

Regeneración

English Section
Edited by WM. C. OWEN

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Democracy Signifies The People Strong.

Decidedly, most decidedly, we cannot make a Revolution. No section of society is large or intelligent or powerful enough for that. A Revolution, being only Progress moving with unusual rapidity, is a growth begotten doubtless of discontent, from which springs thought, which in its turn leads to clearer understanding and a determination to overthrow what is out of date and put in its place something more in harmony with the advanced knowledge of the times. Revolution is a growth, inevitable to the advance of knowledge, but choked by the weeds of tradition, habit, superstition and the institutions of the past. We are gardeners and our duty is to remove the weeds. Nature will do the rest.

First, it is self evident that without the earth we cannot live. We are land animals, who must walk upon the earth and get from it our food and shelter. How many of our readers have ever asked themselves what Labor really is? Labor, from its lowest to its loftiest operations, is nothing but the removal of raw material from one place to another. We change, and re-change, and change endlessly, the location of natural resources. We never have done anything else and never shall. Figure it out for yourself.

That much is easy, but how are we so to give all men access to these resources, on those free and equal terms which alone can satisfy the aspiration of a Democracy that means to be strong? This our Anarchist agitators, for example, do not explain, because they have not taken the trouble to get knowledge on the subject. Like "Freedom", of London, they habitually treat Land Nationalization, which is a State Socialist plan and would lead to an enormous concentration of Governmental power, with Henry George's proposition that the community should take the land values which it itself produced. That is not a State Socialist but a strictly Anarchistic, or Individualistic, proposition. It leaves it to the individual to decide how much it is worth his while to pay for the special privilege of occupying a specially valuable piece of land, and that seems just. It also seems expedient because it obviously would do away with the vast hierarchy of officials now engaged in levying and collecting taxes on industry. It seems righteous, because the values the community has created the community should have. And absurdly it is most disgraceful that our professed revolutionary leaders do not understand the Land Question. Land monopoly is a weed choking the life out of the tree of human life. We must understand how to root it out that it never can grow up again.

Labor leader, who are the professed teachers of the toiling millions, will tell you that religious conflicts do not interest them. Yet if European history teaches one lesson more clearly than another it is that the nations which rebelled against and overthrew the authority of the Church of Rome, immediately grew strong; whereas those, like Spain, which remained under its yoke, withered and withered away until they became, as they are today, the mere shadow of their former selves. How can a Democracy which means to be strong afford to ignore that most striking of all lessons?

Up to about seventy-five years

ago the English government arrogated to itself the right to dictate to the English people where and from whom they should buy the food and other supplies, as the American government does to this day. It gave the English landowners the monopoly of supplying England's wants. Then the people rose against that tyranny and adopted Free Trade. Have you ever reflected that the British Empire, with its colonies on which the sun never sets, its command of the seas and all the other elements of strength against which Germany was so bitterly defeated from that revolt? Has Democracy, which wants to be strong, no lesson to learn from England in this respect? Free Trade is the natural condition and, therefore, healthy; whereas Protection is a governmental artificiality which fosters special privilege and robs the masses of their native strength. When I, who try to study impartially and learn, point these things out to Labor agitators they reply that Free Trade and Protection are "bourgeois" questions in which they are not interested. What a delusion! Pre-asked themselves what Labor really is? Labor, from its lowest to its loftiest operations, is nothing but the removal of raw material from one place to another. We change, and re-change, and change endlessly, the location of natural resources. We never have done anything else and never shall. Figure it out for yourself.

This country, like all others, swarms with agitators who yell incessantly that Labor, at last, is coming into its own. Cross-question them and you will find ninety-nine out of every hundred believing that the miracle is to be accomplished by State interference, by some form of Paternalism under which officials shall administer the national state for the good of the nation. Yet the truth is that the rise and fall of European Powers bears sickeningly monotonous testimony to the fact that when a nation puts its affairs into the hands of official trustees, whom it expects to think and act on its behalf, that nation forthwith goes down the hill, loses its power of initiative, is shorn of its virility and falls as Spain, again the classical example, has fallen. Moreover, this truth, so well established by the record of the nations, slaps us in the face when we turn to a contemplation of individual life. No man ever becomes a real man until he is made to stand on his own feet. Until he has freed himself from apron strings no one ever amounts to anything.

