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Process Under Socialism

Pëtr Kropotkin

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The Nineteenth Century, 1887, online source RevoltLib.com.

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As to parliamentary rule, and representative government altogether, ... It is becoming evident that it is merely stupid to elect a few men [sic], and to entrust them with the task of making laws on all possible subjects, of which subject most of them are utterly ignorant. It is becoming understood that Majority rule is as defective as any other kind of rule; and Humanity searches, and finds, new channels for resolving the pending questions. The Postal Union did not elect an international postal parliament in order to make laws for all postal organizations adherent to the Union. The railways of Europe did not elect an international railway parliament in order to regulate the running of the trains and the partition of the income of international traffic; and the Meteorological and Geological Societies of Europe did not elect either meteorological or geological parliaments to plan polar stations, or to establish a uniform subdivision of geological formations and uniform coloration of geological maps. They proceeded by means of agreement. To agree together they resorted to congresses; but while sending delegates to their congresses, they did not elect MPs *bons a tout faire*; they did not say to them, 'Vote about everything you like – we shall obey.' They put questions

and discussed them first themselves; then they sent delegates acquainted with the special question to be discussed at the congress, and they sent *delegates* – not rulers. Their delegates returned from the congress with no *laws* in their pockets, but with *proposals of agreements*. Such is the way assumed now (the very old way, too) for dealing with questions of public interest – not the way of law-making by means of a representative government. Representative government has accomplished its historical mission; it has given a mortal blow to Court-rule; and by its debates it has awakened public interest in public questions. But, to see in it the government of the future Socialist society, is to commit a gross error. Each economical phase of life implies its own political phase; and it is impossible to touch the very basis of the present economical life – private property – without a corresponding change in the very basis of the political organization. Life already shows in which direction the change will be made. Not in increasing the powers of the State, but in resorting to free organization and free federation in all those branches which are now considered as attributes of the State.