

Freedom

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International Socialist Congress.

The division in the camp of international parliamentary Social Democracy, which dates from 1898, reached a crisis at their latest Congress at Amsterdam. On one side, headed by Jaurès, stand those who are in favour of the participation of Socialists in parliamentary and Ministerial combines. On the other side, Bebel, Guesde, Ferri and those who, being equally for parliamentary action, repudiate the participation of a Social Democrat in the Ministry of a capitalist State. The discussion provoked on this subject at the Amsterdam Congress attracted such an interest among political parties and the bourgeois press of Europe that during the whole week of the Congress the great dailies were debating the question of reformist and revolutionary tactics, Bebel, Guesde and Ferri being classified as revolutionists in opposition to Jaurès as reformist.

The term "revolutionist," applied to a fraction of parliamentarians, is taken by the press from the lips of the Social Democrats themselves, who proudly insist on being called "revolutionists." In their mouths that word has not the ordinary "vulgar" signification. We "ordinary people" mean that a party is called revolutionary if in its struggle against oppression and exploitation it has recourse to revolt, street fights, uprisings. Thus Garibaldi, Mazzini and their friends were revolutionists; the Republicans and Socialists in France in the middle of last century, the Irish and Polish Nationalists were revolutionists. Quite other is the definition of "revolutionary," as given by Ferri, Bebel, Kautsky and other parliamentarians. In their conception every partisan of a large humanitarian idea which aims at the ultimate transformation of society is a revolutionist. People of action, like the followers of Mazzini, as M. Ferri says in his *Socialism and Darwinism*, were not revolutionists but people of a criminal type. So that such peaceful persons as Saint-Simon, Fourier, Robert Owen, even Kingsley, were revolutionists; but Blanqui, Sophie Perovskaja, Garibaldi, Mazzini, were criminals!

This definition must be kept in mind by our readers in order to understand that when German Social Democrats speak of a social revolution they do not mean an uprising, barricades, or street fights, but simply the political education of the working classes and the increase of Socialist votes and deputies, so that by a peaceful and legal agitation they may obtain the consent of the majority of the voters for social legislation. This is why Bebel, answering an observation of Jaurès at the Congress, that German Social Democracy with its three million votes has attained no practical result, said: "three millions of votes is not sufficient for us; having in Germany eleven million votes, we must have at least seven or eight millions; then we shall see!"

Those who live another fifty years will see their peaceful revolution!

But we who saw the very beginning of the parliamentary tactics of Social Democracy, we knew, and said many times, that notwithstanding their revolutionary and socialistic phraseology, they had abandoned Socialism for petty reforms and legal tactics.

We know that they always employ high-sounding revolutionary phrases without any practical meaning. For instance, Liebknecht, imitating Bismarck's famous words, "We Germans fear nobody except God," said, "We German Social Democrats fear nobody, not even God."

This was said by the man who could not open a public meeting unless a police inspector was present on the platform, and who, with his fearless comrades, obediently left the hall as soon as the police officer, perhaps finding some expression of an orator not suitable, put on his hat. They fear nobody, but they dare not bring their women comrades to their political meetings because it is prohibited by the law of the

German Empire, which was so extolled by Bebel in his answer to Jaurès. No Frenchman, Swiss or Englishman would submit to such humiliating political conditions, but the leader of German Social Democracy did not even see the irony of his boast.

It is the same when a leader of Social Democracy is speaking about Socialism; he does not mean Socialism in the ordinary sense of Communism or Collectivism, but liberty of press, of religion, universal suffrage, national education, abolition of standing armies, an international court of arbitration, equal rights for men and women; measures for the protection of the working classes (limitation of hours of work, sanitary regulations) and similar reforms, not only adopted theoretically but realised already in many countries by a bourgeois democracy.

Do not let the reader think we exaggerate. Liebknecht himself declared that all those so-called Socialist claims "are reforms already accomplished or on the point of being carried out in advanced countries and they fully agree with democracy."

Lower still is the standard of Socialism in the so-called Program-Minimum of the French Marxists formulated by Guesde. This program is really the minimum of all moral, economic and social claims! And yet those men appeared at the Amsterdam Congress as the defenders of revolutionary Socialism. They who for the last thirty years have fiercely denounced every revolutionary attempt in Russia, Italy, France, and Spain; they who are preaching to the German working classes, instead of Socialism, political democracy, and that not of the most advanced type, they attempted at the Congress to give a lesson in political radicalism and democracy to nations enjoying a far greater freedom than themselves.

