

Freedom

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THE COMING REVIVAL OF SOCIALISM

By P. KROPOTKIN.

IV.

The revival of Socialism in the years 1884-1890 is still fresh in our memories. The visit of Henry George to this country and the appearance of his impressive work, "Progress and Poverty"; the founding by Hyndman of "Justice," the organ of the Social Democratic Federation; the writings of Edward Carpenter, and the conversion of William Morris to Socialism—all these undoubtedly gave an impetus to the growth of Socialism in England. But there were also much deeper causes. Ireland was ablaze from 1881, and the action of both the Land League and the Fenians, the resistance of the Irish to wholesale evictions, and the "No Rent" Campaign, produced a deep impression in England and Scotland; while a number of Irishmen took a lively part in spreading in Great Britain the unionist agitation which the Knights of Labour, in full force still in America, had by this time brought over to England. Besides, a deep impression had been produced on the minds by the enthusiasm of Russian Socialists and the desperate struggle of the Terrorists; and to this impression must also be added the interest awakened by the sudden and violent movement amongst the miners and the weavers in South-Eastern France, followed by a scandalous trial at Lyons. On the other side, in Britain itself, great hopes were awakened by the arrival of the Radical Ministry of Gladstone, to which the eyes of the Radicals had been turned in expectation for a long time. And finally, since 1882 the country had entered a period of diminishing and badly paid exports, which reached its lowest ebb in 1886. The crisis was so acute that in the first part of that year parties of working men paraded every day all the streets of London and its suburbs appealing to charity, while hundreds of unemployed came together at nights in Trafalgar Square to sleep there in the mud, with no other blanket than an occasionally found newspaper.

The Trafalgar Square riots, during which a crowd dashed, after a meeting, up Regent Street, breaking a few windows in the best shops and compelling fine ladies to alight from their carriages, fell like a thunderbolt upon the rich of London. They saw rising before them a vision of 1780,—East London marching to sack the West-end mansions—and the rich hastened to show their sympathy "with the poor poor" by subscribing some £30,000 in a few days for relief work. All England—the poor with hope, the rich with terror—began to talk Socialism. The papers were full of articles sympathetic to the working men and with schemes of reform. The visions of 1780, 1789, 1793, floated before the eyes of the rich, and it must be said that their fears were not unfounded. The Government itself had ascertained that if Burns, Hyndman and Champion, arrested after the Trafalgar Square riots, had been punished severely, retaliation would have followed.

The most striking feature of the whole movement was the revolutionary note that rang through it. Was it the influence of an unseen, Knights of Labour, under-current which was felt amongst the working men? or was it the other just-mentioned influences combining together? At any rate the leaders felt a revolutionary temper amongst the working classes and they followed it. The Social-Democratic and Anarchist Press and meetings were quite outspoken as to their aims and methods. It was written and said that the aim of the movement was a revolution, the result of which must be the taking back of the land for the people—with no compensation, the docks, and all other sorts of municipal capital returning to the municipalities, the mines to the miners, the factories to the factory hands. . . . all

this being done on the spot by those themselves interested. Even the inveterate politicians spoke of the necessity of getting rid of both the Houses of Lords and Commons, and convoking a Convention, which would revise all institutions in a revolutionary sense.

A distinctive feature of the movement was the readiness of passing from words to acts, or at least to such manifestations as are the forerunners of revolt. Piccadilly riots, Norwich riots, Trafalgar Square meetings, Battersea Church Parades, morning calls of the unemployed at the vestries, Hyde Park meetings, during which the very poorest of the poorest Londoners came together in scores of thousands and growled with fury as they marched past the mansions, these were the favourite means of agitation.

