

frightful consequences of the alliance with Germany. The new government has arrested a great number of adherents of the Radoslavof cabinet, including former ministers and delegates to Parliament, and men prominent in every sphere of public life. They are to be brought to judgment for their acts. Every indication points to the present cabinet's following obediently in the path traced by the Supreme Council.

But in the hearts of the rank and file of the nation, this so-called peace has engendered a bitterness that has alienated all sympathy for the Entente. Weary of political adventure, all the people want is to begin the restoration of their economic prosperity,

independent of encroaching neighbors. The people count upon the aid of those countries who know the needs of the Bulgarian market. Their call for commercial friendships may be silenced for a period, but it will ultimately be heard.

The great future task of Bulgarian foreign policy will be to secure by every peaceful means the revision of the Peace Treaty. The public men now in power will not be able to resist permanently the great pressure welling up from below, which is constituting a community of interest with Germany. The form in which this interest will be incarnated is not yet revealed to our vision. It lies in the mist of that far greater problem, the greatest problem of present Europe — Russia.

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REVOLUTIONS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

BY EDUARD BERNSTEIN

I HAVE been moved by Gustav Mayer's fine biography of Engels to reread some of the letters which I received from him in the course of a correspondence extending through many years. In one of them I chanced upon a paragraph that seems appropriate to-day. It is in a letter written in July, 1883:

'The Germans constantly commit the great error of imagining that revolutions can be made over night. In reality they are merely an acceleration of popular movements normally occupying several years. Any revolution made over night either sweeps away a reactionary system that was hopeless from the first, as in 1830, or

leads to a result directly opposite that which is sought, as in 1848.'

How true these trite but sensible words are proving themselves to be! How irrefutable is the demonstration of their validity that we are receiving from countries where the most diverse conditions prevail; whose experiences prove that even revolutions are organic processes obeying definite laws of evolution! They may be accelerated, indeed, but they cannot be arbitrarily and prematurely hastened without producing the very opposite effect from that desired. Wherever the common people have lost sight of this truth, a wave of reaction has undone their work. This reaction may take

the form of a brutal reign of terror instituted by the old masters of society, or of a reign of anarchy affecting the social organism like a malignant disease and producing universal misery.

My readers will recall the familiar story of Nicholas I of Russia, who, when railways were proposed in his country and his royal advisers discussed the route to be taken between the two capitals, seized a ruler and drawing a straight line from one city to the other said sharply: 'That is the shortest route. Build it there.' Consequently, the roadbed crosses miles of difficult morass and then runs through stony and broken country, requiring a multitude of bridges and embankments. Its cost was several times greater than that of a route wisely accommodated to the topography. The history of absolute despots is filled with instances of similar arbitrary acts, which have resulted in a frightful sacrifice of human labor and human life. Revolutions and revolutionist parties who get the mad idea that they can arbitrarily turn the world in any direction they desire, and override economic law and human nature, are pursuing precisely the same policy as these despots. Many of the dictatorial commands with which Lenin, Trotzky, and their associates began their rule involuntarily remind one of that capricious order of their fellow countryman, Nicholas I. They are inspired by the same spirit, and how much human happiness that has cost!

Of course, I would not suggest that we pursue a passive, *laissez-faire* policy, or timidly refrain from thoroughgoing measures. The Social Democracy, as the party of social reform, should bear in mind the beautiful verses of Sallet:

You tell us that hot-headed youth
Presses too ardently toward its dreams of freedom,
Forgetting history's lesson, that only patience
wins:
Yet does not history stop when effort ceases?

On the other hand, we must not confound mere readiness to undertake things with real accomplishment, nor assume that a law must seem radical in order to have a radical effect.

Our Independent Socialists rival the Communists in their criticism of the Shop Committee Law presented by the majority coalition to the National Assembly. Now, I do not dispute the fact that the law has defects from the labor point of view. It is like every project of a coalition, a compromise. But this does not mean that it is worthless. If the Majority Socialists have made concessions to the bourgeoisie on several points, the latter have also made concessions to the Socialists. Indeed, the whole law, though it does not seem radical, is a significant concession by the middle classes to the Socialist conception of justice, and to that extent is a part of the social revolution. It carries the germ of a fruitful social development, and must be endorsed by every Socialist who is not more loyal to his party than to his social conscience.

What should decide a Socialist to endorse or reject a measure is: Does a law or regulation run counter to the purposes for which Social Democracy is striving, or does it involve conditions so unfavorable to our purposes as to interfere with their achievement? In that case the measure should be rejected. Or will the proposal have no effect upon social evolution? Is it merely a string of hollow phrases? In that case, we may approve or reject it, according to the expediency of the occasion. But if such a proposal contains the germ of future development,

the interests of the laboring class compel us to support it, although it may not immediately satisfy all the popular demands of the working people.

The Shop Committee Law, approved by the Majority Socialists, belongs to the last of these three groups.

