

# Revolutions: Political and Social

BY J. HARRINGTON

## Article 6.

GERMANY was not a hermit empire such as Austria was in 1848. Already she had taken her place in the front of the intellectual trek which marked this period in Western Europe. Von Baer had published his work on embryology; Rathke and Bischoff had followed his lead, while chemistry and botany were also being wrought into a scientific system, from which the rest of the world was soon to seek assistance.

The Paris revolution had, therefore, as Marx points out, a different effect on Germany than on Austria. In the first place it supplanted the very form of government which the German bourgeoisie aspired to. In the second, its full significance was realized from the first,—the voice of the masses was heard at first hand, and not relayed by a notorious liar. Already the King had made several concessions in regard to press and speech before the Vienna revolution, and organizations for the relief of the needy were active, so that the intense misery prevalent in Vienna was not evident in Berlin.

In Vienna the revolution had appeared with the students movement. In Germany the working masses took the initiative. And in order that this movement might be kept in hand, the bourgeois assemblies undertook to present the various petitions which were constantly being drawn up. These petitions had more vigor and independence than the Austrian, but they too were merely seeking very simple remedies and did not betray any revolutionary spirit.

The day on which Metternich was smuggled out of Vienna in a basket of dirty linen, the King of Prussia rejected one of these humble demands. And the crowd which gathered to hear the news was fired upon; barricades were immediately thrown up and manned by the workers, on the next day, March 14, came news of the Vienna success, and simultaneously the uprising of the eastern provinces. The King now consented to the demands lately made, but revolutionary appetites increase with success, and what might satisfy one day merely aggravates the next. New petitions were presented to the King on the 18th, and he requested the deputies to return to their homes. An account of the many concessions which had already been made was being read to the crowd, when, without warning, they were fired on again. So that at the very moment the bourgeoisie were congratulating the King and themselves upon the happy conclusion of a five days riot, the very thing they dreaded and sought by all means to avoid, happened. After the first shots the crowd dispersed, but at once commenced to erect the well-known barricades; the countryside sent reinforcements and on the 19th the masses were ready for battle, when again the issue was settled by a regiment which had been brought in over night refusing to fire on the people.

The King surrendered, dismissed the ministry, conceded everything, stood abject and bareheaded while the funeral of the barricade dead passed, and otherwise acted like a powerful potentate must act when his power is gone. Meanwhile, outside the great centre the revolution continued; the Rhine provinces, Bohemia, Bavaria, Saxony, all had maintained a vigorous agitation for reforms, and the Paris revolution, followed quickly by Vienna and Berlin, carried them far beyond even their wildest demands, which were largely for a united Germany. In Saxony the Paris affair called forth immediate action. As soon as the news arrived at Liepzig the Town Council was called, to anticipate the "anarchist element" of course, and the usual petition was drawn up: Freedom of speech and press, and a German Elective Assembly. This was dispatched to Dresden on March 1st, three days after Louis Philippe arrived in England; proclamations called the

citizens to assemble on the 3rd to hear the deputies' report.

Robert Blum, a Liepzig bookseller, who had taken a prominent part in the agitation which had arisen over the Jesuits, the censorship, and the dismissal of some university professors and some priests a few years previous, and who had suffered imprisonment at that time, now became the leader of the Saxony movement. The deputies commenced their report by describing the kindly attitude of the King, when the crowd which had collected in the narrow streets clamored for Blum. Upon his appearance the crowd became more orderly; he was just as unwilling as the other speakers to inform them bluntly of the failure they had to report. The uproar broke out once more and high above all other cries, ultimately drowning out all others arose the cry: "The answer!" By this time, however, the answer was well understood, and Blum succeeded in turning the anger of the crowd into enthusiasm, which determined to press the demands still further. The immediate dismissal of the ministry, the immediate calling together of the German Assembly. Could an enraged people possibly ask less?

The pressure being maintained, the King finally appeared to yield, when on March 11th a strong force of soldiery appeared in Liepzig, to maintain order. Blum replied to the demands made upon the Town Council that bullets could kill men but were powerless against ideas, which really ruled the world.

