

The calling of this generation

A generation is born into history, when it becomes aware of its calling. And ~~each generation is worth as much~~ its worth will depend on the degree to which it (has) actually fulfilled that calling. Should it not recognize the task uniquely ^(set out out) ~~destined~~ for it, should ~~it~~ or could it not take that task upon itself, ^{it will meet the} ~~its~~ fate ~~will be that~~ of ^{wicked and slothful} ~~the~~ ^(buried) ~~bad~~ servant who ~~did not make good use of~~ the talent ^{in the castle,} ~~that was entrusted to him~~. Such generations are ^{kept on record} ~~recorded~~ but in ~~the imagination~~ of ~~historians~~ ^{the} ~~and~~ ^{only} ~~in~~ ^{in the} ~~the~~ civic registers ~~and~~ ~~the~~ tax rolls, among ~~calendar~~ ^{calendar} years. they have no home save ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ the ~~pages of history~~ ^{came to life} ~~which~~ ~~have~~ ~~not~~ ~~been~~ ~~written~~ ~~down~~ ~~in~~ ~~it~~. History knows them not. Such generations never ~~lived~~, for they failed to recognize the task ^{that} ~~which~~ would have been their life.

What is the calling of today's generation? It ^{has fallen} ~~fell~~ to us as our lot to ~~witness~~ ^{be} witness to humanity's gravest trial. To the individual ^{of our time} ~~living in the same time~~ this is a blow ^{to be} ~~which~~ ~~he~~ sustains, but to ^{the} a whole generation it is a calling, to which it must live up. This generation ^{was made} ~~has become~~ ~~to~~ witness to the greatest moral event since the crusades and the reformation. Every minute ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ times like these harbours more elements of recognition and ^{revelation} ~~revealing~~ than ~~do~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ centuries of purblind and complacent years. At such times we may ^{glimpse} ~~perceive~~ the hidden ^{failings} ~~weaknesses~~ in the structure of the soul which ~~is~~ ^{securely encased.} ~~the~~ ~~ghost~~ ~~of~~ the closed epochs hidden away. The spirit of man, ^{moved by its sense of} ~~is~~ ~~aware~~ ~~of~~ its shame, ~~is~~ ~~seeking~~ for the right way and ~~finding~~ ^{for} it. ~~That~~ Moral progress ~~is~~ ~~the~~ only open, sure and straight road towards ^{inner peace and perfection, but neither is} ~~consummation~~. And there ~~is~~ ~~no~~ more valuable ^{or} ~~and~~ reliable ^(earnest) ~~token~~ ~~of~~ this progress, than ^{a sense} ~~the~~ ~~feeling~~ of shame; ~~and~~ ~~there~~ ~~is~~ ~~no~~ greater ~~as~~ or more obvious calling ^{is} ~~for~~ today's generation, than to bear true witness ^{in throwing open to the world this} ~~to~~ our great shame.

1. Even the bare events will stand in need of testimony before long.

Later generations will find it hard, to believe even the ^{patent} ~~stupid~~ facts of our times, ~~hard~~ to take them ^{for} literally ~~for~~ true. For instance, they will not believe that the outbreak of the great war could have taken the civilized world entirely ~~unawares~~ by surprise; in the beginning, that ~~public~~ opinion ~~admitted~~ actually held the blundering of diplomacy to ~~be~~ be solely responsible for the catastrophe; that the catastrophe occurred just at a time when the general mood and intent to see such a contest of the peoples arise, ~~had~~ was already on the wane; that in spite of this, enthusiasm was greatest in the beginning, because people were just as quick in accepting the fact that after all, there ^{was} ~~is~~ a war on, as they were ^{sure} ~~assured~~ before, that it ^{was} ~~is~~ out of the question. We ourselves ~~hardly~~ can hardly believe all this to have been so; how could epochs of the far future believe it? To a mankind, long conditioned to peace, war was the very essence of absurdity, an exotic adventure, in which, however, everybody had to take part. And since every country was equally ~~aggressed~~ ^{aggressed} upon, the socialists could speak of ^a defensive war, with apparent justification. And ^{so} the ~~general~~ ~~defensive~~ universal defensive war was ^{on} ~~being~~ fought. Until war itself ^{is} ~~became~~ greatness and value, ^{is} ~~new~~ and renewer of things. Until the great sacrifices finally ^{suspended} ~~brought forth~~ the "great times." In the following they ^{(all the time became only} ~~were to~~ ^{become} greater and greater... Later the question ^{came up,} ~~arose~~ what exactly ~~was~~ the war was about? Many people did not understand the question, or ^{reflected that} ~~thought it impossible~~ to answer, ^{put} ~~that~~ the time to ^{put} ~~ask~~ it was not yet. They did not ^{thus} ~~then~~ regard it as a venture, but rather as some aimless compulsion to which we ^{all} ~~were~~ ^{was} made prone. It ~~is~~ not being carried on for any aim.

but it ~~will remember~~^{would} pick one as it ~~comes~~^{came} to a halt. In this
 will be revealed the "meaning" of the war. "Contest of races" - "the
 Middle-Eastern question" - "Anglo-German rivalry" - "the Baghdad
 Railway" - "Belgian integrity" - "Mitteleuropa" - "Encirclement" -
 "American hegemony over Europe" - "Alsace-Lorraine" - "~~the expansionism~~
 of the yellow race" - "the fight of democracy against autocracy" - ~~and~~
 "Freedom of the Seas" - each and every one of them at one time or
 another stood for the "meaning" of the great war, which, ^{"in the nature of things"} ~~unavoidably~~
^{"evidently" was bound to} ~~had to~~ terminate, now in the west, now in the east, now in terms
 of blood, now in terms of gold, ~~now~~ of nerves, of shipping ^{space} capacity,
 now in one tremendous battle, now ~~again~~ in attrition, fighting to
 the last man, now in the annihilation of one side, now in a draw.
 These slogans stood in no relation to each other at all, they ~~even~~
 were mutually exclusive. They changed as a matter of fashion and
 one and the same section of the public would subscribe now to the
 one, now to the other, or a third, or a fourth of the "meanings"
~~scribing them~~ in which they then thought to have found the key to ~~the~~
 the conundrum. According to whether the reports from the battlefields
 were favourable or not, people's whole Weltanschauung, their basic
 views in the moral and social fields ^{turn into the stark opposite,} would ~~some result~~
 Noted publicists changed their deep convictions, out of deep conviction
 by the month. And all the time no-one ~~understood~~
 had any clear notion of how the war was possible at all. ~~There still~~
^{The feeling never quite passed} ~~was a lingering feeling~~, that in ~~our world~~ the world of ours such a
^{in point of fact} thing as the war was ~~plainly~~ impossible. And because essentially
^{and no one understood} everybody was thinking in such terms, ~~and no one understanding~~ -
 that is, the war was not credited with ~~such~~ more reality than
~~one would ascribe to some terrible, abiding delusion~~ -
^{general} the ~~expectancy~~ ^{really} was, that it should come to an end all by itself, and

that

at any time; ~~really~~ ^{if} not right now, then ~~still~~ soon... "It's been holding out so ~~stubbornly~~ long," fantastic enough that it has ~~been holding out so long~~ people would say. ~~Then~~ ^{they} Though it was ^{they} themselves who had been holding out, ~~and~~ ~~fronts~~ ~~and~~ holding the fronts, the general feeling ~~was~~ ran somehow in the reverse. But no one was quite sure how.

