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Robert L. Bloom
Gettysburg College

Basil L. Crapster
Gettysburg College

Harold L. Dunkelberger
Gettysburg College

See next page for additional authors

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3. The Emergence of Socialist Parties, 1848-1914

Abstract

The emergence of socialist parties frequently is treated by Marxians and non-Marxians alike, as an inevitable development. From this viewpoint, the Industrial Revolution completed the breakdown of an essentially land-based social structure, economy, and political system. New classes were created; new interests required political expression. Working people, united by the often miserable conditions under which they lived and labored, ultimately turned to socialism. [excerpt]

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Contemporary Civilization, Socialism, Trade-Union Movement, Combination Acts

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Comments

This is a part of [Section XVI: Developments in Socialism, \(1848-1914\)](#). The [Contemporary Civilization](#) page lists all additional sections of *Ideas and Institutions of Western Man*, as well as the [Table of Contents](#) for both volumes.

More About Contemporary Civilization:

From 1947 through 1969, all first-year Gettysburg College students took a two-semester course called Contemporary Civilization. The course was developed at President Henry W.A. Hanson's request with the goal of "introducing the student to the backgrounds of contemporary social problems through the major concepts, ideals, hopes and motivations of western culture since the Middle Ages."

Gettysburg College professors from the history, philosophy, and religion departments developed a textbook for the course. The first edition, published in 1955, was called *An Introduction to Contemporary Civilization and Its Problems*. A second edition, retitled *Ideas and Institutions of Western Man*, was published in 1958 and 1960. It is this second edition that we include here. The copy we digitized is from the Gary T. Hawbaker '66 Collection and the marginalia are his.

Authors

Robert L. Bloom, Basil L. Crapster, Harold L. Dunkelberger, Charles H. Glatfelter, Richard T. Mara, Norman E. Richardson, and W. Richard Schubart

3. The Emergence of Socialist Parties, 1848-1914

The emergence of socialist parties frequently is treated, by Marxians and non-Marxians alike, as an inevitable development. From this viewpoint, the Industrial Revolution completed the breakdown of an essentially land-based social structure, economy, and political system. New classes were created; new interests required political expression. Working people, united by the often miserable conditions under which they lived and labored, ultimately turned to socialism.

To be absolutely content with such an explanation is to miss the complexity of history. Socialism was more than an end-product determined by the interplay of material forces. It was affected decisively by the impact of personalities and ideas, the choices made by specific men acting according to different pictures of reality. Further, it was not the only outlet available for the expression of working-class discontent and demands. Trade unions, cooperative associations, utopian experiments, liberal reform movements also vied for support. Perhaps no political action was inevitable, for many workers, living at subsistence levels, drained physically and mentally by their work, ill-educated and denied suffrage, were apolitical, or even antipolitical. A common pattern which emerged in the history of working-class movements was an alternation between economic and political action.

In Great Britain the emergence of socialist groups was bound up closely, although not exclusively, with the trade-union movement. Coming into common existence in the eighteenth century, labor unions were organized in all of the major trades, bringing together local trade clubs which partly resembled medieval guilds in form and function. When these groups sought to influence wage scales, they fell afoul of British common law and specific legislation, most notably the Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800.

Although trade unions continued to operate clandestinely, the Combination Acts seriously impeded any efforts by the laboring classes to improve their lot through economic pressure. This left two courses open: resort to violence, when discontent no longer could be contained, and an attempt to secure a voice in British politics. Rioting and the destruction of machinery reached a peak in 1811-1812, when the famous Luddite riots broke out in scattered parts of England. Largely this was the work of desperate men whose livelihoods were jeopardized by the introduction of new machinery or methods of production. The alternative course, achieving a voice in British politics, was a long-term project which actually began about the time of the French Revolution. As indicated elsewhere in this volume, a broad-scale movement for wider suffrage resumed after the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars, culminating in the Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884. Although some inequities remained, the latter two acts enfranchised the working classes.

