W. Tcherkesoff
Pages of Socialist History
Teachings and Acts of Social Democracy
1902

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and revolutionary elements rallied round the Federalist followers of Bakunin, and it was they who up to 1881 continued to summon the Congress of the International.

What glorious occasions does the name of Engels call up! What wonder that the majority of legalists, sprang from so noble an origin, made at Zürich compacts with the governments, assaulted the Independents, and proclaimed war.

PREFATORY NOTE.

The reader should be made aware that the chapters in this book were not written altogether consecutively. Most of them appeared serially in the London Freedom and in Les Temps Nouveaux, Paris.

When it was resolved to collect them in the present volume, the author made certain additions and emendations, among these Chapter XIV, which, beginning with the words, "Scarcely five years have passed since the publication of this work", might puzzle the reader, lacking this explanation The final chapter, the "Open Letter to Herr Liebknecht," appeared some years before the latter's death.

INTRODUCTION.

The enemies of the people, of their intellectual and social emancipation, are united in a supreme effort to impede, if not once for all to crush, the progress and development of the common welfare.

The Clergy with the Nobility, once almost annihilated by the populace during the great French Revolution, are again as numerous and powerful as before.

The sovereigns with their ministers, the plutocracy and the military, once so profoundly humiliated by the people during the revolutions of 1848, have once more recovered their self-confidence, their power and brutality.

What is the cause of this change? Why, at the beginning of the twentieth century, are the people more oppressed and humiliated than at the end of the eighteenth?

The answer is obviously clear and simple.

Because, during the last thirty years there has not been in existence any effective opposition to contend with this newly-arisen Despotism and Oppression.

Because, all the advanced and progressive political parties are in perpetual conflict among themselves, so that the governments, the

aristocracy, and the money-mongers have forgotten the salutary lessons of the great Revolution and of the year 1848.

Because, the political and social reformers of today, instead of urging resistance and revolution, are preaching to the people the doctrine of petty reforms and submission.

Because, every individual or popular revolutionary attempt is immediately discredited and censured by these same reformers, more fiercely even than was ever done before by any. moderate supporters of the existing order.

Such are the facts. And great is the responsibility attached to the disciples of these pacific reformers, among whom certainly the first place belongs to Marx and Engels, together with their followers, now so numerous thruout Europe. Their teachings and tactics, their legal — always legal — action, their violent hatred of revolutionists, have disheartened all honest and vigorous fighters.

It is time to examine the scientific, philosophical, and Socialistic doctrines of these teachers. Let us see whether their much-vaunted doctrines of non-activity, of a predestined Social Democracy founded on fatalism, have any historical and political justification.

London.

correspondent for Spain, wrote on July 25, 1872, to the Federal Council in Spain a monstrous letter, in which he demanded " a list of all members of the Alliance," and concluded with these words, " failing to receive a categorical and satisfactory answer by return of post, the General Council will feel itself compelled to denounce you publicly etc. ("Memoire de la federation Jurassienne' p. 250). Mr. Engels wrote this letter without asking the opinion of the other members of the Council When Jung and Marx heard of this ridiculous threat, the Council took no further notice of this famous letter.

I have not room to give the details of the intrigues carried on by Engels, Lafargue, Outine, and so many others against the Federalists, and especially against Bakunin and James Guillaume. Suffice it to say, that these intrigues brought about the schism in the International at the Congress of 1873, of evil memory. Little is generally known as to the method of summoning this Congress. But we know that Marx and Engels ordered Sorge, the delegate of the German section in New York, to bring as many blank credentials as possible. Sorge, in fact, brought a large number. They were distributed right and left to the partisans of Marx and Engels. But the crowning sham was that these gentlemen brought with them, as members of the Council General of the International, men who had no part whatever in any section, and even Maltman Barry, of the "Standard", well known as the intimate friend of Engels. With a majority thus composed, they banished. Bakunin, Guillaume, and with' them the Federations of Jura, Spain, Italy, Belgium, and England. Only the Germans and a few isolated groups from different countries remained with Marx, Engels and Barry.[3] All the active

[3] It is useful to mention that Jung had refused to be present at this Congress. "Marx and Engels urgently invited me to the Congress ... I refused ... the next day they called again ... Engels said to me : "You are the only man who can save the Association." I answered that I could go to The Hague only on condition that Marx and he should not go." We see that even among their own adherents, their influence was considered fatal.

according to his needs," with autonomous groups„ or by Marx and Engels with their "exclusive monopoly," " the cultivation of the land according to a general scheme," "the organization of a labor army, for agriculture especially?" And what has Mr. Engels to brag of? Why should humanity glorify an occasion of reaction? I can understand celebrating the anniversary of the publication of Robert Owen's manifesto in 1813, since he proclaimed Socialist ideas, humanitarian and broad in many ways. But to celebrate the date of the appearance of Mr, Engels on the political horizon, with his reactionary ideas and his too often unlucky tactics! ... So often productive of evil, if I may be pardoned for saying so.

Let us look at the other glorious date, 1873, when a plan of action was resolved upon which ended at Zürich in declarations in support of the present system of government, based upon capitalist exploitation and a militarism unknown in times past.

