

## BERNSTEIN AND THE "SCIENTIFIC" SOCIALISTS

A Thinker's Ideas Compared with the "Scientific" Contention that Socialism is Fixed and Subject to no Variation—Fact vs. Fancy

Under the title "How Is Scientific Socialism Possible?" there has appeared a lecture delivered by Edward Bernstein before the Berlin Society of Students, an organization devoted to the study of social science. We take from it the following extracts, which appear to us of interest to American Socialists:

"Science is, when we try to define it concisely, merely systematized knowledge. Knowledge means the recognition of the true essence and relation of things. As, however, according to the state of knowledge at a given time, there can be only one science covering a certain field of knowledge.

"In respect to the so-called exact sciences, this is generally recognized. It will hardly occur to anybody to talk about liberal physics, socialistic mathematics, conservative chemistry, and so forth. Is it different with the science of the history of man and social institutions? I can not admit it and consider a 'Socialistic social science' simply nonsense.

"Wherever we meet views of that kind we find after careful investigation that the mistake consists in the underestimation or ignoring of the difference between scientifically formulated theories or doctrines and science itself.

"That socialism is and can not be a pure science seems to me proven by what has just been stated. The definition as expressed in the term excludes it. No 'ism' is a science. What we signify by 'isms' are points of view, tendencies, systems of thought or demands, but not sciences.

"The foundation of any real or genuine science is experience. It builds upon accumulated knowledge. Socialism, however, is a theory of a coming state of society and, therefore, lacks the characteristic features of a strictly scientific conclusion. Nevertheless, there is an intimate relation between Socialism as represented by Social Democracy and science. Socialism draws in larger and larger measure upon the armory of science as the source of its strength.

"As a political party it stands nearest to science, representing a movement of an ascending class. As such it is freer in its criticism of the existing order than any other party or movement. And freedom of criticism furnishes the fundamental principle or perquisite of scientific insight.

"Society is a living, developing organization, and the party or class whose tendency is in the direction of progress and development may naturally be expected to show the greatest interest in knowledge and social development. This interest is present in the Social Democracy, because the knowledge of social inter-relations furnishes a means by which social progress can be accelerated. At the same time, this knowledge of social inter-relations can be used as a means to remove all conditions checking or retarding social evolution.

"Socialism is, as before stated, in a certain degree always a result of our will, but by no means of our fancy. In order to reach its desired goal Social-

ism needs the knowledge of the forces of society and their inter-relation, as a leading principle.

"The title, 'Scientific Socialism,' is misleading, as it may intimate that Socialism as a theory is pure science. This conception is not only a mistaken one, but it brings Socialism in jeopardy, because it is calculated to deprive it of one of the chief prerogatives of scientific judgment—namely, of scientific impartiality. Each sentence in a given scientific construction of Socialism is then considered as a necessary link in the claim of Socialistic proofs in the form in which it is expressed. This is likely to be of great disadvantage in practical work. Therefore, I would prefer such a term of Socialism that would express the idea that it is based upon scientific insight and recognizes that as its leading principle, but at the same time indicates that it does not claim to be science, and, as such, is not fixed and settled at any time. It is always subject to variation. The term that best expresses the essence of this 'ism' is Critical Socialism—the word 'critical' being used in the Kantian sense of scientific criticism."

So much for Bernstein's thought-provoking views. They will not be altogether new to readers of The Herald, which has stood for Socialism as an art dealing with social phenomena and evolution. The contention of the self-styled "scientific" Socialists that Socialism is formulated, fixed, settled, subject to no variation (as the editor of The Challenge recently declared) is pure nonsense; to call it science is folly. Socialism without variation is dead. A "science" that has nothing new to develop is a contradiction in terms. If Socialism is as firmly fixed as a theorem in mathematics, how do you explain Bernstein vs. Kantsky, Jaures vs. Guesde, De Leon vs. Willschire, and other conflicting and contending personalities in the movement?

Insisting upon a "scientific" Socialism, Socialists who are not scientists oppose immediate demands in a political platform. They advocate a declaration of principles which could be conveniently located on the point of a needle and include all their "science," but as a matter of cold fact would be nothing more, according to Bernstein and The Herald, than a meaningless jargon of revolutionary cant.