With the repeal of the Combination Acts in 1824, the organization

1820 - new type of unions industrial - included the semi + unskilled workers, much more militant, some of them became dominated by socialists and got tied into political parties. Dr. Marx - society must be a secret or semi-secret organization - later he had the idea of a mass party.

of trade unions grew rapidly in subsequent years. Their work proceeded under restrictions, however, when Parliament passed an act in 1825 virtually prohibiting strikes. Noteworthy in the 1830's was the extent to which trade unions came under the influence of Robert Owen. This marked the beginning of British socialism as something more than an intellectual movement. Trade unions organized cooperative societies, forming a Grand National Consolidated Trades Union in 1834, with Owen as its leader. This experiment with one big union, which lasted a year, was concerned only partly with questions of wages and working conditions. More importantly, it sought to establish workshops which would compete with private business. It toyed, moreover, with the idea of a general strike which would bring on a new society based on the Owenite principle of cooperation.

During the next few years, working people increasingly became absorbed in Chartist agitation for political reform. Some leading Chartists exhibited an interest in socialist ideas, establishing contact with French revolutionaries and trade unionists. While all of these efforts failed, they served as precedents for the International Working Men's Association, established by English and French labor groups in 1864. Almost from the beginning, the First International, as it later came to be called, was dominated by the personality and intellect of Karl Marx. It sought to gather and disseminate information, to discuss problems of mutual interest and, generally, to coordinate international socialist action. While the International did serve to popularize somewhat the doctrines of socialism, particularly those of Marx, it failed to achieve the objective of socialist unity. Never more than a loose alliance, it combined divergent elements from several countries: chiefly, English trade unionists who became more interested in labor problems at home; French socialists influenced heavily by Proudhon; and other national delegations which increasingly were won over to the anarchist ideas of Mikhail Bakunin, who will be discussed in the next section. Thus the work of the International frequently was hampered by dissension, a circumstance which caused Marx to seek the expulsion of the anarchists in 1872. Injured further by the withdrawal of the English trade unionists, the organization never recovered. Marx, who now saw the possibility of losing control, moved to transfer the headquarters of the International to New York. Since Americans played an unimportant role in the group, this amounted to virtual dissolution. The International died a peaceful death at a congress held in Philadelphia in 1876.

In England no significant socialist movement survived the Chartist period. Working-class movements, nevertheless, did exist, such as the cooperative movement which had sprung up during the 1840's. The prototype of this development was a store set up at Rochdale in 1844 by a small group of trade unionists, Chartists, and Owenites. Based on the idea of distributing the profits of the enterprise to members of the society in proportion to goods purchased, the Rochdale experiment inspired a consumers' cooperative movement which was to become increasingly important during the later

nineteenth century. Another alternative for the British worker was offered by the Christian Socialists. In origin, this was largely a group of Anglican clergymen interested in the solution of social problems through writings, cooperative societies, and improved educational facilities. Led by Frederick Denison Maurice (1805-1872) and the novelist Charles Kingsley (1819-1875), the Christian Socialists figured prominently in obtaining legislation in 1852 giving legal recognition to the cooperatives. Altogether, the movement was broadly humanitarian, but not strictly socialist in character.

Meanwhile, the main stream of British labor was interested primarily in trade-union questions at home. The labor leaders who sat on the General Council of the International, for example, were greatly concerned with excluding foreign laborers from Great Britain. Labor confined itself mainly to the achievement of higher wages and the strengthening of the trade unions, which were organized along craft lines. Attempts to link the labor movement by a federation of unions finally were successful in 1864, when the subsequently powerful Trades Union Congress was formed.

For the representation of their political interests, the trade unions relied on the established parties, primarily the Liberals. The position of labor now seemed secure, with increasingly favorable working conditions established by law, legal recognition of trade unions in 1871, and continued prosperity. In this situation there was small support for radical doctrines, and the development of a separate labor party appeared neither necessary nor desirable.

A change in the British political environment occurred after a severe economic crisis beginning in 1879. Trade union membership doubled. This growth reflected a turning away from craft unionism and toward the admission of unskilled workers. A trend toward industry wide cooperation among trade unions also foreshadowed the development of industrial unions in which the old differentiation according to specific crafts and skills was to disappear. Politically, there were contrary impulses at work in the labor movement. For every worker who still favored political action, there were many others who wished to use the new strength of labor for direct industrial action.