This profound contradiction between revolutionary and Socialist phraseology and moderate bourgeois practice was discovered at last even by the more enlightened Social Democrats. Bernstein, Jaurès and Turati did not fail to indicate that the program and tactics of Social Democracy are in reality not Socialist, not revolutionary; that Social Democracy in Germany adopted the program of English, French and Swiss democracy, and hoped to realise by parliamentary tactics some economic and political reforms carried out in England by Gladstonians, in France by Radical Republicans of the type of Ledru-Rollin and his successor, in Switzerland by the representatives of the self-governing peasantry.

Once this contradiction was made clear, they honestly proposed to the party to put aside their Socialist and revolutionary garb and to declare themselves moderate reformers, to follow thoroughly parliamentary tactics of progressive democracy, and to take part not only in the elections but also in the formations of ministries.

In Germany, with its medieval feudal organisations, where the Emperor has nearly unlimited power and the Ministers are appointed by him, certainly no Social Democratic deputy has a chance of being invited as a Minister; but in countries such as France, England, Switzerland or Holland, where democracy has gained political freedom by revolutionary struggle, such a possibility is not at all excluded. In France the thing happened. When the Republic was threatened by clericals, Bonapartists and other enemies of democracy, the advanced Radicals invited into the ministry a Social Democratic deputy, Millerand. It was in the heat of the Dreyfus affair, when every honest man in France was fighting against reaction, our Anarchist friends in the streets and public meetings, moderate reformers—in Parliament. Jaurès, Viviani and other Social Democratic deputies helped Millerand; they did not betray principles or tactics. It was a logical outcome of the whole Social Democratic teaching.

But, as the Minister of a bourgeois State, Millerand was obliged to sanction all governmental acts, including the sending of troops against the strikers. The workers in

(Continued on page 34).

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NOTES.

CO-OPERATION v. CAPITALISM.

The Co-operators have been holding their Congress, and have given us figures which place beyond question the wonderful growth of the movement. The increase in the number of productive co-partnership societies is a particularly healthy sign, showing as it does a rather bolder spirit in attacking the problem of co-operative production in the direction of profit-sharing. But when all is said and done, there is little consolation for the workers in all this fine array of figures. It is true, indeed, the workers themselves are slow of thought and lacking in initiative where in many ways they might help co-operative effort; but not the less true is it that the narrow, selfish spirit of many prominent co-operators, and the disgusting instances of sweating in some societies, which have been made public, are responsible for chilling the enthusiasm that many might otherwise feel in helping. Even a paper so sympathetic as the *Daily News*, speaking of the dispute between the Shop Assistants' Union and the Ferndale Co-operative Stores, says, "The co-operators acted exactly as Lord Penrhyn acted, although several of their committee belonged to the South Wales Miners' Federation." It then points out the necessity of the employees in the co-operative societies combining to protect themselves as much as if they were working for a private capitalist. So profit-grabbing in a me of co-operation leads men to become the enemies of their own class! And this, too, when the least intelligence points clearly to the urgent need of an immediate union based on fundamental principles of economic solidarity between the trade unions and the co-operative societies. If ever a peaceful revolution is to be carried out in this country, it will only be accomplished on these lines.

THE TRADE UNION CONGRESS.

The Trade Union Congress of 1904 has opened in a dull, spiritless fashion, reflecting, as all advanced movements are now doing, the heavy depression with which reaction, with all its present horrors and abominations, has cursed mankind. Taking advantage also of that fatal trust in legal methods, which is so characteristic of the English unions, the hirelings of the ruling classes who pretend to dispense "justice" (for mercenary considerations) have practically destroyed their fighting power. The Briton's love of law and order has brought him to a pretty pass. All that he has struggled and suffered so much to gain has been swept away, as it were, by the stroke of a pen. It is a pretty trick of the reactionaries, who argue logically enough, "We need make no rows and riots. We have hoodwinked them with imperialist phantasies and protectionist red herrings; now is the time to strike with the legal weapons in which they have so much faith. It will be all our gain and their loss, and thirty years' work will have to be commenced over again." And this is the situation that faces them. They have denounced revolutionary methods and preferred the law. Now their loss, both moral and material, has come home to them. Will they awaken and rise to the situation? We see no signs.