Even so late as in 1890 Burns spoke of letting his Battersea candidature alone and of going to the country for organising agricultural labour, "in order to get at the root of the labour question" (*Freedom*, September, 1890). And when the First of May movement came to Europe from America, and brought to us the idea of preparing a General Strike by means of First of May demonstrations, the Socialist League, with Morris at its head, was immediately won to this Anarchist idea. Even the Social Democratic Federation was revolutionary then, in the years 1884-1887. Feeling that they were hopelessly remote from getting any seat in Parliament, they held quite revolutionary language, and we had Hyndman in our ranks saying "Well done" when he spoke of the Chicago bomb. The enthusiasm was general. Even those middle-class people who now have but words of disdain for the Social Revolution, were far ahead of the Anarchists in their hopes of a speedy revolution going to settle everything right away. *Freedom* noted at that time the very disappearance of the various Socialist bodies as such:—"The Socialists were everywhere, but political humbug had disappeared" it was said in "Notes." Unity of action prevailed.

The great strikes of the dockers and the great coal strike deeply impressed the middle-class Socialists who had joined the movement, especially when they saw the organising capacities displayed by the working men. All elements were then in favour of some sort of action. . . .

But, beginning with 1890, the movement began to subside. Towards the end of that year it seemed as if it had spent its last energy in the First of May demonstration,—and it soon came to a standstill. The enthusiasm was gone. We entered that period of apathy which lasts till now.

(To be concluded.)

QUAKERS AND WORKERS.

The *Daily News* did a pretty piece of work through quarrelling with its compositors. This "Liberal" journal, with its solicitude for labour, had been arranging for months to strike this blow. With all the craft that generally besets the passive spirits of the non-resisters, they adopted back-stairs tactics and threw their men out at a moment's notice. Someone must have pointed out the folly of this trick and have shown the possibility of its affecting the Liberal vote at the coming election. At any rate the proprietors climbed down, and the matter has been patched up. But the motive of the *Daily News* in this matter must not be overlooked. It was to outflank the union for some advantages of its own. And this again reminds us how careful we need to be of the Levers and the Cadburys with all their good intentions, and to bear in mind that these good people, with their Garden Cities and old-age pensions, are philanthropists, not Socialists. We are quite sure that even Garden Cities will have to make their revolutions.

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NOTES.

TRADE UNIONS OR SOCIAL DEMOCRACY?

Justice prints an account of the growth and value of trade unions in Germany which ought to convince members of the S.D.F. that these organisations are fighting the capitalist and bettering the conditions of the workers in an admirable way, while all the votes of the Social Democrats are futile for good in this direction and only increase the number of "leaders." We read of an increase of 8·2 per cent. for the year 1903, the number of organised workers now standing at 1,192,642. They have made many successful fights and gained better conditions for the workers in the respective trades. "Without doubt," we are told, "the power of the organised workers of Germany is growing by leaps and bounds, to the terror of the manufacturers and large employers." This is hopeful indeed, and almost makes amends for the dismal failure of the Social Democrats in the Reichstag.

"NO SLAVES IN LONDON."

So the Lord Chamberlain's Department refused to license the new play of Mr. Arthur Shirley called the "White Slaves of London." The reason given is that there are no "slaves" in London, and, according to one report, the title was said to be objectionable because "it would stir up discontent among working people." One of the disadvantages of being a Libertarian—for this applies to others as well as to ourselves—is that he has to defend on principle every cur that licks the lash that is applied to him instead of kicking him as he deserves. Mr. Shirley is the cur in this case; he extols the censorship as an institution, only he "would have it carried out in a common-sense manner." Here we have a serious question, no objection is raised against the "Worst Woman in London," "Her Second Time on Earth," "The Female Swindler," "The King of Crime," and all the other demoralising plays that degrade and brutalize the people in the East End; but let a writer touch the labour question in such a way as to arouse the people to their misery and the reason thereof, and my Lord Chamberlain is up in arms, and strikes the play from the list. Octave Mirbeau ought to pay us a visit and write a play on the Censorship, and see if it is not possible to shame the people into some sense of their inferiority in this respect to France and Germany.

THE ADVENT OF A NEW JOURNAL.