Nevertheless, socialist political movements on behalf of labor began to appear in Great Britain after the depression which began in 1879. In 1881 the Democratic Federation, later renamed the Social-Democratic Federation, was formed. It aspired to be a mass political organization of the working classes. But its ideas of class warfare failed to take hold, as English laborers were wedded to peaceful and gradual betterment of their circumstances. Despite serious internal dissension, the movement was a notable attempt to create a British socialist party along Marxist lines.

Of greater importance was the Fabian Society, founded in 1884, which for decades provided the philosophical leadership of British

socialism. The Fabian Society had no intentions of becoming a political party; it sought, rather, to remain small and to advance the cause of socialism through propaganda. Some of its active members, such as Sidney Webb (1859-1947) and his wife Beatrice Potter Webb (1858-1943), George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), and H. G. Wells (1866-1946), brought prestige to the organization. In principle, the Fabian approach to socialism was characterized by a desire for gradual social change, not revolution. This was in keeping with the tactics of patient harassment employed against the army of Hannibal by the Roman general, Fabius, for whom the society was named. It was of great importance subsequently that the Fabian Society developed into a strong alternative source of theory and thus posed a challenge to the doctrinal supremacy which orthodox Marxists strove to impose on European socialism.

In 1893 the Independent Labour Party was added to the field of avowed socialist groups in Britain. Standing close to the Fabians in outlook, but sharing the desire of the S. D. F. to become a mass party, the I. L. P. won quick support in several manufacturing areas and among the small Fabian groups in the countryside. The I. L. P., despite minor successes, nevertheless failed to secure wide support and regularly lost in elections.

Meanwhile, trade-union sentiment began to change regarding the desirability of forming a separate labor party. Earlier efforts had centered around the election of working-class representatives running under the banner of the Liberal Party. In 1899, however, the Trades Union Congress, acting on a resolution drawn up by the I. L. P., called for a conference between representatives of the trade unions and the three socialist organizations. This conference, held in February 1900, decided to seek the direct representation of labor in Parliament. At this time, and at a second conference the following year, the S. D. F. pressed in vain for the adoption of a specifically Marxist program. It then withdrew from the Labour Representation Committee which had been formed, leaving the embryonic labor party firmly in the hands of men whose socialism, at most, was of the Fabian variety.

The decision to constitute a separate party, finally, was strengthened by an unfavorable judicial verdict in 1901, when the Taff Vale Railway Company was awarded damages for losses sustained during a strike by a railroad union. This represented a basic threat to the trade-union movement, for such a principle would have made the strike virtually unusable as a weapon. All the more, it seemed that the only way to win recognition for the position of labor was by forming a new party.

Although the Labour Representation Committee failed to elect more than two members to Parliament in 1900, it met with greater success in later years. In 1906 it won twenty-nine seats and re-constituted itself as the Labour (or Labor) Party, the name it has held ever since. In the years before World War I, the Labor Party increased its membership to 42 (out of 670) seats in the election of December 1910. Although still dwarfed by the two major parties,

Two societies - peaceful evolution - rather than revolution, both pragmatic, both are socialist, have in mind social control, in political areas, both democratic.

its lively stand for the position of British labor promised to bring it out of the shadow of its immediate rival, the Liberal Party.

In view of its influential role, it is useful to illustrate the position of the Fabian Society by referring to the Report on Fabian Policy, prepared in 1896. Moreover, the following document is indicative of the general character of the Labor Party, distinguishing it clearly from the socialist parties which draw more on Marx for their inspiration:

Inevitability of Gradualness

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That the growth of socialist parties was more the consequence of individual men and ideas than the necessary corollary of the Industrial Revolution was illustrated dramatically by the history of socialist groups in France. Here a considerable body of social-

* Reprinted from Henry Pelling, ed., The Challenge of Socialism (Vol. VII, The British Political Tradition) (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1954), pp. 170-179. Used with permission.

ist doctrine was in existence long before the pressure of industrial capitalism was felt in the last years of the nineteenth century. Keeping alive the heritage of Blanqui, Blanc, and Proudhon were latter-day descendants, groups and individuals whose attachment to rigid ideological positions made cooperation difficult and transient. The ferment caused by Marxism only added to this variety in socialist thought. Complicating this situation was the position of the trade-union movement, a growing force in French life after the 1860's. The trade unions alternated in their support of the different socialist groups and ultimately turned to syndicalism. Syndicalism, forsaking political reformism, stressed direct action by labor syndicates (industrial unions) to overthrow the existing property system by violence. Its plan for the future was rather vague, but pictured the control of production and distribution by the syndicates, and a disappearance of organs of state control. In this, it owed much to Proudhon and the heritage of anarchism.

