

revolutionary phraseology, had in reality before the war become a social reform movement. It is true that the social revolution formally was the goal of the socialist movement. But the term revolution had lost its significance; no practical value was attached to it. Political action had become the all-in-all. For the socialist movement the practical achievement was its real aim. In theory they were all Marxists; in practice they were really Bernsteinians. It is a curious fact that, while Bernstein has lost his theoretical fight against the orthodox Marxists, he none the less has won over to his side every socialist party in Europe, and even those who have never ceased calling him traitor. Plechanoff, Kautsky, Mehring and others fought against Bernstein's philosophic heresies only, but modern socialism, in the form given it by Marx and Engels, is not a philosophy in the usual sense, i.e., it is not one of those so-called systems thought out by a philosopher in his neatly furnished cabinet, without any relations to real life and the struggles that are going on beyond his cabinet. It has nothing to do with ultimate eternal truths for which philosophy is searching. "We have no ready made truths," declared Marx and Engels at the beginning of their career; "we bring no dogmas; we come to interpret what is going on around us"—and what was going on around them? A terrible class struggle, a war for life or death between the upholders of the regime and those bent upon destroying it. They foresaw that it could end in no compromise and could not be fought with dapper hands or with polite, gentlemanly speeches in parliament. In a letter to his American friend, Wedemeyer, Marx very clearly expressed what he thought to be his most important contribution to socialist tactics. In that letter he said:

As far as I am concerned, I cannot claim to have discovered the existence of classes in modern society, or their strife against one another. Middle-class historians long ago described the evolution of the class struggle, and political economists showed the economic physiology of the classes. I have added as a new contribution the following propositions: (1) that the existence of classes is bound up with certain phases of material production; (2) that the class struggle leads necessarily to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) that this dictatorship is but the transition to the abolition of all classes and to the creation of a society of equals.

Marx, of course, knew very well that the dictatorship of the proletariat could not come about as a sudden act, as the result of a conspiracy, of a revolutionary minority. In the International Workingmen's Association (The First Internationale) Marx had to fight hard against the Blancists who held the above views; his hardest fight, however, was against the tactical views of Bakounine. As is well known, Bakounine was at first a very intimate friend of Marx, even a Marxist in a certain sense. He was the first to translate the Communist Manifesto into Russian. The fight between these two giants of the first internationale was entirely on questions of tactics; later, in the course of the fight, the differences in their respective philosophies came to light. Bakounine believed that the social revolution could take place at any time. The only thing needed is a small but determined revolutionary minority that should get hold of the state through an armed uprising, destroy it and free the people. Once they are free, they will organize their social life on an anarchistic basis. Bakounine looked with disfavor on all the activities of the labor movement that aimed at the betterment of the conditions of the working class under capitalism. Trade unions fighting for higher wages and less hours, political socialists fighting for political and social reforms, he considered as either fakirs or fools, and regarded their activities as harmful to the social revolution. First of all, he reasoned, they spend their time on worthless things. The condition of the working class cannot be bettered under capitalism, anyway, but what is more important is that this reform activity may instill the hope into the hearts and souls of the workers that the revolution can be avoided, that we can, to use a modern expression, "gradually grow into socialism."

Marx and Engels could not agree to this view on

the social revolution; this was just the opposite to the tactical consequences of their entire philosophy. Marx knew that revolutions cannot be made at will. Marx knew that "no social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed; and new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the works of the old society." But he knew, moreover, that the "will to revolution," the class consciousness necessary for the accomplishment of the revolution, is not something that can be created by books and speeches. The class struggle that persistently goes on in daily life teaches socialism to the workers. The class struggle goes on, whether we recognize it or not; the workers will fight for any kind of relief they can get in their daily life, even if we advise them against it.

The economic conditions have in the first place transformed the mass of a country into wage-workers. The domination of capital has created for this mass of people a common situation with common interest. Thus this mass is already a class as opposed to capital, but not yet united in its purpose. In the struggle . . . this mass unites and it is constituted as a class for itself. The interests which it defends are the interests of its class. But the struggle between class and class is a political struggle. (Misery of Philosophy, Eng., p. 189.)