We are very glad to welcome the appearance of the first number of the *Voice of Labour*. It certainly is a creditable production, both in matter and style, and ought to have a large sphere of usefulness. We are convinced that a paper of this description is badly needed in Great Britain. It is anti-Parliamentary, and, besides being a Revolutionary Socialist journal, is a strong advocate of trade unionism. We wish it all success. It is published by George Dallas, 126, Trongate, Glasgow.

* * Any books on Anarchism, Socialism, or kindred subjects forwarded (if obtainable) on receipt of order and cash. Inquiries answered on receipt of stamped envelope.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

Roumania.

The treatment of the soldier in this country is little better than that of the Jew. Owing to rumours of brutality in his army and consequent desertions the indolent king has at length thought fit to express his displeasure thereon. At a council the officers declared that discipline in the army could only be maintained by corporal punishment. A soldier, whose life had been made a burden by maltreatment, thereupon threw a petition at the king's feet. He was instantly arrested and punished as a liar for making false reports. Soon after, when the general made his inspection this man pleaded to be transferred to another regiment. He was immediately thrown into the cells "for speaking disrespectfully to an officer." Then his manhood asserted itself. The following morning when at exercise he contrived to give his guard the slip, and snatching up a rifle ran into the officers' quarters and shot an adjutant and a captain dead. A desperate disease needs a desperate remedy. The soldier will die, but not before he knows that he has won better treatment for his conscript brothers through his act of self-devotion.

Germany.

Here, as in the United States, peaceful strikers have to face, not starvation merely, but bayonets. For several months the cotton spinners in Saxony have been out on strike fighting for a shorter day and better wage. When it was noted that the sympathy of the trade unions and the workers was with them, and that they were loyally supported in their struggle against capital, the military were called out. Every meeting was suppressed by troops, every civil right outraged. Once again brute force—the power behind the throne and capital—won the day. The strike collapsed. But failure does not always spell defeat. Once let the workers understand the power behind a General Strike and they may laugh at brute force the world over.

Spain.

The Spanish students with Anarchist tendencies have printed an appeal in *Tierra y Libertad* calling upon their comrades throughout the world to form an international association of Libertarian students, for the threefold purpose of getting into close touch with workers' groups, to assist these in their struggle for liberty, and thus to form a powerful organisation for propaganda and agitation. This is a splendid idea, and we hope it will bear fruit. The closer the bond between workers and thinkers in the revolutionary world, the deeper and stronger the forces within and results without. How terrified the authorities in Spain as elsewhere have become over the growth of the anti-militarist spirit has been lately shown by the ferocious sentences passed on two young men for openly expressing it. One not yet old enough for conscription has been condemned to twelve years' penal servitude in Africa for writing an anti-militarist article in *El Productor* of Barcelona. The second, a Seville worker, to six years' hard labour for being caught in the act of pasting a leaflet against the army on a barrack wall. The abject folly of such repressive measures makes one smile. Thousands of such leaflets will pass the quicker from hand to hand because walls and papers are tabooed.

Russia.

There have been several attempts within the past three months to punish police officials noted for their brutality in repressing strikers and revolutionary propagandists. Of these, two especially made some sensation owing to the rank of the victim. Koulischeff, a sub-commissioner, was shot and seriously wounded in October, solely on account of his cruelty to the peasants and mechanics in his district near Berditcheff; while Metlenko, chief of police at Belostok, received condign punishment in November for the same reasons. In neither case was any arrest made. Metlenko appears to have been particularly brutal in the exercise of his official duties, and each brought his fate entirely upon himself. Whether the warning will be taken to heart by the police in Russia and elsewhere remains to be seen. The revolutionary movement among the students and population meanwhile increases steadily.

France.