A LESSON FOR ALL.

It may be said after all we have written on the Congress just concluded that criticism and complaint are the only notes sounded, and that if we Anarchists were not such a "negligible quantity," it would be worth while asking, as nothing that is done satisfies us, what have we to propose? But it is not our business to propose to other people the work they should do.

The case stands practically thus:—There are in England to-day two powerful and well-organised movements—the co-operators and the trade unionists. These are largely permeated with Socialist ideals, and are closely in touch with Socialist bodies. It may be fairly said that their common aim is to release humanity from the thrall of economic servitude, and in so far as they have remained true to the economic struggle they have gained much. But there exists in these movements, as in most movements, a spirit of compromise, which is a

great danger and a great weakness. Amongst the co-operators it takes the form of dividend hunting, a compromise with capitalist methods, leading inevitably to all the evils of sweating, bribery and corruption. In the trade unions it takes the form of parliamentary action, with all its natural consequences of political ambitions, trickeries and quarrels, which leave the workers' cause at the mercy of the dominant class, and breed apathy at the very time that enthusiasm is most needed. These are bare statements of fact, and are known to all. And against these things we Anarchists protest, and rightly so, since we have never ceased to point to the consequences which would result from such actions, for which we have been mercilessly denounced by all the moderate and respectable misleaders of the people. And what, after all, is our offence? Only this, that we have said, leave the State and its machinery alone: it will crush you. Return to the economic battlefield, where in the last resort all struggles are fought out. Organise for this struggle in a revolutionary spirit, and while this will surely be bringing the day of freedom nearer, your rulers will be forced into carrying out the reforms over which you are now wasting your time.

ECHOES OF THE SOCIALIST CONGRESS

To those who thought there would be no more splits or divisions in the Congress, after the Anarchists were expelled in '96, this year's gathering must have been a disappointment. The quarrel between Bebel and Jaurès is rather an unfortunate set-off against the theatrical expression of internationalism between Russia and Japan—by the delegates.

Splits are inevitable and even beneficial, but we have been told it is only mischief-making Anarchists who foment them. Well, you see even Social Democrats are human.

"We stand for freethought within Socialism." Thus the *Labour Leader* on the Congress. Shade of Macdonald, but isn't this rather steep? Why they don't even "stand for" free action, and naturally you must have freethought first. Really the way these people trifle with big phrases, that end in smoke, is astonishing. Why, even Bebel and Jaurès, who would excommunicate each other if they could, babble of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.

Still the Congress has done good in helping to force the logic of their position upon these infallible upholders of the "true" gospel of Socialism, who are rapidly evolving into an advanced Radical party. Once this matter is settled, the real significance of all these years of strife will become clear. The party of Radical Democracy, with its political reforms, will be definitely formed and the field for Revolutionary Socialism will be left clear—a consummation devoutly to be wished.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST CONGRESS—(Continued from page 33.)

France began to denounce the doctrines which led to capitalist and State oppression carried out under a Social Democratic Minister.

At that moment the Marxists understood what danger lay ahead for them and began to cry, "No Socialist can enter a bourgeois Ministry, no Socialist deputy can ally himself to another political party." Formulating this demand they did not think of the necessity of adapting themselves really to Socialist and revolutionary tactics. They only denounced as non-Socialists their comrades who understood that once being reformers they must do something for the sake of their convictions.

For an impartial observer there is no difference between Millerand, Jaurès, Bernstein, Turati, on the one side and Bebel, Kautsky, Ferri, and other would-be revolutionists on the other side. Reformists and political Radicals they all are; Socialism with its ideals was forgotten by them a long time ago. Notwithstanding the opposition of the self-styled revolutionists their own teachings will force them to follow the steps of Millerand and Jaurès. Once in Parliament, they must ally themselves with and help progressive democracy, otherwise they will be in the politically immoral condition of German Social Democrats, who, as Bebel said himself, are "sometimes with the Centre (Clericals and reactionists) against the Liberals."