Beginning their formal existence as political parties in the 1880's, the various socialist groups finally were brought together in 1905, forming the United Socialist Party. This name represented more of a hope than a reality, for the party was sharply divided. Holding intact an uneasy alliance between moderate, reform-minded socialists, Marxists committed more or less to the ideal of revolution, and syndicalists who differed with both was the personality of Jean Jaurès (1859-1914). Jaurès, formerly a professor of philosophy and newspaper editor, was one of the great leaders of French socialism. Between 1885 and 1914 he was usually a leading member of the Chamber of Deputies. Simultaneously, he dominated his party by his brilliance and forcefulness. Under Jaurès, the United Socialist Party gradually increased its standing in the Chamber of Deputies from 51 deputies in 1906 to 103 (out of 602 deputies) in 1914. At this point, the further development of the party was cut short by World War I and by the assassination of Jaurès.

Of greater importance to the history of international socialism was the emergence of a socialist movement in Germany. Coming earlier than in other European countries, it inspired the growth of kindred parties elsewhere. Its organizational structure, its program, and even its doctrinal controversies were reproduced abroad. In light of such influence, it was of great significance that the bitter struggle in Germany over socialist strategy was won by the advocates of reform, rather than those of revolution.

By contrast with this final position of eminence, the beginnings of German socialism were marked by the sway held by such French theorists as Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Proudhon in the 1830's. Other influences were soon at work, however, and produced a mixed ideological position. This may be illustrated by the view of Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-1864), one of the outstanding leaders of German socialism. Lassalle, a lawyer by profession and a socialist since 1844, held several of Marx' conceptions: economic determinism, the class struggle, and his criticism of the capitalist system.

Nevertheless, ~~Lassalle did not share Marx' insistence on the need to destroy the existing state. He also was a believer in socialism by reform and, like Louis Blanc in France, proposed a system of state-supported workshops.~~

This amalgam of thought, although distasteful to Marx, drew popular support in the 1860's under the impact of Lassalle's personality and skill in organization. Urging trade-union groups to form a separate political party, Lassalle founded the Universal German Working Men's Association in 1863. In the next year he was killed in a duel.

Upon his death, Marxist elements came into conflict with the new leadership of the movement. Attempting to win German labor to a clearcut Marxist position, they founded a rival group in 1869, the Social Democratic Workers' Party. The new party, in contrast to the Universal German Working Men's Association, joined the First International. When Bismarck introduced the principle of universal suffrage for the North German Confederation in 1866, both groups won seats in the newly created parliament. Subsequently the two socialist parties achieved a small representation in the Reichstag of the early German Empire.

Despite meager parliamentary strength, some of the socialist deputies attracted attention, if not notoriety, by their refusal to vote funds for the prosecution of the Franco-Prussian War. The influence of socialism, moreover, was revealed in mass meetings in several major German cities at the time of the Paris Commune of 1871. These gatherings expressed sympathy for the working class in France. A leading socialist deputy added before the Reichstag that the Paris Commune was a token that the proletariat would rise throughout Europe in decades to come. The Prussian government retaliated finally with arrests and the temporary suppression of socialist meetings, organizations, and newspapers.

Faced with a common enemy, the two socialist factions began negotiations to establish a single party. The more rigid Marxists realized the necessity of making concessions to the Lassallians in order to achieve unity. These efforts met with success when a joint congress at Gotha in 1875 created the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany, which was rechristened (1891) the Social Democratic Party of Germany, the name it has borne ever since. The Gotha Program soon drew bitter criticism from Marx and Engels. Reflecting compromise between the two factions, it called for the achievement of moderate reforms of the state through the use of "all legal means." In the Reichstag elections of 1877 the party made new advances, receiving 493,000 votes and 12 (out of 397) seats.