2. ~~Reasons for the unbearable conditions~~ the basic frame of mind of our time, Posterity will be quite unable to conceive

In this ~~odd~~ ^{and confused} very odd climate of opinion the individual soul ~~suffered in a particularly peculiar manner. It was a sickly condition, women~~ fell prone to a truly peculiar condition. It was a sickly condition, ^{pertaining to} ~~an attribute of~~ a public mood so painful and pervasive, that none but the most insensitive were immune to it. It was from this mental sickness that the soldiers in the frontline suffered most, so did the prisoners, and in the hinterland the more sensitive people: women, and great numbers of men ~~who were~~ ^{to it} susceptible. But who would have not suffered under it? It was something of the kind known to medicine as depressive melancholia: the ~~mind~~ ^{spirit} is dejected, yet restless. Consciousness, ever narrowing, is helplessly revolving around one fixed point. That one point ^{is} was the war. In times to come it will not sound credible that the war's greatest ill was ~~neither~~ neither want nor wounds, nor sickness nor ~~strain~~ strain, but that peculiar, elusive ~~phenomenon~~ ^{which} presence that crippled the soul far and wide in ^{its provinces} the ~~realm~~ of world war. And even less shall ^{it be under-} they understand - even today ^{it is known to} only the few ~~know~~ know - that the true cause of this dread sickness lay not in privations or other wartime miseries, uncertainties or dangers, but in something quite different. ^{existence} The torment was the soul's torment over ~~life~~ that had lost its meaning. Man ~~cannot live~~ ^{cannot live} in a world in which ~~it is~~ ~~vain to look for~~.

his search for a meaning would be vain. ~~Individual~~ Individual
 man, ~~standing~~ dumbfounded, kept gazing into a tremendous catast-
 rophe. ^{There he stood} Standing in the very midst of it, ~~its~~ its cause he
 did not know, its aims refused themselves to ~~the~~ ^{his} querying mind; of
 himself he did not know, was he an actor in it or merely a spec-
 tator, and was it ~~all~~ ^{being} enacted for ~~him~~ or against him, and one only
 knew with surpassing clarity: ~~was that~~ ^{existence or non-existence of} the war ~~to be or not~~
~~to be~~ ^{noways, in no way} did ~~not~~ depend on his own volition - yet ~~and~~ ^{in all that touched on the war} everyone all the
 time ~~invoked~~ ^{kept invoking} him and his will. The heroes in the
 frontline were implementing his will, ~~as~~ ^{also} the enemy, ~~likewise~~, when
~~he~~ justifying his acts, was carrying out his will, the fate of the
 whole world, it seemed, was vested in his will. ~~It did not help~~ ^{In vain did he feel}
~~much that he felt~~ ^{that} this was sheer delusion, ~~it~~ ^{and} had no reality at all;
 that in a world which ~~was~~ ^{had no} for him ~~devoid~~ of meaning, and the aims
 of which he did not know, he could have no intent, ~~nor~~ nor will.
~~But~~ ^{yet} he himself no longer knew what he willed and whether his actions
 were ~~imposed by the will of others~~ ^{of} the outcome of his own will
 or ^{of} the will of others, and if of others, who ~~was~~ were they?
~~Even the dimensions~~ ^{The very magnitude} of the war ~~were~~ ^{was also harbouring} ~~hiding out~~ ^{the mind.} contradic-
 tions which ~~imposed judgment~~ confused ~~comprehension~~. War is a means
 to an end. But the war and the armies of today cannot be that.
 The armies of former times, counting thousands or tens of thousands
 of men related to the state they defended as the part relates to
 the whole. It is always rational to sacrifice the part to save the
 whole. But in this war every one was a soldier, ~~and~~ or as
 good as. For even ^{if} ~~he was no soldier~~ ^{did not happen to be a soldier}, his freedom was subject to
 as grave limitations, his property to ~~as~~ ^{as} many risks, his life
 to as many ^{if} privations, ^{as} he had been one. The war of mutually

^{ing out whole peoples}
 starvation spared ~~not~~ neither women nor children. Nearly as many infant children died in this war as adult males. ~~There is no ends and means here any more, no part and whole. We sacrificed-risked the whole, and sometimes did not stop from at sacrificing the whole, for the sake of the whole. Which clearly defies understanding. For this could be justified only by some ends which were more important than the whole, more important than is life, property, welfare and happiness of the whole. But such ends could be found only in ~~complying with some~~ bringing into being some absolute moral sanctions, in complying with ^a some moral dictate, which stands above everything and anything...~~

Life is not liveable ^{For} for the soul that lacks a sense of direction: ^{taken on ourselves} for the hardships of the times must either be ^{accepted} as a sacrifice we ^{want} are willing to bring, or the vicissitudes of the epoch must be ^{endured} suffered, as an elemental calamity, ^{senseless} a catastrophe, ^{and} void of meaning. Only he who is moved by a will does not feel the roughness of the road, and he who is ^{ready} determined to suffer ^{and} treads ^{and} the path in resignation, ^{only they will negotiate} the road. But ^{easy} you ^{me must} have to make ^a your choice between the two. Whoever is wavering in doubt shall have ^{no place} to repose, for the soul knows repose only in ^{the} active will or in passive, ^{enduring} suffering. The present generation in its lack of bearing was pacing along an endless Calvary, starting ^{it} anew at every station ^{of} at which it faltered. Till the tortured soul was numbed in the end, and consciousness blunted. Each awakening ^{hurt again} brought new pain; each realization brought new shame. This is how today's generation, ^{lingered, in} ~~incertitude~~ ^{uncertain of itself, was lingering.}

Not only can we not live in a world that is ~~void~~ void of meaning.

^{Happier}
~~but~~ we cannot even adequately describe it. ~~Better~~ times to come shall never ~~understand~~ learn the simple truth, that one of the ^{most frantic} afflictions of the great war, both at the hinterland and in the trenches, was ^{dullness} ~~boredom~~; The ^{dullness} ~~boredom~~ of a world without meaning. This ^{It may} ~~boredom~~ must have had some resemblance ^{ed} ~~ed~~ to the boredom ~~of a~~ man a man must feel ^{scanning} ~~in going over~~ the endless lists of ~~winning~~ draws in of a class-lottery, though he well knows that his Lottery ticket, ~~and then~~ his fate, ^{There was} is contained therein. ^{that would have looked} Nothing ~~appealed~~ to the imagination. The famed battlefields, the most heroic divisions even remained outside ~~of~~ the imagined. Giant battles, month-long encounters, ^{changing} ~~charges in the standards of the~~ blockade, ^{novel} new battle gear, turningpoints in world history - ^{it was so much printed} ~~to all remained on~~ paper. Many ^{people} had stopped even reading the newspapers, or ^{they} ~~skipped~~ the war news. The suggestive power of this mood was such, that minds given to ^{the} paradox began to ^{proceed,} ~~proclaim quite seriously,~~ the whole affair, ^{was} ~~is~~ not worth taking note of. seeing that it amounts to nothing,