It is necessary to speak very frankly of this war and of Germany, because the delusion now being spread broadcast is that we shall become strong by copying State-ridden Germany. If I believed that I should be enthusiastically pro-German, whereas I am pronouncedly anti-German because I know that exactly the opposite is true. Germany was strong, gloriously strong, when she was producing Gethes and Beethovens; and Germany fell into weakness when, in their stead, she took to producing bureaucrats and swaggering soldiers. She was strong when she led the world in free and scientific thought. She castrated herself when she began to grovel at the feet of an "I am the direct agent of God" autocrat. She was a powerful friend of progress when her great writers were teaching a noble cosmopolitanism. She became the universal enemy when she took to shouting "Germany over all." There is no strength in the invention of deadly gases wherewith to poison your enemy, or of Zeppelins wherewith to take the lives of innocent women and children, or of submarines to be used for the blowing up of helpless immigrant ships. These are not evidences of strength but of a

moral degeneracy that is most profound and that, if by any possibility it could triumph, would usher in an era of weakness from which it might take us centuries to recover.

It is necessary to speak plainly, that the true grounds of unconquerable opposition to Teutonic State Socialism may be understood and explained to those who, as yet, have had no opportunity of understanding. And, believing that I have some little knowledge of the labor and revolutionary movement in the United States, I add that at this moment within our national boundaries there is hardly to be found a German revolutionary agitator who is worth his salt; hardly one who is not a pessimistic mouthpiece of a narrow materialism which feeds us only on the sawdust of such mechanical formulae as the "materialistic conception of history," "economic determinism," and so forth; hardly one who has not lost the art of striking those major chords which spur men to heroism, teach them to "scorn delights and lead laborious days," and train them as athletes for the stern struggle that lies ahead. Where the revolutionary movement of the United States is not sunk in sensationalism and personal debauchery it is lost in a wilderness of a arid pedantry, and for this history will hold the influence of State-ridden Germany mainly responsible.

Our business is to show the Social Revolution not as an intellectual theory but as a necessity; as a child that has been carried in the womb of society far beyond the allotted time and is entitled to be born; as a great change already long overdue. We cannot go on like this. Democracy—which means "the people strong"—has been in gestation since the days of the Renaissance, and now it has to be or not to be. If the havoc wrought by the inbred aristocracies of Europe cannot teach us we should be able to learn from Mexico, at our very gates. When we exorcise the Money Power we should have the intelligence and knowledge to understand that it is the direct outcome of the monopoly granted by Government, and probably, the most pernicious fruit of that Paternalism which insists on bossing the masses instead of permitting them to manage their own affairs. When we hold up our hands in horror at the brutalities of war we should comprehend that concentration of power in the hands of the few will always send the helpless many to the shambles.

What I write is easy to understand, for the most illiterate find it confirmed by the experience of their daily lives. Outside of an asylum for the feeble-minded no one doubts that we have so to revolutionize our land system as that we shall not be working eternally for the landlord and living only by his courtesy. The question is most practical, and an hour spent in serious discussion of it is worth, from a revolutionary standpoint, years of dramatic criticism and libraries on homo-sexuality. All men today recognize that the politician is a most unsatisfactory citizen, and State Socialism's proposition to put him in sole charge of life deserves most careful examination. The question is most practical, and it is better to look at it through the spectacles of modern experience than to pore over Karl Marx and pretend, most hypocritically, to understand him. The question of militarism is evidently up for settlement, and you can assist by explaining that conscription is a reversion to chattel slavery, and by showing to what

the ethics of conscription have brought us, as illustrated by Germany. On the other hand, by swaggering around as "Internationalists," as "Anti-Militarists," as neutrals, who stand loftily indifferent to the struggles now shaking the world, you make yourselves not only ridiculous but contemptible. The sexless amount to nothing and we habitually speak of them as "neuters."

