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César De Paepe, *[Strike Against War]*⁷³

War is an obvious calamity to us all. Its abolition demands, besides our everlasting protest, that we charge ourselves with the task of intervening in practice.

For this there are two methods: The first is to attack war directly by refusing to perform military service, or, what amounts to the same thing since armies need to consume, by refusing to work. The second, which does not involve direct intervention, aims at achieving the abolition of war through the resolution of the social question itself; such is the method that, through its development, the International is destined to make triumphant.

To rely upon the first method means to constantly repeat it; only the second destroys evil at its source.

Some have sought to attribute the cause of war to individual personalities; this is an error: kings, emperors are merely accidents, instruments. The only true cause of war is to be found in our social institutions. The proof is that states that do not have sovereigns also make war. What was behind the American Civil War if not the question of labour? The bourgeoisie of the South needed their black slaves; the Northern states wanted the abolition of slavery to replace it with modern slavery – harsher perhaps even than the former, since the black slave costs something and the white slave costs nothing – in order, that is, there to substitute the proletariat.

The primary cause of all war is hunger. In the beginning, the savage simply ate his defeated enemy; later, the result, while more complicated in appearance, remains essentially the same: the vanquisher takes from the vanquished his

⁷³ This text corresponds to the synopsis of a speech given by César De Paepe (see note 22) to a session of 7 September 1868, at the Brussels Congress, dedicated to the question of war. It was published in B1868 and may be also found in PI, I: 262.

land, the instruments of labour, and the products of labour, and in doing so, satisfies his needs.

This war in the East⁷⁴ that cost so much blood, was it anything other than a battle to seize a source of Oriental products, a real social, commercial struggle?

To sum up: Workers can effectively intervene in the question of war only by continuing their social endeavour, and arriving, through the organization of labour, at the elimination of pauperism, the sole cause of modern anarchy.

⁷⁴ A reference to the conflicts in the Dutch-occupied East Indies.