Despite their fundamentally unrevolutionary position, the socialists came to be regarded by Bismarck as a threat to the established order in Germany. Bismarck decided to act, using as a pretext two attempted assassinations of the emperor. Falsely implicating the socialists in these attempts, Bismarck secured the pass-

age of the Anti-Socialist Laws of 1878, which virtually made the socialist party illegal. While permitting parliamentary and electoral activities, the laws made socialist writings, newspapers, and gatherings subject to harassment. Desperately striving to retain legal status, the party emphasized its commitment to lawful means, hoping to secure a repeal of the repressive laws. When this strategy failed, the party turned to other means. In 1879 it set up an emigre socialist journal in Switzerland. In 1880 it held a party congress there, thus dodging the restrictions of the Anti-Socialist Laws. Moreover, it took steps on this occasion to strike the word "legal" from the party program, to open up possibilities for other types of action.

Bismarck, meanwhile, enacted measures which established sickness and accident insurance for workers, as well as old age pensions. However, whether by force or persuasion, his efforts were unsuccessful in undercutting the appeal of socialism. The socialists consistently gained ground in Reichstag elections, almost tripling their vote between 1884 and 1890. By this time the failure of the Anti-Socialist Laws was apparent, and they were not renewed. The party continued to grow at a rapid rate. In 1912, when it tripled its vote of 1890 and won 110 (out of 397) seats in the Reichstag, it emerged as the largest political party in Germany.

The full story of the rise of the socialists in Germany can not be understood without reference to the nature of the party that developed. It is significant that even during the persecutions suffered under the Anti-Socialist Laws a majority of the party was in favor of genuine participation in parliamentary work, rather than revolutionary activity. This tendency was strengthened after 1890 and was reflected in the organizational efforts of the party in trade unions and consumer groups, based on the implicit assumption that improvements in the lot of the working man could be achieved within the existing social order.

In 1891 a major party congress held in Erfurt adopted a program which superseded that adopted earlier at Gotha. The Marxists superficially had a dominant voice in the congress, but their triumph lay more in the realm of theory, expressed in the new party platform, than in practice. The Erfurt Program of 1891, given below, was of great significance in the development of European socialism, for it became a model for parties in other countries:

The economic development of the bourgeois society leads by a necessity of nature to the downfall of the small production, the basis of which is the private property of the workman in his means of production. It separates the workman from his means of production, and transforms him into a proletarian without property, whilst the means of production become the monopoly of a comparatively small number of capitalists and great landowners.

This monopolising of the means of production is accompanied by the supplanting of the scattered small production through

Social Democratic Party.

the colossal great production, by the development of the tool into the machine, and by gigantic increase of the productivity of human labour. But all advantages of this transformation are monopolised by the capitalists and great landowners. For the proletariat and the sinking intermediate grades -- small tradesmen and peasant proprietors -- it means increasing insecurity of their existence, increase of misery, of oppression, of servitude, degradation, and exploitation.

Even greater grows the number of the proletarians, ever larger the army of superfluous workmen, ever wider the chasm between exploiters and exploited, ever bitterer the class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat, which divides modern society into two hostile camps, and is the common characteristic of all industrial lands.

The gulf between rich and poor is further widened through the crises which naturally arise out of the capitalistic method of production, which always become more sweeping and destructive, which render the general insecurity the normal condition of society, and prove that the productive forces have outgrown the existing society, that private property in the means of production is incompatible with their rational application and full development.

Private property in the instruments of production, which in former times was the means of assuring to the producer the property in his own product, has now become the means of expropriating peasant proprietors, hand-workers, and small dealers, and of placing the non-workers, capitalists, and great landowners in the possession of the product of the workmen. Only the conversion of the capitalistic private property in the means of production -- land, mines, raw material, tools, machines, means of communication -- into social property, and the transformation of the production of wares into socialistic production, carried on for and through society, can bring it about that the great production and the continually increasing productivity of social labour may become for the hitherto exploited classes, instead of a source of misery and oppression, a source of the highest welfare and of all-sided harmonious development.

This social transformation means the emancipation, not merely of the proletariat, but of the entire human race which suffers under the present conditions. But it can only be the work of the labouring class, because all other classes, in spite of their mutually conflicting interests, stand on the ground of private property in the means of production, and have as their common aim the maintenance of the bases of the existing society.