No honest Liberal and Radical can ally himself even for a moment with Conservatives and Clericals, those hereditary enemies of Socialism and the political and intellectual emancipation of the working classes.

By what process of logic did Bebel and the German Social Democrats who in the Reichstag ally themselves with Conservatives, reproach Jaurès and his friends over their alliance with French Radicals; or their support of a Ministry which has freed national education from religious influence, which is struggling now with Clericalism and Papacy, and which is engaged in many thoroughly democratic reforms?

We could understand such a condemnation from a true Socialist and revolutionist, from an Anarchist point of view; but coming as it does from those who have abandoned Socialism and condemned revolutionary tactics, it is more than astonishing.

HERBERT SPENCER.

By P. KROPOTKIN.

III.

(Concluded from page 31).

If the Anarchist Communist can reproach Spencer in the way we stated in our last chapter—it must none the less be confessed that his concessions in sociology and ethics or social morals are far more advanced than any to be found in the state theories of society hitherto given us by writers of the middle-class.

The conclusion he draws from his learned analysis is that civilised societies are on the march towards complete enfranchisement from the theocratic, governmental and military survivals that exist among us to this day.

So far as it is possible to foresee the future by reading the past, human societies are progressing towards a condition in which the war-like and aggressive spirit, besides the military structure that characterises the infancy of societies, will give place to an industrial spirit and an organisation based on reciprocity and voluntary co-operation. As the old military institutions—royalty, the nobility, the army, and the State—tend to disappear, this new organisation will develop altruism and the Communistic spirit. Thus—and here Spencer is at one with the Anarchists—society will reach a stage at which each man will no longer aim at enslaving others, but will, on the contrary, contribute to universal welfare and independence, not under external pressure, but by virtue of established sociable habits.

Whilst the partisans of the State preach discipline, subordination, and government concentration, Spencer foresees the abolition of the State, the enfranchisement of the individual, and complete liberty. Also, though he remains a bourgeois and individualist himself, he does not stop at this stage of *individualism*, which is the ideal of our present middle classes; he foresees free co-operation (what we call the Communist free understanding) extending to all branches of human activity, and leading society to the perfect development of the human personality, with all its personal and individual characteristics—to what Spencer calls *INDIVIDUATION*.

* *

As land will be common property, and the whole revenue it gives belong to society and not to the individual, Spencer thinks (and here he is obviously mistaken) that there will be no need to touch private property in the domain of industry. Intelligent co-operation will be sufficient. But we must note that Spencer does not mean by co-operation the companies of proletarian shareholders that monopolise the name nowadays. He understands all combined efforts, whether to consume or to produce in common, without the idea of profits and exploitation by the shareholders that form the essence of existing co-operation. He sees what among Anarchists might be called the free atmosphere.

Spencer says that we shall have a society in which individual life will be developed as far as it is compatible with life in society, whilst social life will have no other aim than to offer the best sphere of development to the individual. Thus he would go the lengths of Communist free understanding, the aim of which should be the widest development of individual life—the highest degree of *individuation*, as he says, with the view of opposing it to *individualism*—including the most complete development of all of each man's faculties, and not the stupid bourgeois individualism that preaches each man for himself and "Devil take the hindmost."

Only, as a true bourgeois, Spencer would see at every corner the ghost of the sluggard who will not work at all if his existence is ensured by a Communistic society; everywhere he expected the loafer who shivers at the club door, waiting for the bourgeois whom he will help into his carriage and of whom he will demand a penny—the rascal! It is thus that on reading Spencer we often stop to rub our eyes, asking if it be really him, a man of such intelligence, that flings these rough words at the tramp, grumbles at having to give a copy of his writings to the free library of the British Museum, or at universal free education!

The narrow spirit of the middle classes reappears in this manner amidst the noblest conceptions; in this Spencer is strikingly akin to Fourier, another man of genius, having similar returns to the shop-keeping medium from his most brilliant flashes. Here it is well not to forget the Collectivists who have the same terror of the sluggard, veiled only by their palaver and formule.