^{edium}
 Posterity, when news of this ~~boredom~~ will reach it, will put it down either to some particularly frivolous or to some particularly heroic attitude. The more objective minds perhaps to the complex medley of events. Though Reality, ^{entirely} is ~~wholly~~ different. Exactly as before, people were interested in everything that carried meaning. Gossip and intrigues; a fight put ^{up} ~~on~~ by the weaker; ~~or~~ persecution of the innocent moved public opinion ~~very~~ much as before. People were far more interested in a single little lie that was exposed than in the most gigantic truth, ^{they were} ~~on~~ which ~~it was~~ unable to ^{ponder.} ~~make comment.~~ Moral courage ^{still gave rise to} ~~did bring forth~~ heroes ~~even now,~~ and while combatants in their millions perished namelessly, there ^{were found to be} were ~~very much~~ people dedicated to peace, whose names all Europe knew.

by fire
 The death of a small child, left alone while ~~the~~ mother was lining
 up for bread ^{would be} was more amply talked about, than the day's news from
 the ~~frontline~~ battlefronts... But this solving of the riddle will
 remain our own secret. Rosterity ^{To} ~~will receive~~ the image of our time ^{will come}
 in ready clichés, ^{colourful,} ~~high-coloured,~~ in clear-cut contours. History
 records ^{but} ~~only~~ the winning numbers, ~~only~~ Who is to imagine the
^{dreadfulness} ~~boredom~~ of the unending drawing of numbers, who is to believe that
 in the frontline ^(it was that) boredom killed the souls...

3. There was no escaping ^{such} ~~this kind of~~ a world. It would ~~not~~
 have ^{been in vain for} ~~helped~~ people ^{trying to} ~~to~~ withdraw ~~themselves~~ into the closed realm of their
 professions, ^{hoping to} ~~and to expect hope for finding~~ their feet in the wonted
^{world of} ~~professions and~~ familiar duties. Work and its reward, exertion and
 its wages, all that had changed. In some ~~unfathomable~~ undefined
 and unfathomable ways everything had changed and was no more what it
 used to be. The former ^{and duties} ~~relationships within~~ functions in human society,
 the traditional rôles in the state, the natural human relations
~~and so, they all~~ got muddled up and confused. The ^G great ^{Indefinite} uncertainty
^{had held also of} ~~penetrated~~ the lives of individuals.

The conscience of the ^{governing} ~~governing~~ circles could never be clear,
 for in the war it was not possible to govern. Chance decided the
 fate of programmes. Those destined to lead were leading ^{but} ~~only~~ in
 appearance. In reality they ^{stumbled along} ~~followed, falteringly~~ in the wake
 of events, ^{like others, gathered the} ~~as~~ which they ~~also learned~~ from General Head-
^{daily bulletins,} ~~quarter's press releases~~. Yet they had to ^{pretend to greater} ~~put on a show of more~~ ~~determination~~
 determination than ever; ~~to pretend to~~ purposefulness and clarity
 of aims ^{with} with no purpose, no aim. This lie actually poisoned ~~them~~
~~entirely~~ the whole of public life, but nothing could be done about
 it, for it was covered ^{up} ~~over~~ by complicated ^{ex} appearances. ^G The govern-
 ment, meanwhile, had to ^{suffer merely a certain measure in} ~~look on helplessly how~~ its power, ~~was~~

~~constantly increasing~~ Its powers did not increase ^{owing not so much} ~~owing~~ to its successes ~~but~~ ^{than} rather ~~owing~~ to its failures. This kind of ^{enhanced} responsibility was ^{hardly an elevation, rather it was (a)} depressing ^{and confusing} to government, ~~more than it was an elevation.~~ Small wonder if they tried all they could to ~~shift the~~ ^{in the way of devolution of power.} ~~responsibility~~

Continuity in internal politics, ^{however,} also led to new and new morally objectionable appearances. Government continued to derive ^{their} ~~its~~ mandate from the confidence vested in ~~it~~ ^{them} by public opinion; by the same public opinion which to evolve and to foster was regarded as a prime task of government; A task, of which control, again, rested with public opinion... In such a palace of mirrors one had to lose one's way, irremediably ~~irretrievably~~ ^{irretrievably} ~~irretrievably~~.

Ostensibly, the ^{whole} ~~entire~~ machine of internal affairs remained in operation, with all its party-stageings and its trapdoors. The ministry (might have been deliberating, in its inner circle, what will be the likely exigencies of the foreign policy situation - whether to introduce democracy, or ~~to~~ erect autocracy² - while they would higggle ^{ing} and hagggle ^{ing} on ~~the~~ bills presented by the old cliques, patch ^{ing} up ~~the~~ obsolete institutions ~~and~~ and carefully collect ^{ing} and ~~keep~~ counting up the votes needed for its majority - all this for the sake of appearances, without ^{no} ~~with~~ faith or conviction. Decisions were made elsewhere. Government, public opinion and parties were playing at politics under the wheels of the "dread mill".

During the times of the Burgfriede the oppositions had also lost their raison d'être, but like ^{much else} ~~many other things~~ ~~having~~ lost ^{its} ~~their~~ justification in these times, they did not, for that reason, cease to exist. The war was the ^{grim surpassing} ~~greatest~~ calamity of the ~~times~~ times, yet of all things it was the ^{only} ~~one~~ they did not oppose. Yet it was an open secret that the opposition parties had only

shelved their criticism, they had not for that matter renounced it. Hence, their ^{derived} ~~They drew their importance from~~ importance ^{derived} from the criticism they might have exercised, ^{but in point of fact,} which, ~~however, they~~ ~~did not~~ not. This self-restraint, then, they ^{put} ~~ranked~~ down as a good point for themselves. Thus, it was always the party most opposed to the war which had the greatest merit ~~in it~~, their self-restraint being ~~the~~ greatest. Had they openly admitted that they, like ^{so many} others, were carried away by the warlike mood, they would not only have lost their following, but would also have become less of a utility for the government. ^{This way,} ~~They~~ by pretending to oppose war, the oppositions even did well by themselves. And they would never have ~~assumed~~ admitted ^{if}, had they changed their convictions and tacitly turned into supporters of the ~~war~~ war (which largely ^{they anyhow they were} ~~was the case~~) even ~~then~~ ^{some on} they would have pretended to be acting against their convictions, and merely for the ~~good~~ ~~and~~ sake of the country. This, as a matter of fact, was considered laudable by all, themselves included.