The struggle of the working class against capitalistic exploitation is of necessity a political struggle. The working class cannot conduct its economic struggle, and cannot develop its economic organisation, without political rights. It cannot effect the change of the means of production into the possession of the collective society without coming into possession of political power.

To shape this struggle of the working class into a conscious and united one, and to point out to it its inevitable goal, this is the task of the Social Democratic party.

In all lands where the capitalistic method of production prevails, the interests of the working classes are alike. With the extension of the world commerce and of the production of the world market, the condition of the workmen of every single land always grows more dependent on the condition of the workmen in other lands. The emancipation of the working class is therefore a task in which the workers of all civilised countries are equally interested. Recognising this the Social Democratic party of Germany feels and declares itself at one with the class-conscious workers of all other countries.

The Social Democratic party of Germany therefore contends, not for new class privileges and exclusive rights, but for the abolition of class rule and of classes themselves, and for equal rights and equal duties of all without distinction of sex and descent. Proceeding from these views it struggles in the present society, not only against exploitation and oppression of the wage-workers, but against every kind of exploitation and oppression, whether directed against class, party, sex, or race.

Proceeding from these principles the Social Democratic party of Germany now demands --

1. Universal, equal, and direct suffrage, with vote by ballot, for all men and women of the Empire over twenty years of age. Proportional electoral system; and, till the introduction of this, legal redistribution of seats after every census. Biennial legislative periods. Elections to take place on a legal day of rest. Payment of representatives. Abolition of all limitation of political rights, except in the case of disfranchisement.

2. Direct legislation through the people, by means of the right of proposal and rejection. Self-government of the people in Empire, State, Province, and Commune. Officials to be elected by the people; responsibility of officials. Yearly granting of taxes.

3. Training in universal military duty. A people's army in place of the standing armies. Decision on peace and war by the representatives of the people. Settlement of all international differences by arbitration.

4. Abolition of all laws which restrict or suppress the free expression of opinion and the right of union and meeting.

5. Abolition of all laws which, in public or private matters, place women at a disadvantage as compared with men.

6. Religion declared to be a private matter. No public funds to be applied to ecclesiastical and religious purposes. Ecclesiastical and religious bodies are to be regarded as private associations which manage their own affairs in a perfectly independent manner.

7. Secularisation of the school. Obligatory attendance at the public people's schools. Education, the appliances of

learning, the maintenance free in the public people's schools, as also in the higher educational institutions for those scholars, both male and female, who, by reason of their talents, are thought to be suited for further instruction.

8. Administration of justice and legal advice to be free. Justice to be administered by judges chosen by the people. Appeal in criminal cases. Compensation for those who are innocently accused, imprisoned, and condemned. Abolition of capital punishment.

9. Medical treatment, including midwifery and the means of healing, to be free. Free burial.

10. Progressive income and property taxes to meet all public expenditure, so far as these are to be covered by taxation. Duty of making one's own return of income and property. Succession duty to be graduated according to amount and relationship. Abolition of all indirect taxes, customs, and other financial measures which sacrifice the collective interest to the interests of a privileged minority.

For the protection of the working class the Social Democratic party of Germany demands --

1. An effective national and international protective legislation for workmen on the following bases: Fixing of a normal working day of not more than eight hours. Prohibiting of money-making labour of children under fourteen years. Prohibition of night work, except for those branches of industry which from their nature, owing to technical reasons or reasons of public welfare, require night work. An unbroken period of rest of at least thirty-six hours in every week for every worker. Prohibition of the truck system. *(paid in company script - only spent in the co. store.)*

2. Supervision of all industrial establishments, investigation and regulation of the conditions of labour in town and country by an imperial labour department, district labour offices, and labour chambers. A thorough system of labour hygiene.

3. Agricultural labourers and servants to be placed on the same footing as industrial workers; abolition of servants' regulations.

4. The right of combination to be placed on a sure footing.

5. Undertaking of the entire working men's insurance by the Empire, with effective co-operation of the workmen in its administration. *

The attempt to translate the Erfurt Program of piecemeal reform through parliamentary means into a systematic revision of

* Reprinted from Thomas Kirkup, A History of Socialism (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1900), pp. 223-229.