I must own I am rather surprised at the choice of the last Congress of the International. The real glory of Marx lies in the establishing and drawing up of the preamble and general statutes of the great Association; , that is to say, from 1864 to 1869, up to the Congress of Bale — the moment of Marx's highest power. As far as I know, the Congress of 1873 left bitter memories with Marx, who saw plainly that it meant a death sentence against his centralized State party. As a matter of fact, from that moment the party of Marx in the International had no further existence, and up to 1881 the congresses were held only by the federalist followers of Bakunin, known as Anarchists — But if Marx was not pleased with the result of the Congress of 1873, Engels, on the contrary, was triumphant, for he had intended for a long time back to provoke a division in the International. Steeped in the reactionary ideas we have quoted above, Engels took a vow of implacable hatred against the Bakuninists, especially the members of the Socialistic International Alliance. The Federalists were supreme in the International in Switzerland, Belgium, Spain, and Italy. Engels, as a member of the General Council of the International and as

I. TWO HISTORIC DATES. (Apropos of the Zürich Congress, 1893.)

The Socialist world has been mnch surprised by the attitude of the legalist majority at the recent so-called International Congress. But no one has raised the question, which it would be interesting to have answered: Was the action of the majority simply a blunder committed by the delegates, or was it a logical result of what has been preached for some years under the name of '^scientific Socialism," — a startling confirmation of the policy of legal tactics, of paltry reforms, and of purely parliamentarian combination? Luckily for us, Engels himself has given us the answer.

" It is just fifty years," said he, at the last sitting of the Congress, "since Marx and I first took up arms. It was in Paris, in 1843, in a review, entitled the "Franco-German Annals" ("Annales franco-allemandes "). Socialism at that time was represented only by small sects... This year marks yet another anniversary: that of the Socialist Congress, held twenty years ago, whereat we agreed upon the plan of campaign pursued up to the present without change and without swerving. It was in 1873.[1] ... We met together; we agreed upon a line of conduct; and you see where we are today... Let us

[1] The Congress of 1873 was of no importance whatever in the Socialist movement. But that of 1872 at The Hague, where Marx and Engels triumphed, was really of great historical importance. These gentlemen hunted Federalists from the International, and by this act killed the great Association. We shall therefore only speak of the 1872 Congress, which left its mark on history. Journal des Economistes, No. 9, p. 328, 1. 893.

remain firmly united in our general line of conduct, and victory will be ours.

This is very clear, is it not? It is evident that the Socialist world was surprised solely owing to its ignorance concerning the line of conduct; and that the chief of " scientific Socialism " glorifies himself precisely upon this position, foreseen fifty years ago and adhered to for thirty. Let us now see what new thing Marx and Engels introduced into the concept of Socialism, and what the character of the 1873 Congress was.

We know from history that in France at this time — from 1839 to 1848 — a wide revolutionary movement with a very Socialistic tendency was in existence. Socialist publications flooded the country. P. Leroux, V. Considerant, Proudhon, G. Sand, Auguste Comte, Lamennais, Barbes, and Blanqui, but especially Louis Blanc, preached Socialist doctrines, of various kinds, which have been well absorbed by the working masses. Louis Blanc's was the most popular. It was on account of his scheme for the 'Organization of Labor' that the people carried him in triumph as member of the provisional government, February 24, 1848. In his paper, 'Revue du Progrés' ("Review of Progress'), started in 1839, Blanc began to publish his system of State Socialism, a perfectly new doctrine at his period. He said that the social problem would be solved only by a democratic State: that the people should, above all, grasp the political power, and take legislative authority into their own hands; but that the political struggle should be subordinated to the economic and social emancipation of the people; the latter is the end, the former a simple means to it. Once the State is captured, all privileges will be abolished, as well as all capitalistic social organization; which will be replaced by an organization of national workshops, and by free loans to autonomous associations. Organized workshops, "loans to the poor" being set on foot, the State had no further right to meddle with the autonomous life of the associations, which should organize themselves upon the Communist basis, having for its motto: From each according to his abilities, to

each according to his needs. This is, in a few words, the doctrine of Louis Blanc. It is seen that the Social Democracy of today — ^but let Mr. Engels himself tell us what they preached at the same time as Blanc.

Just a few months before the revolution of February 24, 1848, the German Communist League published the famous "Communist Manifesto," drawn up by Marx and Engels. The practical methods recommended to the people were formulated as follows: —[2]

1. The expropriation of the land, and employment of rent for the expenses of the State.

2. A progressive and very heavy tax on incomes.

3. The abolition of the right of inheritance.

4. Confiscation of the wealth of emigrants and rebels.

5. Confiscation of credit in the hands of government by means of a State bank and an exclusive monopoly.

6. Centralization of the means of transport in the hands of the State.

7. Augmentation of the number of State factories and of the instruments of production; cultivation and improvement of the land according to a general plan (provision).

8. Work compulsory for all; the organization of a labor army, for agriculture especially.

With this Marx and Engels began their Socialistic and revolutionary.. propaganda. Let impartial persons judge by whom the wider humanitarian and social ideas were conceived, by Louis Blanc with his motto, "from each according to his abilities, to each

[2] I quote from the text of the first edition, 1847.