Innumerable small strikes of more or less intensity are taking place throughout the country, the unceasing demand being for a shorter day and living wage. In the purely agricultural districts also the peasants are standing up for their rights, at the village of Counozouls with quite a fierce insistence. A large estate here was sold by a nobleman to a rich leather merchant. From time immemorial the people had enjoyed the right of free pasture in the surrounding forests and to fallen branches for fuel. The new owner refused to tolerate these ancient customs—such things must be paid for. He set the law to work and the peasants answered by buying eighty guns. Further, they took an oath to resist payment by force and to hang the first of their number who broke his oath. They practise shooting every Sunday, and up to now have successfully driven every process server and man of law away from their district, yet in a peaceable and polite manner. A gamekeeper's lodge has been burnt, but when judge and gendarmes commenced an inquiry the peasants became suddenly dumb. Now the sub-prefect has been ordered to search for and seize all arms, and the result is awaited with interest.

At Montpellier, where the trial of some workers took place recently for obstructing the police during a labour manifestation against the labour registry offices in that city, one of the men under examination retorted to a taunt of the presiding magistrate, "But in the name of the rights of men I claim that we have the right to protest against these dishonest offices without prevention by the police, for to us it is a question of daily bread." To which the luminary answered, "Before the rights of you men there is the right of the police officer." What a complete unmasking of the law and of the bourgeois mind.

NOW READY.

MODERN SCIENCE AND ANARCHISM.

By PETER KROPOTKIN.

Translated from the Russian by DAVID A. MODELL, and revised by the Author.

Price 1s.; Post free 1s. 2d.

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HERBERT SPENCER.

By P. KROPOTKIN.

Herbert Spencer, who was born in 1820 and died on the 8th of December last, was one of the brilliant group of scientists to which Darwin, Huxley, Lyell, J. S. Mill, Bain, and others, belonged in England, and which contributed very powerfully to the glorious awakening of natural science and the triumph of the inductive method which took place in the sixties. On the other hand, Spencer is connected with such Radicals as Carlyle, Ruskin and George Eliot, who under the influence of Robert Owen, of the Fourierists and St. Simonians, and of the political Radicalism of the Chartists, gave a Radical and vaguely Socialistic character to the movement of ideas in England between 1860-1870.

Spencer began as a railway engineer, then became a writer of economics. At this time (1848-1852) he formed a friendship with the physiologist George Lewis and his wife, the author of *Felix Holt*, *Adam Bede* and other novels of an advanced character, who wrote under the pseudonym of George Eliot. This remarkable woman, not yet forgiven by British hypocrisy for having married Lewis openly without intervention of Church or State, exercised a powerful influence on Spencer. In 1850 he wrote his best work, *Social Statics*.

He had not at that time that narrow respect for bourgeois property and that contempt for the victims in the struggle for existence that we find in his later works, and he pronounced himself clearly in favour of land nationalisation. There is a breath of idealism in the *Social Statics*.

It is true that Spencer never accepted the State Socialism of Louis Blanc or the governmental collectivism of Pecqueur and the Marxist followers of the latter. He had already developed his anti-government views in 1842 under the title of *The Proper Sphere of Government*. But he recognised that the land should belong to the nation, and we find a breath of Communism in some passages of the *Statics*.

Later, he revised this work and attenuated these passages, but he maintained his rebellion against the usurpers of the land and against all oppression, whether economic, political, intellectual or religious. He always protested against the unprincipled policy of the Conservatives; at the time of the South African war he openly expressed his blame of the English aggression, and quite recently he declared himself strongly against the Protection of the adventurer Chamberlain. All his life long he refused the titles of nobility and decoration that were offered to him, and when a University sent him an honorific title he did not even acknowledge it.

This explains the silence maintained about Spencer by the robbers of the upper classes.

The greatest service, however, rendered by Spencer is not to be found in his *Social Statics*, but rather in the elaboration of his Synthetic Philosophy, which may be considered as the philosophic work of the nineteenth century.