The earning ~~strata and~~ strata and small businessmen were equally discomfited. To start with, they closed down their shops and made ready for ~~to be~~ ^{being} out of business, out of work. They waited and endured. They waited for all goods and merchandises to give out and ~~for~~ the war to stop. But the war got the better of it. ~~Stopping~~ Far from stopping on this account, it ^{into effect} ~~enforced~~ the greatest boom, ^{of} ~~the~~ near-complete lack of raw materials notwithstanding. Only poor merchandise could be delivered, ^{of course} ~~though~~ for good merchandise there was none. To deliver poor wares, however, was ~~was~~ a dangerous ^{undertaking} ~~matter~~, it could bring a distinction, or ~~but~~ else a prison sentence. The merchant's occupation became ^{almost} ~~nearly~~ as risky as the ~~merchant's~~ soldier's. The notorious Krantz ^{took his stand} ~~stood~~ before his judges in Vienna, ^{for a} ~~in the~~ great

in the great trial against war-propagandists

~~trial against profiteering, like a~~ ^{in the} manner of ^a hero. Except, this kind of risk and peril did not bring true glory, ^{for that} it was too ~~profit-lucrative~~. The ^{many} ~~numerous~~ new riches, easily come by, ^{in turn} on the ~~other hand~~ belied the fairy-tales of thrift and abstinence, ~~attaching~~ ^{even of the established} thus throwing doubt and uncertainty on the glories of long-acquired fortunes. ^{also in regard to} In the war-aims it was the middle-class citizenry who were most involved and interested, ~~and~~ they were the ones most seriously ~~to be~~ disturbed by the incessant shifting ^{of these aims} from the ones to the others. For justice, right and honour are one thing, ~~and~~ markets, quotas and oil-wells are another. The ones ~~stand~~ ^{stand} spell enthusiasm and sacrifice, the others profit and calculation. But the twain kept alternating in the minds, ~~much~~ as crest and trough alternate in the sound's vibration - their endless ~~with~~ there-and-back waxing ^{into} to one great moral dissonance. ^{yet} Even business could ~~have been~~ a war-aim only, in case the war ^{were} ~~had been~~ the material sacrifice brought for it. ~~But~~ ^{is} ~~war~~ itself ^{for which} ~~was~~ business, ^{need} and needed aims ^{to} be found only in order that business might be prolonged, ~~this was a~~ ^{the} situation ^{becomes in buying - selling,} which ~~made~~ even the most primitive moral code, ~~stand on its head.~~ ^{practical} Even the businessman's well-trained, ^{alternately} eye got dizzy, having to focus ~~now~~ on the immediate present, ^{and} ~~now~~ on the distant future. At times prospective peace appeared to him as the only reality, that was to bring ^a continuation ^{of} to the wonted ways of ^{procedures and activities;} activity; at other times he was snatching at the chances ^{which the moment} offered ~~by the moment~~, and everything else paled. ^{ing} And according to whether he expected his business to thrive through war or through peace, the whole person ^{underwent a change.} ~~varied~~. Incidentally, he did not feel safe even on his home ground; the devil of the exchange-rate was ever present. The more he earned, the less it was worth. He was being enticed to buy war-loans by the argument, that it will rid him of his ready money, and what's over will be worth

more than ~~would~~ all of it (would be otherwise). Thus state-credit was founded on lack of confidence, the state ^{itself describing} ~~qualifying human~~ subscriptions ^{and putting} to war-loans as a kind of lending on usury, by which the patriot ~~is~~ in a position to exploit the state. The confusion of the citizenry was complete.

The peasant was ^{ever shedding blood} ~~incessantly bleeding~~ and ^{ever putting order} ~~incessantly enriching~~ himself, till he himself ^{no longer knew} ~~did not know~~ any longer what was good and what was bad. Out of blood came fortune, ~~and out of it~~ ^{no longer knew} fabulous riches out of the country's dire misery. He knew himself ^{to be} a patriot, (so long as he was the loser) ^{now} his moral foundations were slipping. ^{Now} For the first time he ^{fully understood} ~~came~~ to know the voice of ~~public~~ self-interest. Lacking all social training, he failed ignominiously. The cheaper his own life was on the fronts, the ^{more expensive} ~~dearer~~ he made the lives of ^{others} people at home. His naked self-interest rode roughshod over all and everything that ~~would~~ counter ^{ed/it} ~~him~~ ideals, the common good, the patrie.

But It was the proletariat who were to fall into the gravest moral crisis due to the outbreak of the war, for only their policies were sustained by a ~~philosophy~~ philosophy, and only they applied higher moral standards to their attitudes. It ^{might have} ~~would~~ have been their entering ~~into~~ world history... All eyes were on them. And then, ~~before~~ in the ^{face} ~~presence~~ of a world tense with expectation, in the sight of all and sundry something came to pass which ^{ing} ~~dumbfounded~~ them and which they themselves never ^{fully grasped. It's true meaning} ~~fathomed~~ but ^{itself} ~~something~~ which revealed as ^{sheer} ~~its true meaning~~ disappointment, ~~unimaginable~~ ^{no} ~~disappointment~~ so ^{hopeful} ~~fateful~~, that ~~the~~ ideal ^{it had been} ~~cannot~~ survive it. For ~~their~~ expectation and ~~their~~ ardent faith that on the day war breaks out the bourgeois world will awaken to the Internationale. "The international ~~awakened~~

capitalist syndicate, which incites the peoples against each other" shall find the peoples of the earth, grown to maturity, ~~facing it~~ ^{facing it} in closed ranks. Instead, it was the proletariat awakening to the fact, that the peoples all, and they themselves, ~~with them~~, ^{as well,} were burning in the sinful fevers of the war; that memories, emotions, loyalties, long thought dead, arose and prevailed against ~~it~~ their own intentions, their hopes, their better selves... But ~~this was~~ ^{there was} ~~not the end of it.~~ ^{more to come.} Another turning was in store, agreeable, but the more ~~surprising and~~ ^{for being} disquieting: the predicted ^{dire} consequences of the great climb-down did not materialize. All the horrors of the war were ^{experienced} to be visited on the proletariat. But ~~the~~ ^{been at least a} consciousness of deserved suffering would ~~at least~~ ^{have} kept alive the agonizing shame over the sin committed against themselves, and such consciousness would have ~~constituted the token~~ ^{stood for} of a better future. Instead, to their stupefaction, they found themselves among the privileged of the war. Organized labour proved indispensable in keeping the ^{war industry} ~~factories~~ going. Their Unions, their press and their leadership turned into essential ingredients of the wartime state-machine, ~~by the~~ ^{very} rationale of the war ~~relieved~~ ^{them} from paying tribute in blood, allowed ^{them} to stay ^{put} at their places ^{of work.} ~~in the process of production.~~ While the unorganized masses, ~~and~~ the rabble, the patriotic populace were laid low ~~by~~ and decimated by the ^{front} and by starvation, the international élite of the working-class ~~enjoyed~~ ^{far from} were treated with consideration. Thus, they were ~~not~~ ^{being} even the greatest losers of the war; ~~and~~ so faded even the last hope of some later repentance which, after the great volt-face still could have saved the continuity of revolutionary tradition.