In the New York "World" of November 19th, the following appeared editorially:—"Had the German General Staff not obtained control of the Government of Germany, all Europe would not be drenched in blood. Had the rulers of Germany not been deluded by the folly of a General Staff that believed the German army could crush France in six weeks, finish Russia in six weeks more and end the war before Great Britain could come to the rescue of her allies, Europe would not be one vast graveyard and hospital." No words could be absolutely true, and no truth could be no more appalling. The undeniable fact is that the country which has developed State Socialism to the highest point is also the country which has fallen most completely under the sway of the most powerful and ruthless militarism on record. If that cannot open our eyes to the folly of increasing the powers of Government our blindness is beyond relief.

WM. C. OWEN.

JOTTED DOWN

Anton Fendrich is a well-known German Socialist; so well known that recently the Kaiser granted him a special interview which lasted two hours. It appears to have been a genuine love-feast, for Mr Fendrich goes into ecstasies over the Kaiser's "clear, blue eyes, glowing like molten steel," his affability and his inherent love of peace, while the Kaiser remarked that his body-guard consisted "almost entirely of Social Democrats. And they are splendid fellows, all of them." This is all duly set forth in Mr Fendrich's recently published book, "At the front in an auto." Highly interesting and still more highly educational, for what the Socialists really are is a point on which the world is beginning to be inquisitive. The impression that the world has been a good deal deluded on this head is gaining ground. Yes, indeed.

In Laing's "Social and Political state of the European people," a long-forgotten book which dealt with the days of 1848, is to be found the following respecting the Prussian bureaucratic system, then in its infancy:—"All this machinery of functionarism, with its numerous ranks and gradations in every district, filled with a staff of clerks and expectants in every department, looking for employments, appointments, promotions, was intended to be a new support of the throne in the new social state of the continent; a third class, in close connection with the people by their various official duties...yet attached by their interests to the kingly power. The Beamtenstand, or functionary class, was to be the equivalent of a class of nobility...to make up in numbers for the want of individual weight and influence."

Since then the thing has grown—quite a little. Since then, even in individualistic England, quite a number of "free-born" Britons have found it "along the line of logical development" to urge the still further extension of bureaucracy and thus secure themselves a job that will last for life. In revolutionary France

many an anxious parent wishes nothing better for his children than a safe government clerkship, however poorly paid. And in America? Why, in America every labor agitator is a business man and understands that the greater the number of state jobs the better his chance of landing one and lifting himself out of the ruck.

Up here in Washington also well-meaning friends deplore my criticisms on Organized Labor and its leaders. One of them kindly sends me the Seattle Labor organ, that I may feast on its revolutionary articles. But the cuts of its worthy candidates for office are what I really admire, and my blood runs riot when I contemplate the imminent triumph of Labor, assured by the election of Peter Jenkins— noted for his activity in the Bubblemaker Union—to the office of Second Assistant War Tax Stamp Commissioner. Another comrade landed in a position of influence, where he can be of real assistance to the revolution!

These gentlemen have been playing up the address delivered at the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor by E. Bevin, dock worker and delegate from the British Labor Congress. The heading runs: "Bevin tears the mask off war."—In every country we have a vulture class (Applause) You must have one here." And then I read:—"The labor leaders told Premier Asquith: 'If you will take over the means of living and prevent an increase in the cost of living, we will not ask you for an increase of wages.' He failed to accept our offer."

Yes: Asquith had the audacity to frown on Organized Labor's intelligent (!) proposal that the government should become the All-in-All of English life; that it should be the sole owner and absolute monopolist of the "Means of living"—a charmingly comprehensive term which embraces every thing, some forty million English lives include—and be the one employer, on whom every worker would depend. Of course Asquith is not a dock worker, but there is some reason to suppose that he still has brains. Perhaps he thought this was out-Germanizing Germany. Perhaps, being a man of experience, he has some idea of the "Vulture class" of bureaucrats that would gather at the feast.

