

Revolutions, Social and Political

By J. Harrington

ARTICLE TWENTY.

THE POSITION of Prussia, we have seen, was precarious and the ambitions of her rulers kind if unproportionate. The world still looked upon Bismarck as somewhat of a fool (The fathers of the Socialist movement, more charitable, remarked that he was a reckless gambler). Prussia's ambition was a joke, where it was not regarded as fortunate folly, from which material advantages might in the future accrue. The third Napoleon fondly hoped and rather feebly maneuvered to that end. Bismarck realized that the neutrality of France and the active co-operation of Italy were of vital importance. The negotiations with Italy were carried out on both sides with the utmost suspicions. But by March, 1866, everything was fixed up.

Bismarck was much exercised to have all the elements of his diplomacy synchronize. Italy realized she must be assured of action once the treaty was signed. Bismarck was not sure he could drag Prussia into a war with the rest of German-speaking Europe. Having to concede to Italy that action within three months must ensue, failing which the treaty was void, his task was to goad Austria into war.

The terms upon which they jointly occupied the new Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein, provided ample opportunity for this, and were briefly: Prussia controlled Schleswig, Austria Holstein. The question of final settlement was pushed forward. Austria was quite as anxious as Prussia for a pretext upon which she could manifest her power, especially in view of Prussia's evident reluctance to approach extreme action. Not to make too long a story of matters, which are merely the trappings and suits of national conflicts, the garb in which they were arrayed, the moral image of the material fact, Austria very gracefully allowed the widest latitude of popular expression, and even decided to permit the Assembly of the Duchies to decide the issue. The people were permitted to assemble and express open and strong condemnation of Prussia, and also cheer for the Pretender.

Besides assembling her forces Austria offered to Austria with trafficking with revolution. Franz Joseph refused to answer, and referred the matter to the federal diet, where she was all powerful. Bismarck used this as undoubted evidence that the monster successfully smothered in 1848 was to be again conjured forth, and Prussia from monarch to pauper commenced to take interest. Bismarck now only awaited the time. A delay arose after a disarmament agitation, in the midst of which Austria mobilized troops in Venetia, having been informed by Napoleon of the treaty between Italy and Prussia.

Beside assembling her forces Austria offered to Italy, in return for her help against Prussia, the contentious territory of Venetia. Napoleon, being the medium through which this precious piece of moral uprightness was conducted, was also compelled to return Italy's negative. It seems though Italy had some objection to going back on her word. Napoleon now offered Bismarck an army of three hundred thousand for a Rhinish province. Bismarck suggested Switzerland or Belgium as being more likely to agree with French digestion, similarity of lingo, tradition, etc.

An appreciation of your neighbor's difficulties being one of a statesman's virtues, Russia, England and France now the war loomed, proffered their good offices. Austria agreed to attend, but to Bismarck's unalloyed delight imposed conditions which no country could accept with honor, and called the Holstein Assembly to convene and decide its own fate.

Any sane Prussian could now estimate the character of Austria. Bismarck could now proceed, with the assurance that at least he had the support of the ruling class. He ordered the Prussian army in Schleswig to invade Holstein. Austria obtained power from the Federal Diet to mobilize the German states. And after a few more such moves,

which we must pass over, war finally broke out. Hanover, Saxony and Hesse Cassel were immediately overwhelmed and within six weeks Austria was completely defeated.

Bismarck, Roon and Moltke sat in Berlin directing operations, for the first time by telegraph. The Prussian army was provided with every means required; the Allies were badly equipped, and lead. The net result of this little holiday adventure was the North German Federation: Hanover, Schleswig-Holstein and Hesse Cassel being joined to Prussia. A small beginning to a great end.

While not within the scope of its author's vision, this Federation placed the navigable portions of all the rivers in Germany that flowed north in control of Prussia; it also brought within scope of the Prussian law all the medieval restrictions peculiar to the guilds, which flourished in full force in many parts of Germany. Although the Communist Manifesto was almost twenty years old, the demands of the German wage slave expressed no wish to shed its chains, but loudly demanded release from guild tyranny. Factories were offering higher wages than guild masters, but the law forbade them to hire guild trained craftsmen. Guild masters, too, were alone legally competent to train journeymen. While Prussia had less of these encumbrances on her statute-books, the states incorporated by her victories brought them to her door. By 1869 when Liebknecht and Bebel formed the Social-Democratic Labor Party, the old restrictions had just departed. It will now be our task to review this part of the Social Revolution.