* *

But if you modify Spencer's conclusions where he sins too obviously against what we learn by the reading of man; deepen his most middle-class observation to extract its true motive, which will always be the hatred of all impositions on the full and entire liberty of man, the desire to provoke a maximum of initiative, liberty and strong self-reliance; correct the system where Spencer has insufficiently considered the consequences of modern capitalism; seek for the real meaning of his respect for private property, which you will always find to be, as it was with Proudhon, hatred of the State and horror of the convent and barracks; make these corrections—it is the beauty and

advantage of all inductive and scientific research that its errors may be corrected without ruin of the whole—and you will find in Spencer a social system greatly resembling that of Communistic Anarchists.

If individualist Anarchists, such as Tucker, have accepted Spencer as he stands, with his bourgeois individualism for industrial property and his bourgeois "retribution," they have accepted the letter of the system rather than its spirit; for it would be enough to make the corrections authorised by Spencer himself, by introducing his voluntary co-operation and his attacks against private property in land, to come to our conclusions. This has been regretfully observed by many of the English papers in their obituary notices on Spencer.

* *

Up till now, in all social theories offered us by philosophers, the individual has been sacrificed to the State. Comte, after Kant and many others, fell into the same trap, and the German metaphysicians exaggerated further and were erocious in their worship of the State.

Spencer's system is the first that, on the one hand frees itself of all religious superstition and metaphysical superstructure, and, on the other, roundly and bravely states the sovereignty of the individual. The State is here no longer enthroned as the aim of human evolution in the German style. On the contrary, the individual is placed first, and it is given him to choose the kind of society he will have, and to determine how far he will give himself to this society.

Spencer teaches us that in man we have to fight, not his independence of character, but his too great submission to the common herd; whilst all religions and all social systems have, on the contrary, fought the independent spirit in their fear of making revolutionists.

Unfortunately, here again, Spencer does not remain faithful to himself. He has no sooner made a revolutionary statement than he hastens to soften it by offering a compromise. And once on this road he is obliged to proceed from one concession to another so that at the last he compromises the whole of his work.

After having given the insolent title "Man versus the State" to one part of his *Sociology*, he goes on to admit a negative and conservative part for the State. Thus the State must not employ public money to found a national library or universities: this is not its business. But it will see that individuals be protected from one another. It will protect the rights of proprietors. And since judges are necessary to explain the laws, and elected charlatans—I should call them representatives—for the making of laws, and universities for the teaching of the making of laws—the art of befooling and enslaving men,—thus by bits Spencer rebuilds the State in its worst functions, up to the prison and the perfected guillotine.

Here again, and more than ever, does his courage fail him. The *golden mean* holds him back. Perhaps he felt himself hindered from lack of knowledge, since, at the time when he sketched his philosophy, his field of knowledge was narrow, and he was hampered all his life by his ignorance of all but the English language.

Perhaps, again, his nature and education barred him from rising with the impulse that a philosopher of his immense intelligence should have had.

* *

In a few words, these are Spencer's distinctive characteristics.

To create a *synthetic* philosophy—which is an abridgment of human knowledge as a whole, and gives a material explanation to all national facts and to the intellectual life of man and the life of societies besides; this is an immense work, and Spencer has accomplished it.

But even while we recognise the service he has rendered, it would be false to let ourselves be carried away by our admiration into thinking that his work really contains the last results of the inductive method and science as applied to man.

The fundamental idea of the work is just, but in its applications it was often spoiled through various causes. Some of them have been stated; others, such as the use of the fallacious methods of analogies, and above all the exaggerated attention paid to the struggle for life amongst individuals of the same species, and the overlooking of mutual aid—also a principle of Nature—have been mentioned in our pamphlet on *Modern Science and Anarchism*, which is known to our readers.

We cannot accept all Spencer's conclusions. It is even necessary that we should correct the greater part of his *Sociology*, as a Russian writer, Mikailovsky, has done, on a very fundamental point—the theory of progress. In one place we must be more faithful to the scientific method, in another we must clear the ground of remaining prejudices, or press further the study of some group of phenomena.

But above and beyond all this, one fact of the greatest importance remains that has been proved by Spencer.

As soon as we try to construct a synthetic philosophy of the universe, including the life of societies, it is necessary to come, not only to the denial of a creative god governing the universe, not only to the denial of the immortal soul or any special vital force, but we come to overthrow that remaining idol—the State, the government of man over man. We come, so far as concerns the future of civilised societies, to foresee Anarchism.

