-shots. The Czar of the Hague Conference acted just the same as the others." Well, we have found a recipe for compelling governments, all governments, including that of the Kaiser, to settle their disputes, all their disputes, by arbitration.

Our recipe consists in propagating, on both sides of all frontiers, and particularly in France and Germany, our "war-cry against war: "Insurrection Rather Than War!"

We wish, in fact, to save your sons, as well as the sons of the people, from the horrible death of the battlefield.

If you throw us into prison, and if, by some impossible hazard, you stamp out our propaganda, then beware lest a war breaks out, perhaps at no distant day, and cut down, in the flower of their age, the beings who to you are the most dear. Beware, lest the mother of your son should come to you with accusing mien and cry: "Wretch! There were men who, at the risk of their liberty, tried to show the people a means of stopping governments from waging war, from killing my son; and it was you, wretched one, who threw these men into prison!"

Loud and repeated applause. The president threatens to clear the court. The jury returns with a verdict of "Guilty, without extenuating circumstances." Interrogated as to the application of the penalty, all the prisoners show a mocking and undaunted front.

Gustave Herve: I thank the gentlemen of the jury for the piece of work they have just done. I thank them for having illustrated and confirmed in such a striking manner the thesis which I put forward here on patriotism and the class war. You had sworn to judge without hatred and without fear--

The President: "Do not address the jury; address your remarks to the Court."

Herve: Gentlemen of the Court, they had sworn to try us without hatred and without fear. They have judged us with class hatred and with the fear of the press, of their friends, and of the public opinion of their class. They have widened the breach between their class and ours; they have dug deeper the pit into which we shall hurl them!

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

Gustave Herve is a native of Brittany. He was born in 1871, in the naval dockyard town of Brest. His parents were of the working class, and could only provide for the ordinary schooling; but by the help of a friend of the family he was enabled to continue his studies; and after years of hard work and privation, he rose step by step, carrying on propaganda all the while, to the Professorship of History at the State College in the town of Sens, in the department of the Yonne.

Herve threw himself with great energy into the socialist propaganda in this region, accentuating the anti-militarist side of it by a series of articles in the local socialist paper. One of these articles, "Drapeau de Wagram," perhaps the most powerful indictment of war and militarism ever written, contained the famous phrase about planting the flag on the dunghill, and caused such a scandal that the government dismissed him from his post. He was also prosecuted for the article, but acquitted by the jury. At that trial, and on two or three subsequent occasions, he was defended by Aristide Briand, then an obscure barrister professing violent revolutionary opinions, afterward the Prime Minister of France, and the "hero" of the French railway workers' strike of 1910.

On being dismissed from the college Herve devoted himself entirely to propaganda among the peasants of the Yonne, touring the country side on foot. He continued his anti-militarist contributions to the local press, which led to further prosecutions and further acquittals.

It was during this period that his anti-militarism developed into anti-patriotism; and when in 1905 the dispute arose between the French and the German governments over Morocco, Herve brought before the French Socialist Party, on behalf of the Socialist Federation of the Yonne, the policy expounded in this pamphlet.

VThese extreme views were naturally received with violent opposition by the orthodox leaders and the moderate sections of the party; but with the active support of the powerful General Confederation of Labor of France, the anti-militarist and anti-patriotic propaganda has become a force to be reckoned with in France; and the recent great anti-war demonstrations in Berlin and other German cities (1911), show that it is also becoming a force on the other side of the Rhine.

As a result of the anti-patriotic menace to the rulers of France, Herve has spent a great part of his time in jail during the past seven years, where he continues his activity through articles in his paper, "La Guerre Sociale" (The Social War). During the summer of 1911 he was again haled before the Court of Assizes on account of articles in his paper signed, "Un Sans-Patrie" (one without a country). Prior to this trial, Herve issued the following defiance in a letter to the prosecuting attorney, which appeared in "La Guerre Sociale," June 13, 1911:

"Tuesday morning 'La Guerre Sociale' appeared once more in the Court of Assizes, in the person of its managing editor, my comrade Auroy, a building worker, because of an article entitled 'The Funeral Rites of Colonel Moll,' and signed 'Un Sans-Patrie.' As everyone knows, 'Un Sans-Patrie is myself. You may now wish to give orders to include me in the prosecutions. I profit by the occasion to inform you that I am also the author of all the articles, signed or not, appearing in the same Guerre Sociale on the occasion of the railroad strike, such as those containing provocations to sabotage, and, I know not how many other, crimes and misdemeanors.... Seeing it is still necessary, after 40 years of republican etiquette, to fight for that liberty of the press which the republicans under the Empire proclaimed so loudly, we will fight! And I assure you that you will tire of prosecuting us, my friends and myself, before we ourselves become tired of passing our lives in your prisons."

Meanwhile, Herve is still in jail, and has recently had two years added to a four years' sentence, on account of his audacious propaganda. But his anti-patriotic, anti-militarist and rebel ideas are at large, and are gaining ground in every country on the globe.

With the exception of the title, which we have changed from "Anti-Patriotism" to "Patriotism and the Worker," and a few minor technical changes in the body of the work, the present translation of Herve[sic] speech is the same as that used in its publication by H. Beaumont & Son, Bradford, England, to which we beg to offer our acknowledgments.

I.W.W. PUBLISHING BUREAU.

January, 1912.

- [1.](#) One of the twenty-six aroused, whose speech in defense was delivered the day before Herve spoke.
- [2.](#) Syndicalists is the name given in France and on the continent to the revolutionary unionists; represented in America, Great Britain, South Africa, and Australia by the industrial unionists.
- [3.](#) Loriquet, a Jesuit historian.
- [4.](#) Baboeuf organized one of the real proletarian risings of the Revolutionary period. For an account of the role of the working class in the Revolution see Kropotkin's work, "The Great French Revolution."
- [5.](#) To precipitate the war Bismarck caused the Berlin journals to publish a note worded in such a way as to lead the public to believe that the French ambassador had been "snubbed" by the King of Prussia at an interview in Ems. The American "sense of honor" is less delicate than that of the French. It required the typical incident of violence, the blowing up of the battleship Maine in Havana harbor in 1898, to precipitate the Spanish-American war. It is not yet known "who blew up the Maine," though suspicion points its finger at American capitalists.
- [6.](#) Valmy, the field of the first great battle of the French Revolutionary wars (September 30, 1792), where the revolutionary army, mainly composed of young, untrained volunteers, drove back the Prussian forces who had invaded France on behalf of monarchy and reaction.