Those of our Independent Socialists who have not lost all sense of personal responsibility would doubtless ponder well whether they could conscientiously reject the proposed law if its enactment or defeat depended upon their votes. Since their votes are not necessary, they are in the pleasant position of being able to disapprove the measure with a gesture of Catonic virtue, because it does not agree in every detail with their demands. But the advantage of this position is of very doubtful value. It is a temptation to embark upon a policy likely to end in the complete demoralization of their Socialist conscience.

In one of my last conversations with our deceased leader, August Bebel, our talk turned upon the different votes given by our party at a period when the number of Socialist representatives in the Reichstag was very small. Bebel said, energetically: 'Factious opposition is a thing of the past. We shall avoid repeating the error in the future.' He had a very high conception of the increasing responsibility of the party.

The revolution has added immeasurably to that responsibility. Upon the shoulders of the Social Democracy rests primarily the safety of the republic — the task of so establishing it in the hearts of the people that reaction will be impossible. In view of Germany's unhappy international situation and its economic distress, this can be accomplished only by a wise policy of reform proceeding toward direct socialization in every field where this

appears practicable and desirable, but doing this in such a way as to avoid the premature destruction or disturbance of the bourgeois business organization. A policy which disregards the latter command does harm to the working people at the same time that it injures the general economic organism. Instead of accelerating the revolution, as the champions of a headlong policy assert, premature measures only prolong the revolution — as Engels intimated in the paragraph I quoted at the beginning of this article — and invite reaction.

Engels cited the French Revolution of 1848 in support of his statement. I had completely forgotten his letter when, in the middle nineties, I arrived independently at the same conclusion as a result of a thorough study of that revolution. One of the results of that study was a little book upon the premises of Socialism, and particularly the chapter of that book where I discuss the relation of Blanc's theories to those of Marx. Anyone who so desires, has an excellent opportunity to test the justice of my conclusions at that time, by comparing them with recent occurrences in Russia and Hungary.

Returning to the question of the Shop Committee Law, the people who maintain that the Majority Socialist proposal is a hollow pretense of no practical advantage for the workers, merely demonstrate by their position that they are not well grounded in Socialist theory. A working class that would derive no advantage from obtaining objects incorporated in that law, for which the Social Democracy has fought energetically for years, would thereby demonstrate its incapacity to profit by a more radical enactment.

[*Arbeiter Zeitung* (Conservative Socialist Daily), December 28, 1919]

THE WESTWARD COURSE OF REVOLUTION

WESTWARD, the star of revolution takes its way. The overthrow of Tsarism in Poland and Volhynia made possible the Russian revolution. The overthrow of German imperialism in France and Macedonia cleared the road for revolution in Central Europe. When the working people and peasants of Russia seized political power in 1917, they thought that their uprising would be followed immediately by a similar movement among the proletariat of Germany and Western Europe. But a year of untold suffering elapsed before conditions were ripe for a revolution in the Central Powers. When, finally, the working people of Germany and Austria-Hungary did actually storm the Bastille of their masters, the full energy of the Russian revolutionary proletariat was employed in a defensive struggle against counter-revolutionary assaults from within and without. The Russian revolution succeeded by a titanic effort in repelling its domestic and alien enemies. But the land is emerging from that struggle in bitter misery; its productive forces are crippled, its economic machinery is in ruins.

When the working people of Germany and Austria revolted in January, 1918, they likewise anticipated an immediate revolt of the proletariat in the lands to the westward, who would come to their aid and support. However, the victorious imperialism of the West surrounded Germany and German Austria with the same circle of steel which it had forged around revolutionary Russia. Therefore, the first task of a world revolution was to break the chains of the land and sea blockade, and to disperse the bands of

English and French *condottieri* in Russia. To this task was added, subsequently, that of destroying the Peace Treaties of Versailles and Saint Germain.

Meantime, a full year passed before the proletariat of England, Italy, and America began to move. A year passed before the intoxication of victory gradually ceased to cloud the minds of the workers in these three Powers, and the idea of the class struggle could prevail over the idea of imperialism. But during this year of bitter struggle against privation, ruined industries, and crippled production, the high tide of revolution began to ebb. Like their Russian brothers, the proletariat of Germany and the Danube countries had been able to overthrow completely the rule of their old feudal lords. But they were unable to construct anything substantial to take its place.

Tragic misfortune has dogged the steps of the social revolution in Russia and Central Europe. The people of these countries seized political control just when economic conditions were at their worst.

The Russian revolution overthrew the Tsar and Kerensky in the name of Socialism. But the economic and political crisis prevailing throughout the world forced Soviet Russia to make compromises that surrendered important Socialist principles. In order to have peace, that government was forced to recognize the private title of the peasants to the land, to engage to pay its debts to foreign capitalists, and to turn over the country's mineral treasures and transportation system and factories to foreign capital.

The proletariat of Germany and German Austria were equally desirous of founding a true Socialist community. But war had destroyed the economic foundations for such a community. The wealth of these countries, accumu-