Marxism resulted in a significant doctrinal controversy within socialist ranks. At issue once more was the question of reform versus revolution. The chief figure in this conflict was Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932), who had edited the German socialist journal in Switzerland and England from 1880 to 1890 and who had remained abroad during the 1890's. Although once closely associated with Engels, Bernstein became increasingly critical of Marxism and adopted the evolutionary approach of the Fabians, some of whom he had come to know well. Making his criticisms public after 1898, he precipitated a major debate which spread throughout the international socialist movement.

In essence, Bernstein held that socialist strategy had to be revised in order to fit the changing nature of capitalism. His position accordingly acquired the name of revisionism. Bernstein argued, contrary to the predictions of Marx, that the lot of the working man was improving, that the capitalist system had become more stable, that economic crises were less severe, and that an early collapse was not to be expected. Moreover, small business had not been completely absorbed in big business, nor had the lower middle class been absorbed in the proletariat. The development of political democracy, further, eliminated the need for revolution, and created the possibility of attaining socialism through gradual and peaceful change. Bernstein's arguments accorded with the long-standing practice of the German socialist party, if not with all its doctrinal statements. The effect of revisionism, consequently, was to strengthen the reformist tendency initiated previously by Lassalle. The de facto triumph of revisionism in Germany, in conjunction with the rejection of revolutionary Marxism in most other countries, decisively influenced the course of modern socialism.

use the state as it is now rich get richer, poor get poorer is not true revise Marx revisionist say the same end as Marx but want to use it here and now

In contrast with the rising strength of socialist movements in Europe from 1848 to 1914, it is significant that no socialist parties with mass appeal developed in the United States during the same period. Various factors contributed to this result. To begin with, the political, economic, and social system that prevailed in the United States was markedly different from that of most European countries. In general terms, a greater amount of political freedom, economic opportunity, and social mobility existed in this country. Many aspects of political liberalization, so frequently to be championed by European socialists, already had been attained in the United States. Beyond this, the strength of the two-party system in the United States made it difficult for third parties to survive. Political demands of working people could be expressed through a variety of outlets, such as the major parties and a host of minor ones. The economic and social condition of working men during the nineteenth century frequently was one of great mobility. With great opportunities for advancement, class lines were fluid. Supporting the effects of these material conditions was an optimistic outlook which persisted long after the frontiers of the country were pushed to their present limits and opportunities for economic and social betterment changed.

Where the need for collective action by working men was recognized, this largely was met by labor unions oriented almost exclusively toward economic goals and means. Although they arose in particular crafts in the eighteenth century, unions in their modern form are more the result of the post-Civil War period. In the 1870's the organization of unions underwent new growth, resulting in the gradual establishment of federations of labor groups. With the aim of uniting the labor movement, a federation formed in 1881 was reconstituted in 1886 as the American Federation of Labor. Under the leadership of Samuel Gompers (1850-1924), it confined itself mainly to economic objectives and occasional political action on behalf of candidates favorably disposed to labor. "We have no ultimate ends," an early leader of the A. F. L. once stated. "We are going on from day to day. We are fighting only for immediate objects, objects that can be realized in a few years."

In view of all of the alternatives open to American workers, it is no surprise that socialism found but small response. Although there were disciples of Fourier and Owen who attempted to build model cooperative communities in the early nineteenth century, these were generally shortlived ventures of no lasting significance. After the revolutions of 1848 a number of European socialists took refuge in this country, including some who had been influenced by Marx. Efforts to establish socialist groups, however, met with only limited success, and this chiefly within the ranks of the exiles themselves. Gradually, the emigres became involved in the overriding native concerns of the time, many taking part in the antislavery movement and fighting on the Northern side in the Civil War. After the war a whole spate of socialist societies came to life. Finally in 1877 the Socialist Labor Party was established.

During the 1890's the Socialist Labor Party was dominated by the brilliant and aggressive figure of Daniel De Leon (1852-1914). De Leon, born in Curaçao and educated in Germany, came as a youth to the United States. After pursuing legal studies, he became a lecturer on international law at Columbia University. His chief interests lay in the field of politics, where he gradually adopted a Marxist position which won the praise of Lenin. Within the Socialist Labor Party he pressed for the establishment of socialist-oriented labor unions which would lead the American labor movement away from purely reformist goals. His objective, a militant working class organization aimed at the overthrow of capitalism, failed to secure general acceptance within the party.