In this sense it is that Herbert Spencer has immeasurably contributed to the Anarchist character of the philosophy of the century on which we have entered.

Translated from *Les Temps Nouveaux*.

JOHN BURNS'S "LONDON."

Like the co-operators, John Burns succumbs to the fascination of mere figures and statistics. He loves to talk of all the County Council has done, and give you the net result as far as possible in figures. The *Daily News* of August 31st opened its columns and gave him a great opportunity, and we are all enabled to see London through the spectacles of John Burns. Now we have no wish but to do justice to the progressive element in modern social and political life, of which Burns is a foremost representative. Nor do we quarrel with his optimism, which is healthy enough. But the picture he paints is not the great city as seen and understood by those who have held to the great principles of Socialism which Burns himself once preached, and it is clear that the more he deserts these, the more he comes under the spell of petty reforms, until the electrification of the tramways means for him a social revolution.

Now the true Socialist, one, we mean, who knows what Socialism really means and devotes himself to the work of helping forward the day when it shall be realised without compromising with a system which he knows to be rotten at the core,—such a one sees in a great city like London precisely what he sees in every civilised city in the world—the great mass of exploited workers living in poverty, or on the border-line of that dread world, and, on the other hand, the exploiting class revelling in more or less stupid luxury, serious only over the question of how long they can continue their rule and their lives of idleness and pleasure. All the evils arising from this class antagonism—the overcrowding, the slums, the sweating, the starvation, the vice, the crime—are seen on a larger and more aggravated scale in London than in any city in the world. For that reason it is the city most typical of the capitalist system, and while that system lasts no County Council will ever heal the social sores and ulcers which are its inevitable consequences, and which new streets, electric cars and steamboats on the Thames will leave untouched.

London, it is said, is a world in itself, and this may be true, but exclusive devotion to even such a problem as the "improvement" of this "world" has the fatal effect of narrowing one's view of the real problem for which suffering humanity is struggling for a solution. Hooliganism, we are told, is imaginary; physical deterioration is denied; prostitution is decreasing—such are the statements in face of all we know and see. This is more than optimistic: it is positively inaccurate. The truth is London improves, but the misery of its workers remains. What of the submerged tenth? What of the unemployed? They are not thought of because the mind is so obsessed with the tramways, the streets and the fire brigade.

But the absurd deification of this huge centralised devouring monster has another fatal consequence in so far as it diverts the public mind from really urgent questions which reformers must recognise are of vital and far-reaching importance. Take, for instance, the land question. May not this be regarded as of the deepest import? How many of London's problems will be solved when this question is settled? And how much nearer it would be towards a solution if all the efforts given to the parochial work of London by those who used to talk of the social revolution had been devoted to this really great and pressing question! And they would have lived perhaps to have seen some results.

However, we are protesting against this singing, the praises of petty reforms, not only because it is childish in itself—how childish those who know what Socialism really means can best judge—but far more because it plays into the hands of the reactionary and the apathetic.

The smug dwellers in villadom, reading the columns of the *Daily News*, will ask, What have the workers to complain of? They have John Burns on the County Council, and things are going very well for them. And the apathetic workman slumbers on muttering, "After all, things might be worse. These Socialists are fools, they want too much." And so the conservative spirit in the English people is encouraged.

Some years ago another eulogist of these petty alleviations of the workers' misery went into ecstasies over the boon of the penny fare. Said this good Christian, for he was a "right reverend" of some sort, "I have often stood and watched the crowd of pale anæmic girls, tired and worn, trudging home from their day's work, perhaps with a two miles' walk before them, unable to pay the threepenny fare then charged. Now they can travel from the city to their doors for a penny." Upon which William Morris remarked: "Did this good man never ask himself the question, 'Why are these poor girls pale and anæmic, tired and worn? Who is ruining their young lives in this way?'" Well, since those days the "crowd" has increased if anything, but it is still "pale and anæmic, tired and worn," for all the work of the County Council. Knowing this, and finding the capitalist still merrily exploiting and devastating the mass of the population of this "great" city, we find it rather wearisome, if not worse, to read "John Burns on London," and we say now, as he himself would have said eighteen years ago: Perish London if need be, but save humanity from capitalism.

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