4. Such ~~an epoch~~ ^{was} was our epoch, such a generation our generation.

It never knew where it ~~was~~ ^{stood}, where it came from and where it was

going. It could not be equal to the emergency, for the nature of
 the emergency was not ^{clear} known to it. Its suffering could not be pure
 and magnificent, because it ^{had} carried no ^{manifest} meaning. Bread had grown ^{to be} cheap,
 bread dear, sickness had become a physical advantage and money, for
 which people would give everything, bought nothing. There was no
 common denominator ^{by which} to take the measure of the world. Health, fortune,
 bread, la patrie, and heroism were so many question marks. ~~And~~ A
 world which had lost everything, ^{had} received ~~in exchange~~ but one thing
 in exchange, ^{yet} but one that ^{still} could ~~yet~~ give it a rich yield.
 So rich indeed, that even ^a the mere intimation of it ~~was~~
 was a moving experience; all mankind was ~~was~~ animated by the know-
 ledge of the new ^{abundance} riches. ~~They were riches~~ ^{It was an abundance in profound} ~~in~~ ultimate ^{enchant} disappoint-
 ment, ^{enchant} disappointments which a whole generation endorsed with ^{an outcry} a cry
 of pained surprise; ^{an abundance} riches in shame, torturing and creative. The new
 revelation hit us, like ^{the} a rebirth of ^{an} inner knowledge. All the flaws
 of the past, its empty slogans, its nurtured prejudices, its ^{idle} shallow
 assurance, its cynical affectations of seriousness, and its whole
 criminal heedlessness lay open before us; we understood. What became
 evident to us was not how we could have avoided the war, but that
 all our doings to date ^{contributed to make} ~~had made~~ that war unavoidable. What we per-
 ceived was not, ^{cast} who was to blame, but that we all were. Could man-
 kind but have ~~could~~ its revelation into institutions, the birth of
 a United States of Europe would ^o not have taken long. But all this ~~was~~
 merely ^{lashed} passed through the minds like lightning, ~~was the~~ fleeting
 recognition of ^a some single instant. Meanwhile The years ~~passed~~
~~on~~ were passing over ^a mankind, which ~~was~~ neither more nor less
 in stature than usual, ^{with} ~~and over whose mind and soul~~ the powers of old
 were keeping up ~~their~~ the appearance of their ^{over their minds,} ~~own~~ ~~lordships~~ sway.

(L. 2) ~~The~~ ^{one} leading idea, ~~the~~ ^{and disenchantment} yearning; ~~of~~ ^{one} These powers ~~was~~ to make these revelations forgotten, ~~to~~ falsify them, ~~to~~ deny their reality.

Now, truth may be gathered in a flash, but it cannot be so fast forgotten. ~~And~~ ^{one} deep down every ~~body~~ ^{body} felt that the pain of these very first ~~disappointments~~ ^{illusion} was the last ^{romantic} valuable ~~human~~ ^{suffered} pain in this war; ~~that~~ ^{even} with the outbreak of war ~~history~~ ^{the} had spoken its message: what comes after is ~~but~~ repetition... The lesson, at any rate, ^{to be} will be mankind's ~~who~~ ^{what} had ~~borne~~ ^{mere} the suffering. And that lesson shall be the heritage of the ages.

5. These great lessons which ~~are~~ ^{inherent} in our time, cost ~~them~~ ^{infernales} millions of ~~people~~ ^{human} human lives. To ~~distill~~ ^{infernales} them, to grasp them entirely will ~~be the labour of the next generation~~ ^{be the labour of the next generation} be the labour of the next generation. But we must never forget that it is our shame which shall make their minds and souls susceptible to the task and it will be our ~~disappointments~~ ^{enchant} which will open their eyes. The heritage of mankind rests with our true and ~~own~~ ^{cauld} right witness.

Two kinds of obstacles We shall have to overcome. One is temptation, ~~which has~~ ^{will have} to be fought down within ourselves, the other is danger coming to us from others.

From ourselves?
First and foremost we have to resist the temptation ~~of~~ ^{to} forget ~~it~~ ^{give}. We must ^{being to} objectively ~~be~~ the fleeting present in word and writing, in poetry and prose, in art and science - lest time wash away its reality. Its ^{we} memory must ~~be~~ faithfully guarded, as Moses ~~decreed~~ ^{decreed} ~~unceasing~~ ^{unceasing} ~~memory~~ ^{to be the law, when} he ~~was~~ wrought into stone the Ten Commandments, uttering solemn words ~~and decreed~~ ^{decreed} ~~as law~~ ^{as law} ~~unceasing~~ ^{unceasing} memory.

We must resist the distorting distance in looking back.

led Everything seems to gain meaning and justification, In ^{looking back} ~~the~~ ^{retrospect} ~~aspect~~ ^{aspect}. ^{might} ^{is} ^{salutary} ^{on}

There is a tendency to look

~~aspect~~ ^{out} Except ~~the~~ ^{But this} semblance is mis-
 leading. If ~~we~~ ^{To give} gave way to the temptation of this semblance,
~~it~~ ^{be enough} would suffice to undo our calling. Therefore, let us very clearly
 understand, that the ~~meaning~~ spiritual reality ~~of which we~~ ^{nowhere save} to
 which we bear witness exists ~~only~~ ^{comes once only} in the present. ~~Only once~~ ^{can we}
~~get~~ the inside glimpse of the present age: here and now.

Finally, we must resist the temptation of glorification,
 which posterity will bestow on such a chosen generation as the
 generation of today. We shall be judged by our epoch. If ~~this~~
~~epoch~~ our times were great, so shall we be considered great. And
 we shall be asked what these times were like, for ~~we are~~ ^{it is we who returned from} the wit-
~~nesses.~~ Our honour and glory in the eyes of posterity will therefore
 depend on ourselves. But we must not falter and we must bear true
 witness, for the sake of our calling. We shall proclaim faithfully
 what kind of a generation we have been, ^{the} contemporaries of the war.
 This last ^{ordeal} ~~test~~ will be the hardest ~~of all~~ test of all.

When we shall have ^(one after the other) conquered in our own selves the temptations
 of forgetting, of looking back and of glorification, we shall
 then encounter the dangers that will come to us from others.

One common feeling, one common dread ^{locks in the fog} ~~draws~~ links
~~together~~ ^e this world of today and all ~~but~~ its historical forces:
 that it is the end, the end, the end - irretrievably, ^{this} ~~their~~ world has
 passed away. And one common will, one common determination is at work
~~in~~ hidden and secretly in this moribund world, in all its
 governments and all its oppositions, ~~in~~ its science and its religion,
 its culture and its civilization - one guilty hope is rife in
 the minds of its ~~intellectual~~ ruling spirits - that in spite of all
 and everything, they shall ^{private} ~~live~~ they shall forget everything,

they shall silence everyone, they shall rend the tell-tale pages from the book of history and they shall continue as the rulers of the world — without faith, ~~and~~ without conviction.

Woe to ~~him that~~ ^{him that} ~~has~~ ^{an} had been ~~unwanted~~ witnesses to the humiliation of the mighty. For the mighty shall turn on ~~them~~ him in a common effort, should he wish to testify, how things happened. And the epoch of today will be sanctified, in order to make it inaccessible ^{heretics} to ~~the~~ those who search for the truth, and the ~~apostates~~ ^{heretics} who ~~will not~~ shall believe the true witnesses, will be ~~ostracised~~ ostracised.

For inestimable interests of the world's ^{so} long-established priest-pundits demand, that posterity never ~~take cognizance of~~ hear of today's Revelation. That no word come through to them of any voice that In the time of blood was heard to speak by a whole generation. And that we all ^{have} heard the Word which spoke ^{thus} to us in the epoch of ^{illusion} ~~disappointment~~ and shame: "Leave off the worship of idols. See where the false gods have led you. Bear eternal witness to the shame of the present times and you shall find the right way."

To bear such witness ^{band together} must the present generation ~~unite~~

let the present generation stand as one man.

12 in English

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The calling of this generation

A generation is born into history, when it becomes aware of its calling. And its worth will depend on the degree to which it actually has fulfilled that calling. Should it not recognize the task uniquely set out for it, should or could it not take that task upon itself, it will meet the fate of the wicked and slothful servant who buried the talent in the earth. Such generations are kept on record in the civic registers only and in the tax rolls, they have no home save among the calendar years. History knows them not. Such generations never came to life, for they failed to recognise the task that would have been their life.