Meanwhile, a new and powerful socialist party began to emerge in the Midwest under the leadership of Eugene Victor Debs (1855-1926). One of the remarkable figures of the American labor movement, Debs also had held political positions as a Democrat. After serving as city clerk of Terre Haute, Indiana, he was elected to the Indiana legislature in 1885. Perhaps the best known of his exploits lay in connection with his role in the famous Pullman Strike of 1894. As leader of the American Railway Union, Debs decided to support the cause of the Pullman Company strikers and ordered a

boycott of Pullman cars on Western rail lines. This precipitated a violent rail strike, one that was ended only by the intervention of federal troops. Debs was arrested on a charge of conspiring to obstruct the mails, but was released on bail and ordered not to prolong the strike. After calling for a general strike throughout the country, he was sent to jail for contempt of court. This event was significant not only for the nation-wide fame Debs thus acquired, but because he became converted to socialism during his six months' imprisonment.

Joining his American Railway Union with various socialist groups, Debs formed a rival socialist party in 1897-1898. His organization was swelled by anti-De Leonite elements from the Socialist Labor Party. Together with them, Debs formed the Socialist Party in 1901. Standing for moderate reform achieved peacefully within the framework of a democratic system, it gained slowly in strength, polling approximately six per cent of the total vote cast for president in 1912. In 1910, a socialist was elected to the House of Representatives, while other members of the party were chosen for several state legislatures and mayoralties. Such gains, however, were more of a curiosity than a threat to the two-party system. Nevertheless, the Socialist Party acquired significance as an outlet for discontent and as a champion of causes too new or controversial for the major parties to espouse. In this manner, some valuable proposals were popularized. But the flexibility and dominance of the two large parties made it possible for them to adopt such ideas as their own, and to take credit for their enactment into law. Beyond this, any evaluation of socialism as a movement in the United States must take cognizance of its broader influence on American idealism, championing the cause of the underprivileged with increasing, although indirect, success in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, before World War I the Socialist Party, as a party, was rejected by the main stream of the American labor movement, which largely preferred direct economic action to any political approach.

Elsewhere, the new phenomenon of socialism struck deeper roots. Virtually all of the European countries had at least budding socialist parties before 1914, while a spread to other continents already was beginning. One measure of the scope of this movement may be seen in the rise of a new international organization, known as the Socialist and Labor International (1889-1914). While the First International once was satirized as a general staff without an army, the Second International could not be dismissed so lightly. Organized on the hundredth anniversary of the French Revolution, following sporadic socialist congresses held in the years after the demise of the First International (1864-1876), the new organization represented mass parties in several major European countries. Its gatherings, moreover, brought together distinguished parliamentary leaders and powerful socialist functionaries, men whose decisions at home were of great consequence. Thus, considerable attention was given to the international congresses which were held in Paris (1889), Brussels (1891), Zurich (1893), Copenhagen (1896), Paris

To end

(1900), Amsterdam (1904), Stuttgart (1907), Copenhagen (1919), and Basle (1912). In 1900 an International Socialist Bureau was established at Brussels to coordinate the activities of the organization. Lastly, a journal was published in French, German, and English to encourage communication between the individual parties.

If the Second International represented the growing power of the socialist movement, it also was a token of other things. It was composed of groups that stood for different versions of socialism in each of the member countries. Moreover, while Marx was extolled in theory, he was more frequently ignored in practice. Thus the various socialist parties generally were characterized by an inclination for reform, and not revolution, within their respective states.

Crucial for the fate of the organization was the disparity between the professed ideal of uniting the international working class and the reality of nationalism. It was soon to be demonstrated that the ties to individual countries could not be rent asunder when a choice had to be made between loyalty to nation and loyalty to the international socialist movement. On the eve of World War I, the International sought in vain to concert socialist action, passing a resolution in 1914 which urged general strikes to prevent the onset of hostilities. When this action failed, the individual parties stood by their countries, one by one coming to the support of national war efforts. This marked the effective end of the Second International.