The philosophers of the eighteenth century, and especially the Encyclopædists, had already tried to construct a synthetic philosophy of the universe,—a summary of all that is essential in our knowledge of Nature and man; on the plants and the stars, on the physical and chemical forces (or rather the physical and chemical movements of molecules), on the facts of vegetable and animal life, on psychology, the life of human societies, the development of their ideas and of their moral ideal. A "picture of Nature," as Holbach had tried to make it, from the fall of the stone to the dream of the poet—the whole conceived as material facts.

Later on Auguste Comte continued the same work. He tried to construct a positive philosophy, which was to summarise the essentials in our knowledge of Nature, without any intervention of gods, occult forces, or metaphysical formulæ with their veiled allusion to supernatural forces.

The positive philosophy of Comte (whatever the English and Germans, who imagine that they have not suffered its influence, may say) impressed its mark on all the speculations of the 19th century. It provoked that awakening of the natural sciences in the sixties, of which we have written in "Modern Science and Anarchism." It also inspired Mill, Huxley, Bain, and all the Positivists and gave Spencer the idea of constructing his Synthetic Philosophy.

But Comte's philosophy, apart from the fundamental religious error, of which we speak in the pamphlet just quoted, pre-

sented a formidable gap. Comte was not a naturalist. Zoology and botany were unknown to him. He denied the variability of the species. This obviously hindered him from conceiving evolution and development as we conceive them at the present day.

Already in 1801 the great naturalist, Lamarck, giving a further development to the ideas of Buffon, affirmed that the various species of plants and animals that now people the earth, had developed gradually out of other species of plants and animals which, under the influence of the conditions amongst which they lived, had acquired new forms. In a dry climate, where evaporation is very great, the tissue of leaves will change, leaves will even disappear to give place to a hard and dry prickle. An animal forced to race through deserts will gradually acquire lighter proportions than one that lives buried in the mire of swamps. And so on.

Everything continually changes in Nature: forms are not permanent, and both the plants and the animals which we find nowadays are the result of a slow adaptation to conditions that in their turn are always changing.

But such was the reaction that reigned after the great Revolution that these ideas of Lamarck were forgotten and boycotted. German metaphysics ruled at that time, and reinstated, together with the cult of royalty, the god of the Hebrews, and the immortal soul part and parcel of god.

Nevertheless the idea of natural development, of evolution, was going its own way. If our system of planets and our sun are the result of a slow development—as Laplace and Kant had already proved them to be—why should not the masses of nebulous matter that we see in the starry sky represent worlds as yet unformed?

Is not the universe a world of solar systems constantly evolving and starting afresh to infinity? If Buffon and Lamarck had already guessed that the lion, the tiger and the giraffe are so well fit for the conditions in which they live, because it is those conditions which have made them what they are, the facts that were being accumulated at the beginning of the century, or by travelling, constantly brought new proofs in favour of the variability of the species.

Transformism, and thence the ever-renewed development of new species, were ideas that imposed themselves on men's minds.

At the same time geology established that thousands of centuries had passed before the first fish, then the first lizards, then the first birds, then mammals, and at last man, had made their appearance on earth. These ideas were very widely spread during the first half of the century—only people did not dare to affirm them openly. Even in 1840, when Chambers put them into a system in a book, "Vestiges of Creation," which created a great sensation, he did not dare confess his name, and hid his identity so successfully that during forty years no one could discover who had been the author of the book.

It follows that when metaphysicians tell us to-day that Hegel discovered, or even popularised, the idea of change and evolution, these gentlemen only prove that the history of the natural sciences is as unknown to them as the very alphabet of these sciences and their method.

The idea of evolution had imposed itself in all the fields of science. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary to apply it to the interpretation of the natural system as a whole, to human institutions, to religious and to moral ideas. It was necessary, whilst maintaining the fundamental idea of Comte's positive philosophy, to extend it, so that it should embrace all that lives and develops on earth. To this Spencer consecrated his life.

Like Darwin, he was physically of the "weak." But by submitting rigorously to a physical and intellectual hygiene he managed to complete this mighty task.