What is the calling of today's generation? It has fallen to us as our lot to witness humanity's gravest trial. To the individual of our time this is a blow to be sustained, but to the whole generation it is a calling to ^{which it must live up} which it must live up. This generation was made witness to the greatest moral event since the crusades and the reformation. Every minute in times like these harbours more elements of recognition and revelation than centuries of purblind and complacent years. At such times we may glimpse the hidden failings in the structure of the soul, which the closed epochs hide away, securely encased. The spirit of man, moved by its sense of shame, seeks for the right way and finds it. For moral progress is the only open, sure and straight road towards inner growth and perfection. And neither is there a more valuable or reliable earnest of this progress than the sense of shame; nor is there any greater or more obvious calling for today's generation

than to bear true witness in throwing open to the world our great shame.

1. Even the bare events before long will stand in need of testimony.

Later generations will find it hard to believe even the patent facts of our times, to take them for literally true. For instance, they will not believe that the outbreak of the great war could have taken the civilized world entirely by surprise; that in the beginning public opinion actually held the blundering of diplomacy to be solely responsible for the catastrophe; that the catastrophe occurred just at a time when the general mood and intent to see such a contest of the peoples arise, was already on the wane; that in spite of this, enthusiasm was greatest in the beginning, because people were just as quick in accepting the fact that, after all, there is a war on, as they were sure before, that it is entirely out of the question. We ourselves can hardly believe all this to have been so; how could epochs of the far future believe it? To a mankind long conditioned to peace, ^{it} was was the very essence of absurdity, an exotic adventure, in which, however, everybody had to take part. And since every country was equally aggressed ^{attached} upon, the socialists, with apparent justification, could speak of a defensive war. And so the universal defensive war was on... Until war itself came to stand for greatness and value, being both new and a renewer of things. Until the great sacrifices finally engendered the "great times." In the following they all the time became only greater and greater... Later the question came up, what exactly the war was about? Many people did not understand the question or replied that the time to put it was not yet. Thus,

they did not regard it as a venture, but rather as some aimless compulsion to which we all were made prone. It was not being carried on for any aim, but it would pick one as it came to a halt. In that will be revealed the "meaning" of the war. "Contest of races" - "the Middle-Eastern question" - "Anglo-German rivalry" - "the Baghdad railway" - "Belgian integrity" - "Mitteleuropa" - "Encirclement" - "American hegemony over Europe" - "Alsace-Lorraine" - "ascendance of the yellow race" - "the fight of democracy against autocracy" - "Freedom of the Seas" - each and every one of them at one time or another stood for the "meaning" of the great war which, "in the nature of things" "evidently" was bound to terminate, now in the west, now in the east, now in terms of blood, now in terms of gold, of nerves, of shipping space, now in one tremendous battle, now in attrition and fighting to the last man, now in the annihilation of one side, now in a draw. These slogans stood in no relation to each other at all, rather, they were mutually exclusive. They changed as a matter of fashion and one and the same section of the public would subscribe now to the one, now to the other, or a third, or a fourth of the "meanings", in which they then thought to have found the key to the ^ucon~~pr~~adrum. According to whether the reports from the battlefields were favourable or not, people's whole Weltanschauung, their basic views in the moral and social field would turn into their stark opposites. Noted publicists out of deep conviction changed their deep convictions by the month. And all the time no-one had any clear notion of how the war was at all possible. The feeling never quite passed that in the world of ours such a thing as the war in point of fact was impossible. And because essentially everybody was thinking in such terms and no-one understanding - that

is, the war was not credited with more reality than one would ascribe to some terrible, abiding delusion - the general expectancy was, that it should really come to an end, all, by itself, and that at any time, if not right now, then soon... "It's fantastic enough that it has been holding out so long," people would say. Though it was they themselves who had had been holding out, holding the fronts, the general feeling ran somehow in the reverse. But no one was quite sure, how.

2. Posterity will be quite unable to conceive the basic frame of mind of our time.

In this very odd, confused climate of opinion the individual soul fell prone to a truly peculiar condition. It was a sickly condition, pertaining to a public mood so painful and pervasive, that none but the most insensitive were immune to it. It was from this mental sickness that the soldiers in the frontline suffered most, so did the prisoners and in the Hinterland the more sensitive people: women, and great numbers of men, susceptible to it. But who would have not suffered under it? It was something of the kind known to medicine as depressive melancholia: the spirit is dejected, yet restless. Consciousness, ever narrowing, is helplessly revolving around one fixed point. That one point was the war. In times to come it will not sound credible that the war's greatest ill was neither want nor wounds, nor sickness, nor strain but that peculiar, elusive presence that crippled the soul far and wide in its province. And even less shall it be understood - even today it is known only to the few - that the true cause of this dread condition lay not in privations or other wartime miseries, uncertainties or dangers, but in something quite different.

The torment was the soul's torment over existence that had lost its meaning. Man cannot live in a world in which his search for a meaning would be vain. Individual man, dumbfounded, kept gazing into a tremendous catastrophe. There he stood, in the very midst of it, its cause he did not know, its aims refused themselves to his ^{probing} querying mind; of himself he did not know, was he an actor in it or merely a spectator, and was it being enacted for or against him. One thing and one only he knew with surpassing clarity: existence or non-existence of the war did in no way depend on his own volition - yet in all that touched on the war everyone all the time kept invoking him and his will. The heroes in the front line were implementing his will, also the enemy, when justifying his acts, was carrying out his will, the fate of the whole world, it seemed, was vested in his will. In vain did he feel that this was sheer delusion and had no reality at all; that in a world which for him had no meaning, and the aims of which he did not know, he could have no intent nor will. Yet he himself no longer knew what he willed and whether his actions were the outcome of his own will or of the will of others, and if of others, who were they?

The very order of magnitude of the war was also harbouring contradictions which confused the mind. War is a means to an end. But the war and the armies of today cannot be that. The armies of former times, counting thousands or tens of thousands of men, related to the state they defended as the part relates to the whole. It is always rational to sacrifice the part to save the whole. But in this war everyone was a soldier or as good as. For even if he did not happen to be a soldier, his freedom was subject to as grave limitations, his property to as many risks, his life to as many

privations, as if he had been one. The war of mutually starving out whole peoples spared neither women nor children. Nearly as many infant children died in this war as adult males. There is no ends and means here any more, no part and whole. We risked the whole and did not stop at sacrificing the whole - for the sake of the whole. Which clearly defies sense and understanding. For this could be justified only by ends more important than the whole, more important than life, property, welfare and happiness of the whole. But such ends could be found only in implementing some absolute moral sanctions, in complying with a moral dictate, which stands above anything and everything...

To the soul that lacks a sense of direction life is not livable: the hardships of the times must either be taken on ourselves as a sacrifice we want to bring, or the vicissitudes of the epoch must be endured as an elemental calamity, a senseless catastrophe. Only one who is moved by a will and does not feel the roughness of the road, only one who is ready to suffer and treads the path ^{willingly} in resignation - only they can ^{go on} ~~make~~ it. But one must choose between the two. Whoever is wavering shall have no place to repose in, for the soul knows repose only in the active will or in passive enduring. The present generation, in its lack of bearing, was pacing along an endless Calvary, starting it anew at every station at which it faltered. Till in the end the tortured soul was numbed and consciousness blunted. Each awakening hurt with new pain, each realization brought new ^{defection} shame. This is how today's generation was lingering on the way, unsure of itself.