But events were travelling fast, and on the fatal 13th the King thought enough evil was abroad and granted all Saxony had demanded. Everyone awaited the inevitable reaction, when the events in Vienna and Berlin carried these results into safe channels and urged their authors to still more daring demands.

Let us return then, to the revolution at large, leaving the other small centres for a brief mention in the general reaction.

The nice quiet little revolution which the bourgeoisie had planned, wherein the King was to be taken to the edge of the abyss, and they were to request him to fall down and worship them, got out of hand, and they found themselves face to face with the armed masses. So Marx tells us that "The king chafed in the highest degree after the revolution of the 18th March very soon found out that he was quite as necessary to these 'liberal' ministers as they were to him." The dread of the armed masses therefor threw all classes above the workers into one camp. The workers on the other hand had not yet matured that distinct class concept which would enable them to press further demands than those which would give them scope and freedom to move. Under the restriction of the pre-revolutionary days they found every desire and demand cribbed by the governmental forms. The organizations they belonged to were forbidden to carry on projects which promised betterment of their condition; sentiments expressed by tongue or pen arising from the irritations caused by their condition in life were promptly visited by prosecution and imprisonment; laws were made and enforced contrary to what they had been taught to expect, and they naturally conceived the idea that if all these things were changed they would experience joys not promised at their birth.

Under these circumstances compromise became easy, when this tremendous revolutionary movement, which involved every country in Europe except Britain and Russia, had now to put into actual practice the precepts of their faith.

We have not thought it necessary to include movements of subjected nationalities such as Bohemia and Italy, or those which merely ended in riots such as England, but these were to play an important part as we suggested above in the reaction

which followed. The Feudal tenure was at an end, and they were now called upon to institute a new method wherein their material needs could be advanced. Having won in the last court of appeal the right to order any form of government they desired, it would appear a simple matter to proceed to that end. Such a belief is still prevalent in spite of history, and we confess to the weakness ourselves until Russia once more emphasized it so emphatically; the fact is that during revolutionary periods the overthrow of an old form of government is a simple matter compared to the establishing of a new one.

When the Frankfort Assembly met on March 31st, we see an apparently solid mass. Flags flying, bands playing, crowds applauding. But immediately the deliberations commenced, the fur commenced to fly. They were united in the determination that the old order had to go. They were just as divided on what the new order had to be. The representatives chosen to attend this assembly were not the people who had conquered the right to have an Assembly. They were, moreover, haunted by the fear that an armed force might appear at any time and put an end to their deliberations. They did not have the courage or energy to provide an armed force for their own defence, a matter under the circumstances requiring little of either, except, as Marx points out, "This assembly of old women, was, from the first day of its existence more frightened of the least popular movement than of all the reactionary plots of all the German Governments put together."

They were dammed if they did:

They were dammed if they didn't.

But we had better leave that till another time.

## PLATFORM

### Socialist Party of Canada

We, the Socialist Party of Canada affirm our allegiance to, and support of the principles and programme of the revolutionary working class.

Labor, applied to natural resources, produces all wealth. The present economic system is based upon capitalist ownership of the means of production, consequently, all the products of labor belong to the capitalist class. The capitalist is, therefore, master; the worker a slave.

So long as the capitalist class remains in possession of the reins of government all the powers of the State will be used to protect and defend its property rights in the means of wealth production and its control of the product of labor.

The capitalist system gives to the capitalist an ever-swelling stream of profits, and to the worker, an ever increasing measure of misery and degradation.

The interest of the working class lies in setting itself free from capitalist exploitation by the abolition of the wage system, under which this exploitation, at the point of production, is cloaked. To accomplish this necessitates the transformation of capitalist property in the means of wealth production into socially controlled economic forces.

The irrepressible conflict of interest between the capitalist and the worker necessarily expresses itself as a struggle for political supremacy. This is the Class Struggle.

Therefore we call upon all workers to organize under the banner of the Socialist Party of Canada, with the object of conquering the political powers for the purpose of setting up and enforcing the economic programme of the working class, as follows:

- 1—The transformation, as rapidly as possible, of capitalist property in the means of wealth production (natural resources, factories, mills, railroads, etc.) into collective means of production.
- 2—The organization and management of industry by the working class.
- 3—The establishment, as speedily as possible, of production for use instead of production for profit.