In truth he wrote a complete system of synthetic philosophy, describing, firstly, physical and chemical forces; then the life of innumerable suns, in formation or in decay, which people the universe; then the evolution of our solar system and of our planet. This forms the "First Principles."

After this comes the evolution of living beings on our globe, treated in the "Principles of Biology." This is a very technical book, to which Spencer gives much original work, and in which he shows how, by the action of chemical forces, life first appeared on our globe; how out of small collections of microscopic cellules, the immense variety of existing plants and animals, from the simplest to the most complex, has been able

to develop gradually. Here Spencer has in part preceded Darwin; and if he was far from possessing Darwin's knowledge and having been as deep as he had into each question, he sometimes had on the other hand greater and juster general views than those of his great master and contemporary.

According to Spencer, new species of plants and animals originate firstly, as Lamarck had stated, in the direct influence of the environment on the individuals. This he called "direct adaptation." Then, these new variations, produced either by the dryness, the dampness, the cold or warmth of the climate, or by the kind of nourishment, &c.,—if they are serious enough to be of use in the struggle for existence—will permit those individuals who possess them, and who are, therefore, the most fit to survive and to leave the healthier progeny. This is Darwin's survival of the fittest which was called by Spencer "indirect adaptation."

This double explanation of the origin of species prevails to-day in science. Darwin himself hastened to accept it.

The next part of Spencer's philosophy, is his "Principles of Psychology." Here he takes an entirely materialistic point of view. He does not use the word "materialism." But, like Bain, he definitely leaves out all metaphysics, the soul, and the rest. He lays the foundations of materialist psychology.

Then he gives us the "Principles of Sociology," the foundation of the science of societies, based, as Comte had foreseen, on the gradual development of customs and institutions.

Lastly, he gives us the "Principles of Ethics," that is to say—Morals. Two parts of this last division—"The Data of Ethics" and "Justice," published separately in cheap editions, are very generally known both in this country and on the Continent.

Thus we have a complete system of revolutionary philosophy. Translated from *Les Temps Nouveaux*.

(To be continued.)

AMERICAN NOTES.

JOHN TURNER'S CASE.

The latest news from Ellis Island gives us an excellent account of Comrade Turner's health. We are also glad to hear he is keeping in good spirits.

There has been another big meeting in New York, held at the Cooper Union Hall, by the Central Federated Union. The trade unions are slow to move as there is so much officialism amongst them and so little of the revolutionary spirit; a good reason, as Turner points out, for the Anarchists to join the unions and spread their ideas amongst them.

The following extract from the *Truthseeker* (New York, January 16th) gives another moral of the Turner case which will be of interest to our readers:—

If any part of Mr. Spencer's estate were situated in this country, there is one of his executors who could not come here to settle it. The executor is the Hon. Anberon Herbert, the Anarchist whom Huxley, in his essay on Government, acknowledged by name as his friend. Mr. Spencer probably did not see the humor, and possibly missed the "incongruity," of appointing as his executor a man who cannot enter the country where his writings were first welcomed.

And here arises a question.

If men not well disposed towards organised Government are to be pushed back into the sea when they touch our shores, why should the writings of such men be admitted to the country and distributed by the government through the mails? For, after all, it is not the men who are regarded as dangerous, but their ideas. I suppose the Secretary of Labour and Commerce has given some thought to the difficulties he would meet in detaining an idea at Ellis Island, and deporting the same on the vessel that brought it over.

The disrespect that some of us have for Government was put into print in reckless language by the late Ralph Waldo Emerson, who inquired: "Is not the State a question? All society is divided in opinion on the subject of the State. Nobody loves it; great numbers dislike it, and suffer conscientious scruples to allegiance, and the only defence set up is the fear of doing worse by disorganising." Emerson only needed to have this fear dispelled to become an Anarchist and an outlaw. If any of our mediums should chance to bring Emerson back to the "mundane sphere," it might become the duty of our authorities to detain him.

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