Not only can we not live in a world that is void of meaning, we cannot even adequately describe it. Happier times to come shall

shall never learn the simple truth, that one of the gravest afflictions of the great war, both at the Hinterland and in the trenches was boredom - the boredom of a world without meaning. It may have resembled ^{what} a man must feel scanning the endless lists of draws in a class-lottery, though he well knows that his lottery-ticket - his fate - is contained therein. There was nothing that would have ~~touché~~ touched the imagination. The famed battlefields, the most heroic divisions even remained outside the imagined. Giant battles, month-long encounters, changing blockade-norms, new battle gear, turning-points in history - it was so much printed paper. Many people had stopped even reading the newspapers, or they skipped the war news. The suggestive power of this mood was such, that ~~my~~ minds given to the paradoxical began to profess, the whole affair, seeing that it amounted to nothing, was not worth taking note of.

Posterity, when news of this tedium will reach it, will put it down either to some particularly frivolous or to some particularly heroic attitude. The more objective minds perhaps to the complex medley of events. Reality, however, is entirely different. Exactly as before, people were interested in everything that carried meaning. Gossip and intrigues; a fight put up by the weaker; persecution of the innocent moved public opinion much as before. People were far more interested in a single little lie that was exposed, than in the most gigantic truth which they were unable to ponder. Moral courage still gave rise to heroes and while combatants in their millions perished namelessly, there were found to be people dedicated to peace, whose names all Europe knew. The death by fire of a small child, left alone while its mother was lining up for bread would be more amply talked about than the day's news from the

battlefronts... But this solving of the riddle will remain our own secret. To posterity the image of our time will come in ready clichés, colourful, in clear-cut contours. History records ^{only} the winning numbers. Who is to imagine the dread dulness of an unending drawing of numbers, who is to believe that in the frontline it was boredom that killed the souls...

3. There was no escaping such a world. It would have been in vain for people trying to withdraw into the closed realm of their professions, hoping to find their feet in the wonted world of familiar duties. Work and its reward, exertion and its wages - all that had changed. In some undefined and unfathomable way everything had changed and was no more what it used to be. The former functions and duties in human society, the traditional roles in the state, the natural human relations got muddled up and confused. The Great Indefinite took hold also of the lives of individuals.

The conscience of the governing circles could never be clear, for in the war it was not possible to govern. Chance decided the fate of programmes. Those destined to lead were leading in appearance only. In reality they stumbled along in the wake of events which they, like others, gathered from the General Headquarter's daily bulletins. Yet they had to pretend to greater determination than ever; to purposefulness and clarity of aims - with no purpose, no aim. This lie poisoned the whole of public life, but nothing could be done about it, for it was covered up by complex appearances. Government, meanwhile, suffered a constant increase in power, owing not so much to its successes, than to its failures. This kind of enhanced responsibility was hardly an elation, rather it was both depressing and confusing to government. Small wonder if

they tried all they could in the way of devolution of power.

Continuity in internal politics also led to [new and new] morally objectionable appearances. Government continued to derive their mandate from the confidence vested in them by public opinion; by the same public opinion which to evolve and to foster was regarded as a prime task of government; a task, of which control, again, rested with public opinion... In such a palace of mirrors one had to lose one's way, irremediably.

Ostensibly, the whole machine of internal affairs remained in operation, with all its party-stageings and trapdoors. The ministry in its inner circle might have been deliberating the likely exigencies of the foreign policy situation - introduce democracy? erect autocracy? - while they would be higgling and haggling on bills presented by the old cliques, patching up obsolete institutions and carefully collecting and counting up the votes needed for their majority - all this for the sake of appearances, with no faith, no conviction. Decisions ^{were made} ~~were made~~ elsewhere. Government, public opinion and parties were playing at politics under the wheels of the "dread mill"...

During the times of the Burgfriede ^{*} the oppositions ^{*} had also lost their raison d'etre, but like much else that lost its justification in these times they did not, for that reason, cease to exist. The war was the surpassing calamity of the times, yet of all things it was the only one ^{the opposition} they did not oppose. Yet it was an open secret that the opposition parties had only shelved their criticism, they had not for that matter renounced it. Hence, their importance derived from the criticism they might have exercised but in point of fact did not. This self-restraint, then, they

* See "Introduction", p.

put down as a good point for themselves. Thus, it was always the party most opposed to the war which had the greatest merit, their self-restraint being greatest. Had they openly admitted that they, like so many others, were carried away by the warlike mood, they would not only have lost their following, but also would have become less of a utility for the government. This way, by pretending to oppose war, the oppositions even did well by themselves. And had they changed their convictions and ^{to} tacitly turned into supporters of the war (which ^{in fact} they anyhow largely were) they would never have admitted it, they would have gone on pretending to be acting against their convictions, and (that) merely for the sake of the country. This as a matter of fact was considered laudable by all, themselves included.

The earning strata and small business-men were equally discomfited. To start with, they closed down their shops and made ready for being out of business, out of work. They waited and endured. They waited for all goods and merchandises to give out and the war to stop. But the war got the better of it. Far from stopping on this account, it forced into effect the greatest of booms, near-complete lack of raw materials notwithstanding. Only poor merchandize could be delivered, of course, for good merchandize there was none. To deliver poor wares, however, was a dangerous undertaking it could bring either a distinction or a prison sentence. The merchant's occupation became almost as risky as the soldier's. The notorious Krantz, in the great trial against war profiteers, took his stand before his judges in Vienna somewhat in the manner of a hero. Except, this kind of risk and peril did not bring true glory - for (that) it was too lucrative. The many new riches, easily come by,

in turn belied the fairy-tales of thrift and abstinence, throwing doubt and uncertainty on the glories even of the long-established fortunes. Also in regard to war aims it was the middle-class citizenry that were most involved and interested, they were the ones most seriously disturbed by the incessant shifting of these aims. For justice, right and honour are one thing, ~~and~~ markets, quotas and oil-wells another. The ^{former} ~~ones~~ spell enthusiasm and sacrifice, the ^{latter} others profit and calculation. But the twain kept alternating in the minds, as crest and trough alternate in the sound's vibration - their endless there-and-back waxing into one great moral dissonance. Yet even business could be a war-aim ~~only~~ in case the war were the material sacrifice brought for it. Once war itself is business, for which aims need be found only in order that business might be prolonged, the situation becomes topsy-turvy, even by the ^{most} primitive moral code. Even the businessman's well-trained, practical eye got dizzy, having to focus alternately on the immediate present and on the distant future. At times prospective peace appeared to him as the only reality that might bring continuation to the wonted ways of procedure and activity; at other times he was snatching at the chances which the moment offered, everything else paling away. And according to whether he expected his business to thrive through war or through peace, the whole person underwent a change. Incidentally, he felt not safe even on his home ground: the devil of the exchange-rate was ever present. The more he earned, the less it was worth. He was being enticed to buy war loans by the argument, that it will rid him of his ready money, and what's over, will be worth more than the whole of it otherwise would be. Thus state-credit was founded on lack of confidence, the state itself des-

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cribing war-loan subscriptions as a kind of lending on usury and putting the patriot in a position to exploit the state. The confusion of the citizenry was complete.