On the other hand, Socialists who are not "scientific," or at least do not repeat with tiresome and ridiculous iteration a phraseology that belongs to the region of fancy and not to the realm of fact, who study social phenomena and evolution with a view to using their knowledge in the interest and for the benefit of society, that is the oppressed, the proletariat, do favor and insist upon a practical platform of progressive and far-reaching reforms, never losing sight of the ultimate supremacy of the producers of wealth over all forms of injustice and exploitation—a condition which can be established only by the social ownership of the tools of production and facilities of distribution.

There is no sense in this convention adopting a preamble and leaving the fight to be carried on throughout the country, when there is a difference of principle which should be disposed of. Those who are in favor of a cataclysmic declaration, hollering three cheers for a co-operative commonwealth and against everything that may benefit the people as reforms should stand together, and those who believe in a progressive program should likewise take their position together and on principle at least, we should have a definite understanding, and to my mind, after a year or two, a great many who have heretofore been so wise will wake up to the realization that there is a difference in principle among socialists, and mere personalities have simply been demagogical sidelights.

Seymour Stedman.

Among those who may attend the Indianapolis convention from Chicago we have heard mentioned the following: Mrs. Corinne S. Brown, Mrs. Kate Johnson, Phillip S. Brown, Seymour Stedman, C. T. H. Westphal, W. J. McSweeney, R. J. Robinson, Charles Tyl, F. Hlavacek, J. A. Ambroz, Isador Laddoff and A. S. Edwards.

Comrades in Illinois branches can send their credentials to any of the foregoing in care of headquarters, or to C. T. H. Westphal, Secretary of the state committee, 124 1/2 North Campbell avenue, Chicago.

### Arrangements for Convention

The following circular letter has been issued by the committee of arrangements for the Indianapolis convention: Pursuant to instructions which we have received from our respective national headquarters, and in conformity with notices issued from the same sources regarding the National Unity convention of Socialist parties to be held in Indianapolis, Indiana, on July 29th, 1901, we herewith extend you a cordial invitation to be present at said convention.

Being instructed to make such arrangements as would conduce to the economy and convenience of the delegates and facilitate the work of the convention, we hereby inform you that said convention will be held in Masonic Hall, corner of Washington street and Capitol avenue, and will be called to order at 10:00 o'clock on the morning of Monday, July 29th, 1901.

The Grand hotel, located at Illinois and Maryland streets, two blocks north of the Union Station, having made a special rate of \$2.00 per day, has been selected by us as the headquarters of the convention.

Cheap rooms and restaurants may also be found in the vicinity of the convention hall, and arrangements may be made to reserve rooms by forwarding instructions to George E. Mills, 122 1/2 E. Court street, or to William Mahoney, 120 N. Penn. street, Suite 18.

A special rate of one fare and a third has been procured upon the following terms: Those attending convention must purchase first-class tickets within three days from opening of convention, not including Sunday, and must get a certificate from the railroad agent showing that such ticket was bought to attend the Socialist convention. These certificates must be presented at convention on 31st day of July to be signed by secretary and representative of railroad. Upon fulfillment of these conditions a return ticket may be purchased for one-third regular fare; provided, that there be at least one hundred certificates representing tickets for which not less than seventy-five cents have been paid.

It is important that at least one hundred certificates be presented in order to get the benefit of the reduction, and these tickets must not be sold or speculated in, as the party is pledged to redeem all such at full rates.

Hoping that your respective organizations will be represented with delegates contributing their wisest counsel to the assembled Socialist forces, we conclude by proffering our labor in the performance of any services which we may be able to render to visiting delegates. Yours fraternally,

Geo. E. Mills,  
R. Greuling,  
J. W. Kelly,  
M. H. Weiel,  
Wm. Croke,  
Leon Greenbaum,  
E. Val Putnam,  
M. S. Hayes,  
Wm. L. Hamilton,  
Wm. Mahoney.

Joint Committee on Arrangements.

### Illinois Social Democrats

A special meeting of the Social Democrats of Illinois affiliated with 126 Washington street will be held at Lauterbach's hall, North Clark street, Chicago, Sunday afternoon, July 21, at 2:30, to which all members of the branches in this state are urgently invited.