Bismarck, finding his path to the "legal" furthering of his policy encumbered by the Progressists, seeking a means to curb their power, conceived the idea of enlisting that group of intellectual giants who had thrown in their lot with labor. As early as 1860 he had offered both Liebknecht and Marx substantial bribes, in the form of editorships of government papers, with full freedom to advocate Socialism to its last dire consequence on him and his tribe. He, of course, calculating to crush this movement when it had crushed his immediate foe. After the manner of the horticulturists who introduce a parasite to prey on the parasites which prey on their product. And, as often occurs in the field of nature, this stratagem of the great statesman almost proved his undoing. While unable to enlist either Marx or Liebknecht, he did secure the support of Lasalle and Schweitzer, who actively supported Bismarck.

They further supported the North German Federation, which was opposed by Bebel and Liebknecht.

Lasalle was killed in a duel in 1864 and at that time the movement he had fathered, the German Working Men's Union, numbered some 4,000 odd. Not a very formidable body and, in the main, without political vantage. But there were giants on earth in those days and the work of Marx, Engels, Liebknecht, Bebel, Lasalle, to mention but a few, proceeded with a vigor and integrity not seen until the late Russian revolution. In order to fully realize the effect of these labors and turn them against the roaring and obstreperous capitalist class, and incidentally calm the resentment against his outrageous policy, Bismarck brought in his universal franchise scheme. To quote his own words: "Looking to the necessity, in a fight against an overwhelming foreign power, of being able, in extreme need, to use even revolutionary means, I had had no hesitation whatever in throwing into the frying pan by means of a circular dispatch of June 10th, 1866, the most powerful ingredient known at that time to liberty-mongers, namely universal suffrage, so as to frighten foreign monarchies from trying to stick a finger into our national omelette. I never doubted," he naively confessed, "that the German people would be strong and clever enough to free themselves from the existing suffrage as soon as they realized that it was a harmful institution." The Socialists were not to

be counted among those who worshipped this "most powerful ingredient," and scored "this worship of universal and direct franchise," as Liebknecht put it vigorously. In another comment on universal suffrage, Bismarck is rather humorous: "I still hold that the principle is a just one, not only in theory but also in practice, provided always that voting be not secret, for secrecy is a quality that is incompatible with the best characteristics of German blood." (Emphasis ours.)

This will be our excuse for not following him further into the philosophy of voting and its effect on the nation. But some of his remarks were to be substantiated in, to him, an alarming manner. At the next election the Social-Democrats polled over one hundred thousand votes. The Lassalleans and the Eisenachers, after years of bitter strife, came together and, wonderful to relate, in spite of the dictum of some of the homo-revolutionists, that the social revolution is best furthered by strife among the workers, the result appeared in 1874 with over three hundred thousand, and in 1877 almost half a million. Then Bismarck saw the error of his ways and the Socialist laws were enacted. This was unable to stem the tide, however, and after a slight set back, 1884 saw the political barometer at over half a million, and so on until some three million votes were recorded. And while the forces of capitalism rendered, in 1914, this hopeful gathering of the clans useless to the revolution, it will serve to illustrate the change which had come over the German workingclass. That peculiar human trait which causes men to feverishly struggle for a worthy object, and yet on the eve of victory, surrender to an already defeated enemy, can be understood if we remember the paralysis-producing power of habit.

A Bismarck, held in contempt by the majority of the nation, could nevertheless drag them with him in all his mad adventures, while head of the nation. When finally removed from that post none were so poor as "to do him reverence." The entire country was opposed to him, and an attempt on his life, frustrated by his quick wit and vigor, was heralded everywhere with gladness. After the victory he was careful to remove this animosity as far as possible.

The tendency of all conquerors to bleed the conquered he checked at once. He had only commenced his task of unifying Germany, and realized fully the need of reconciling, not only the annexed provinces, but Austria and the Prussian people as well. So in the midst of the enthusiasm which greeted his victorious return, he frankly confessed the illegal methods by which he had proceeded and asked for an Act of Indemnity. Many of the men who were his instruments were quietly retired, and men more in line with his new policy appointed in their place. The Progressive Party died, the National Liberal Party took its place, and the immediate prosperity which followed rendered the return to these "illegal" practices unnecessary. Austria was treated with the utmost consideration. And as these measures were carried through by Bismarck against the entire land-owning class, his own class, the Junkers and the king himself, our capitalists simply walked into power almost before they realized what they were doing. Few writers on Germany have failed to note the greatly superior institutions of learning which have for centuries been her boast. Wells, in his first edition of the "Outline," is quite caustic, but had reason to remove the sting in his second, when referring to British and German educational methods and results. Two industries above all others, and directly influencing all others, require exact knowledge in all the higher spheres of learning—foreign languages, general science and mathematics—these are chemistry and electricity.

In 1852 the immense deposits of potash were discovered and methods were being found to release the sulphur potassium and chlorides from coal and

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