The peasant was ever shedding blood and ever getting richer, till he himself no longer knew what was good and what was bad. Out of blood came fortune, fabulous riches out of the country's dire misery. So long as he was the loser, the peasant knew himself for a patriot; now his moral foundations were slipping. Now for the first time he fully understood the voice of self-interest, and came to know temptation. Lacking all social training, he failed ignominiously. The cheaper his own life was on the fronts, the more expensive he made the lives of people at home. His naked self-interest rode roughshod over all and everything that countered it: ideals, the common good, la patrie.

But it was the proletariat who were to undergo the gravest moral crisis due to the outbreak of the war, for only their policies ^{rested on} ~~rested on~~ a philosophy, only they applied higher moral standards to their attitudes. It might well have been their entering into world history... All eyes were on them. And then, in the face of a world tense with expectation, in the sight of all and sundry something came to pass, dumbfounding them, something they themselves never fully grasped. Its true meaning revealed itself as sheer disappointment, disappointment so tragic that no ideal can survive it. For it had been their expectation and ardent faith that on the day war breaks out the bourgeois world will awaken to the Internationale. "The ~~internationalist~~ universal capitalist syndicate, which incites the peoples against each other" shall find, facing it in closed ranks, the peoples of the earth, grown to matu-

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rity. Instead, it was the proletariat awakening to the fact, that the peoples all, and they themselves as well, were burning in the sinful fevers of war; that memories, emotions, loyalties long thought dead arose and prevailed against their own intentions, their hopes, their better selves... But there was more to ~~come~~ come. Another turning was in store, the ²more disquieting for being agreeable; the predicted dire consequences of the great climb-down did not materialize. All the horrors of the war were expected to be visited on the proletariat. But in that case at least a consciousness of deserved suffering would have kept alive their agonizing shame over the sin committed against themselves, and such consciousness would have been the earnest of a better future. Instead, to their stupefaction, they found themselves among the privileged of the war. Organized labour proved indispensable in keeping the war industry going. Their Unions, their press and their leadership turned into essential ingredients of the war-time state machine. The very rationale of the war relieved them from paying tribute in blood, allowed them to stay put at their places of work. While the unorganized masses, the rabble, the patriotic poorest of the poor were laid low and decimated by the trenches and by starvation, the international élite of the working-class were treated with consideration. Thus, they were far from being the greatest losers of the war; and so faded even the last hope of some later repentance which, after the great volte-face still could have saved at least the continuity of revolutionary tradition.

4. Such was our epoch, such a generation was our generation.

It never knew where it stood, where it came from, and where it was going. It could not be equal to the emergency, for the nature of the emergency was not clear to it. Its suffering could not be pure

and magnificent, because it had no meaning. Blood had grown to be cheap, bread dear, sickness had become a physical advantage and money, for which people would give everything, bought nothing. There was no common denominator by which to take the measure of the world. Health, fortune, bread, la patrie, heroism were so many question marks. A world which had lost everything, had received but one thing in exchange, yet one that still could give rich yield. So rich indeed, that even a mere intimation of it was a moving experience. It was an abundance in profound and ultimate disenchantment, disenchantment which a whole generation endorsed with an outcry of pained surprise; an abundance in shame, torturing and creative. The new revelation hit us like the rebirth of an inner knowledge. All the flaws of the past, its empty slogans, its nurtured prejudices, its idle assurance, its cynical affectations of seriousness, and its whole criminal heedlessness lay open before us: we understood. What became evident to us was not how we could have avoided the war, but that all our doings to date contributed to make that war ~~inevitable~~ unavoidable. What we perceived was not who was to blame, but that we all were. Could mankind have but cast its revelations into institutions, the birth of a United States of Europe would not have taken long. But all this merely touched the minds like lightning, was but the fleeting recognition of a single instant. The years meanwhile were passing over a mankind, neither greater nor smaller in stature than usual, with the powers of old keeping up the appearance of their sway over the minds. These powers had one leading idea, one ardent desire: to make these revelations and disenchantments forgotten, falsify them, deny their reality. Truth, sure enough, may be gathered in a flash, but it cannot be

so fast forgotten. Deep down everyone felt that the pain of these very first disillusionments was the last humanly valuable pain suffered in this war; that even with the outbreak of the war history had spoken its message: what comes after is mere repetition... The lesson, at any rate, has to be mankind's, which had endured the suffering. And that lesson shall be the heritage of the ages.

5. These great lessons which inhere in our time, cost millions of lives. To internalize them, to grasp them entirely will be the labour of the next generation. But we must never forget that it is our shame which shall make their minds and souls susceptible to the task and it will be our disenchantments that will open their eyes. The heritage of mankind rests with our true and candid witness.

We shall have to overcome two kinds of obstacles. One is temptation, to be fought down within ourselves, the other is danger coming to us from others.

First and foremost we have to resist the temptation to forget. We must give objective existence to the fleeting present in word and writing, in poetry and prose, in art and science - lest time wash away its reality. Its memory we must faithfully guard, as Moses decreed unceasing memory to be the law, when, uttering solemn words, he wrought into stone the Ten Commandments.

We must resist the distorting distance in looking back. In the retrospect everything seems to take on meaning and justification. But this semblance is misleading. To give way to the temptation of this semblance would be enough to undo our calling. Therefore, let us very clearly understand, that the spiritual reality to which we bear witness exists nowhere, save in the present. The inside glimpse of the present age comes once only: here and now.

Finally, we must resist the temptation of glorification, ~~granted~~ which posterity will bestow on such a chosen generation as the generation of today. We shall be judged by our epoch. If, then, our epoch were great, so shall we be considered great. And we shall be asked, what these times were like, for it is we who witnessed them. Our honour and glory in the ~~years~~ ^{years} of posterity will therefore depend on ourselves. But we must not falter and we must bear true witness, for the sake of our calling. We shall faithfully proclaim what kind of a generation we have been, we, the contemporaries of the war. This last ordeal will be the hardest test of all.

When we shall have conquered one after the other the temptations of forgetting, of looking back and of glorification, we shall then encounter the dangers that will come to us from others.

One common ~~dread~~ feeling, one common dread holds in its grip the world of today and all its historical forces: that it is the end, the end, the end - irretrievably, this world of theirs has passed. And one common will, one common determination is at work hidden and secretly in this moribund world, in all its governments and all its oppositions, its science and its religion, its culture and its civilization - one guilty hope is rife in the minds of its ruling spirits - that in spite of all and everything, they shall prevail, they shall forget everything, they shall silence everyone, read the tell-tale pages from the book of history and continue as the rulers of the world - without faith, without conviction.

Woe to him who had been an unwanted witness to the humiliation of the mighty. For the mighty shall turn on him in a common effort, should he wish to testify how things happened. And the epoch of today will be sanctified, in order to make it inaccessible to those

who search for the truth, and the heretics who shall believe the true witnesses will be ostracised.

For inestimable interests of the world's old-established priest-pundits demand, that posterity never hear of today's Revelation; That no word come through to them of any voice that was heard to speak by a whole generation in the time of blood; that we all have heard the Word which spoke thus to us in the epoch of disillusionment and shame: "Leave off the worship of idols. See where the false gods have led you. Bear eternal witness to the shame of the present times and you shall find the right way."

To bear such witness let the present generation stand united.