Recognizing this, Marx and Engels knew that the work and struggles of the trade unions are not futile tasks, but are steps in the evolution of the class consciousness of the workers. Moreover, they recognized that everything gained by the workers on the economic or political field is a positive gain—positive in the sense that it gives to the workers a more favorable position in their fight against capitalism. "The undying achievement of Marx," says Clara Zetkin, who is now the most prominent leader of German communism, "is the fact that he has thrown a firm bridge between socialism and labor movement. Thanks to the Marxian conception of history, we conceived the inner tie between reform and revolution in history . . . he (Marx) showed us that reform and revolution are not two different methods of the class struggle . . . but two different phases of historical development that are organically united." Every struggle for every reform is a step on our way to socialism. Even the super-revolutionist, Anton Paneok, who left the Comintern because the latter was not revolutionary enough for him, has this to say on the relations between reform and revolution: "A reform, achieved through a struggle, any achieved law in fact that is important for the workers, is for the proletariat a gain of power." Rosa Luxemburg, who is rapidly becoming the saint of the communist movement, has expressed the view of every Marxist on reform and revolution, in the following words:

Can social-democracy be against social reforms? Of course not. And can we place our ultimate aim, the social revolution, in opposition to social reform? Certainly not. The practical struggle for social reforms, for democratic institutions—a struggle that aims to ameliorate the life of the working class, on the basis of the existing order, such a struggle is for social democracy the only way of the proletarian class struggle, for the conquest of political power and the abolition of wage slavery. (See Reform and Revolution—her reply to Bernstein.)

I could fill a book with quotations to show that this is the view of every Marxist in Europe, but this would be useless and would take up too much of my limited space. I will therefore quote only one more authority, one whom I hope no one will accuse of reformism. I mean Lenin. The Russian anarchists have criticised severely the Russian social democrats, who have always held the view that the Russian workers would have to first fight together with the other classes for a democratic republic and various other social reforms. The anarchists claimed that with the social democrats reforms are of primary and revolution of secondary importance. To this Lenin replied in his book, "Chto Delat (What Is To Be Done, p. 46):

We are not delaying (the Revolution); we only take the first step toward it, by the only road; namely, by the road of the democratic republic. Whoever wants to go to socialism by any other road than political democracy must

arrive at, in the economic and political sense, absurd and reactionary conclusions.

And in another book of his, "Dvie Taktyki" (Two Tactics, p. 89), he plainly says:

Revolutionary social democracy includes in its activities the fight for reforms; this fight is for it a part of the struggle for freedom and socialism.

Marx and Engels had also an entirely different view of the state than Bakounine. According to Bakounine, two states must be destroyed before anything can be done; according to Marx and Engels, the working class

must first acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself as the nation (Communist Manifesto, p. 38.) The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest by degrees all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state—that is, of the proletariat organized as the ruling class. (Com. Man., p. 41.) We see then, instead of destroying the state, the workers must use it to further their ends.

But more than anything else, Marx and Engels opposed the Blancist-Bakouninist idea that the revolution could be accomplished by an armed uprising of a minority. In what is called Engels' "last political testament," his preface to Marx's "War in France," published by the Labor News Co., under the title "The Revolutionary Act," he says that "with the successful utilization of the general franchise, an entirely new method of the proletarian struggle had come into being and had quickly been built up. . . . The rebellion of the old style, the street fight behind barricades, which up to 1848 had prevailed, has become antiquated." He even goes on to warn his readers that "the ruling classes, by some means or another, would get us where the rifle pops and the saber slashes." He also teaches us that "the time is past when revolutions can be carried through by small minorities at the head of unconscious masses."

We are now in a position to make a resume of the Marxian conception of the social revolution:

- (1) The social revolution cannot be made at will.
- (2) The social revolution comes as the culminating point of a long-drawn-out class struggle.
- (3) This class struggle is not created by class consciousness; on the other hand, class consciousness is created by the class struggle.
- (4) The workers must continually fight for their daily demands; anything gained in this fight, whether by political and legislative reforms does not matter, strengthens the workers in their fight against capitalism.
- (5) Socialism cannot be established before capitalism has reached the zenith of its development.
- (6) The social revolution will be the mass action of the majority of the workers and cannot be the act of a conspiracy by a revolutionary minority.
- (7) The first act in the social revolution is the conquest of political power, the inauguration of the proletarian dictatorship, although this dictatorship is nothing else than the political rule of the working class, i.e., the majority of the population.

(To be continued)

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