Branches throughout the state not intending to send a delegate to Indianapolis may forward their credentials to the secretary of this committee.

Arthur Dennison, Chairman.  
C. T. H. Westphal, Secretary.

### Unprecedented Meetings

The attendance at Comrade E. V. Debs' meetings in South Dakota, where he spoke on Socialism under Chautauqua assembly auspices, was unprecedented in the history of that state. He has already been engaged for next year, provided he can fill the appointments, and everywhere the people are clamorous for his return. At Aberdeen he broke all records of attendance and receipts, it being the biggest day in the twelve years' history of the assembly, exceeding "Bryan Day" two years, which had the record until the Socialist day this year.

The dangerous channel in East river between the mainland and Long Island, known as "Hell Gate," is properly "Hurl Gate," owing to the hurl and whirl of the water in passing through the channel. The battleship Massachusetts recently went through the gate unharmed, and steamers of equal length, carrying hundreds of passengers, daily navigate the channel, to improve the navigation of which the government expended \$20,000,000. Still the name of Hell Gate sticks. The idea of a hell gate through which oceans of water are incessantly pouring is not orthodox.

## NARROW DOGMATISM IN THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Socialists Who Arrogate to Themselves the Privilege of Determining What the Convention Shall Do—Social Democrats Will Not Be Browbeaten

When the chairman's gavel falls on the first session all organizations participating in the convention must forever cease to exist as having any political significance, and any attempt to revive them is the worst of treason to the proletariat of America.

—A. M. Simons in Inter. Soc. Review.

The Herald congratulates the Socialists of the various organizations to be represented in the Indianapolis convention, called in response to the action of the Social Democratic party last January, that in the six months elapsed since the proposition for a union convention was adopted there has been so little said by any representative of the different factions to complicate the situation or engender new causes for strife. We have on our part entirely refrained, even against provocation designed to have the opposite effect, from involving the comrades in any fresh and acrimonious discussion. And this we have done solely in the interest of harmony and final unity. A decent regard for the rights of the delegates, as well as our own self respect and loyalty to the decisions of our own organization, compel us, however, to enter a firm protest against the spirit of arrogance and discord manifested in the above quotation from an article by A. M. Simons in the International Socialist Review. When and by whom was A. M. Simons or the Review invested with the prerogatives of determining in advance of the convention what it shall or shall not do? Who clothed him with the office of dictator? Whence does he derive the right to issue bulls and formulate threats against Socialists—even the "Chicago" faction?

Let us understand each other: We of the Social Democratic party are quite willing to unite, if in its collective wisdom the convention finds a practical and honorable way for us to do so. We hope that way may be found—we will help find it. But we absolutely refuse to be united in accordance with any plan Editor Simons and others may have "up their sleeve." Not Simons, nor any coterie in sympathy with him, shall determine for us the terms upon which we will unite. This shall be done by the convention, by the entire body of delegates conferring and reasoning together for the benefit of the Socialist cause. Any departure from

that program will be a "petty exhibition of jealousy, narrow partisanship and ignorant insularity," not promotive of union but of personal ambitions and animosities.

Again, let us understand each other; it is so much better than assuming a role that makes one ridiculous: The Social Democratic party has by general vote decided that the results of the Indianapolis convention shall be submitted for approval to the organization by referendum. The five members of the committee of arrangements representing us are charged with the duty of carrying out this mandate of the party. No delegate in that convention will have the right to do anything in violation of the expressed will of the party in this respect. Now comes Editor Simons and says in effect: "Any delegate representing the Social Democratic party (of Chicago, of course, for no other can be referred to) who does not abandon that organization when the chairman's gavel falls on the first session will be a traitor!" Such language is neither wise, diplomatic, nor sensible. It evinces a distinctly hostile and implacable spirit. It is a denial of professions of unity. It is mischievous, discordant and foolish.

We sincerely hope, for the sake of unity and the forward movement of Socialism, that few delegates will go to Indianapolis animated by a motive so entirely opposed to reason and common sense. We of the Social Democratic party will go there, not to be browbeaten by those who arrogate to themselves any sort of superiority or allow their petty personal littlenesses to overcome whatever nature, in a compensating mood, may have attempted to do for them, but as comrades pledged to the object for which the convention is held—Socialist Unity—and as such entitled to and demanding that when the chairman's gavel falls calling the first session to order it shall be on a convention of Socialists gathered together, on equal terms and with equal rights, to confer over, reason about and, let us all hope, to finally formulate a plan of union which will be acceptable to every delegate and to every organization represented. In such a convention there will be no need for the branding iron or an impertinent censor hissing "treason" and deciding what it shall or shall not do.

## INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

BY KARL KAUSKY

When the Socialists declare the abolition of private property in the instruments of production to be unavoidable, he does not mean that some fine morning, without helping themselves, the exploited classes will find the ravens feeding them. The Social considers the breakdown of the present social system to be unavoidable, because he knows that the economic evolution inevitably brings on those conditions that will compel the exploited classes to rise against this system of private ownership; that this system multiplies the number and the strength of the exploited and diminishes the number and strength of the exploiting classes both of whom are still adhering to it; and that it will finally lead to such unbearable conditions for the masses of the population that they will have no alternative but either to go down in silence or to overthrow the system of property.

Such a revolution may assume manifold forms according to the circumstances under which it is effected. It by no means must necessarily be accompanied with violence and bloodshed. There are instances in the history of mankind when the ruling classes were either so exceptionally clear sighted, or so particularly weak and cowardly, that they submitted to the inevitable and voluntarily abdicated. Neither is it necessary that the social revolution be decided at one blow; such probably never was the case. Revolutions preparatory, themselves by years and decades of economic and political struggles and changes; they are accomplished under constant ups and downs sustained by the conflicting classes and parties; not infrequently are interrupted by long periods of reaction. Nevertheless, however manifold the forms may be which a revolution may assume, never yet was any revolution accomplished without vigorous action on the part of those who suffered most under the existing conditions.

When, furthermore, the Socialists declare those special reforms that stop short of the overthrow of the present

system of property to be unable to abolish the contradictions which the present economic development has produced, he by no means implies that all struggles on the part of the exploited against their present sufferings are useless within the framework of the existing social order; or that they should patiently accommodate themselves to all ill-treatments and forms of exploitation which the capital system may decree to them, or that so long as they are at all exploited, it matters little how. What he does mean is that the exploited classes should not overrate the social reforms and should not imagine that through them the existing conditions can be rendered satisfactory to them. The exploited class should carefully examine all proposed social reforms that are offered to them.

### The Pope's "Bull"

The Pope is encouraging the organization of a Catholic (scab) workingmen's association in Italy for the purpose of combating the regular trade unions and Socialism. Says a dispatch from Rome, dated July 12:

"These societies will supply workingmen to take places of the strikers. The associations have a membership of 20,000. The Pope believes in the broad theory that a man has the right to work for an employer or not to work for him, but he concedes to the employer the right to employ men on such terms and conditions as he sees fit."

The empire's standing army now has 75,000 men, a large number of horses and mules and a full quota of asses. Forty thousand soldiers stationed in the Philippine islands, 10,000 in Porto Rico and Hawaii, 5,000 in Cuba, and the remaining 20,000 are doing ornamental work, including murdering workingmen, at any time capitalism may demand their services. Washington City is full of officers, naval and military, tricked out in gold lace and buttons, the admiration of themselves, representatives of lesser courts, and particularly of the emperor, who is boss of the entire showman's match.

## A PROGRESSIVE PLATFORM DEMANDED

The impending convention at Indianapolis is one of the importance of which all realize. It can cramp the movement into a narrow circle, or it can give it breadth and vitality. The real details of organization are of minor importance; the question is whether or not the party will adopt a strong, progressive platform.

There are many Socialists who believe in a simple revolutionary declaration, who are against any improvement of conditions, unless it is accomplished by the class-conscious workingmen through their own party and their own representatives.

On the other hand there are other Socialists who are willing to accept anything which will tend to a relief from the economic burdens which they bear, always bearing in mind that they are simply steps to the complete overthrow of the entire capitalist system.

Some are going to this convention with the avowed purpose of adopting a preamble and leaving the platform and its immediate demands to different localities, or subject to the approval of a central committee, which will place us in a position to keep up a most beautiful fight, and of all fights in this world the most and most contemptible are those which exist among fanatics and heretics, and there is quite a number of such in the Socialist movement.