Subscribers complain that I do not give more space to the doings of "Labor." Why should I? Why should I boost the vultures whose every thought—masked under revolutionary phrases—is concentrated on breaking in to the public crib? Why should I dedicate one inch of space to the idiots—for many of them are honest idiots—who, after fifteen months of the greatest slaughter this world has ever known, cannot understand that Government, centralized Government, clothed with the authority to hurl millions into war, is the very institution responsible for all this bloodshed, and, therefore, the very last institution in the world whose hands we should desire to strengthen? State Socialism is the dream of imbeciles, whose ignorance of history is only equalled by their blindness to what is going on beneath their noses.

When men take up a dishonest role they become at once intellectually incapable of thinking straight. They become so inca-

table that they cannot understand how brutally and ludicrously the particular principles and tactics they profess and pursue contradict the larger ethical principles by appealing vociferously to which they win the applause of the well-meaning but unthinking mob—that mob which is responsible for the failure of Democracy and the continued reign of Privilege. Such men will orate most feelingly on Liberty and Equality, but will devote their lives to building up an Aristocracy of Labor, getting a monopoly of jobs and leaving their less fortunate brothers to starve in enforced idleness. Such men will thunder against the corruption of politics and at the same time prove themselves unblushingly the cheapest politicians on the market. They will weep cataracts of tears over the sufferings of the poor, and wine and dine and squander money on loose women at a pace that our gilded youth might envy. What I write is true; notoriously true. This whole thing is one gigantic sham, and the fate of all shams is, sooner or later, smash irremediable.

Mr. Bevin voiced his opposition to conscription, as I do; for I consider it a reversion to chattel slavery, inasmuch as the life of the individual is no longer owned by himself but by that newest and cruellest of all masters—the State. But consider how Mr. Bevin, described as a most practiced orator and able, therefore, to clothe ugly thoughts with pleasing phrases, put it. He said: "The privileges and regulations the trade unions had given up in the interests of their country—and you, friends, know what it means to allow the lower class of labor to be brought into the higher grades of industry—meant that the result of a century of struggle had been given away in the interest of the nation." He urged that, if there was to be conscription, property should also be conscripted, and in that I heartily agree. But he spoke as the haughtiest and least sympathetic of aristocrats might have spoken, contrasting high with low class labor and grumbling that it had cost the former a century of struggle to win their—Privileges. That is not the stuff of which genuine reformers or revolutionists are made. That is not the philosophy to render loyal service to the great movement for human liberty and equality with which the world today is pregnant. That, on the contrary, is re-action of the deepest dye, and it is all we can ever hope for from those whose real task is not the emancipation of Labor but the creation of a specially-privileged class of Labor. Lackeys are a specially-privileged class and there are none so servile as they. Similarly the aristocracy of Labor will prove itself ultimately the most submissive servant of the autocratic State. We should not deceive ourselves.

WM. C. OWEN.

Laconics of Liberty

From Charles T. Sprading's book
LIBERTY AND THE GREAT LIBERTARIANS

THE STATE makes use of the money which it exerts from me to unjustly impose fresh constraints upon me; this is the case when it prescribes for me its theology or philosophy, when it prescribes for me ordinances as a special form of religious observance, when it pretends to regulate my morals and my manners, to limit my labor or my expenditure, to fix the price of my merchandise or the rate of my wages. With the coin which I do not owe it and which it steals from me it defrays the expense of the persecution which it inflicts upon me. Let us beware of the encroachments of the State, and suffer to be nothing more than a watch-dog. --TAINNE.

NO REVOLUTION ever rises above the intellectual level of those who make it, and little is gained where one false notion supplants another. But we must some day, at last and forever, cross the line between nonsense and common sense. And on that day we shall pass from class paternalism, originally derived from the fetish fiction in times of universal ignorance, to human brotherhood in accordance with nature of things and our knowledge of it; from political government to industrial administration; from competition in individualism to individuality in co-operation; from war and despotism in any form to peace and liberty. --CARLYLE.

All our liberties are due to men who, when their conscience has been compelled them, have broken the laws of the land. --DR. CLIFFORD.

There is one thing in the world more wicked than the desire to command, and that is the will to obey. --WILLIAM KINGDON CLIFFORD.

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Tenemos gusto de saber que nuestros excelentes companeros Bautista I. e Isidra M. Leal de Bisbee, Arizona, ambos conscientes e infatigables propagandistas de nuestros ideales, han visto aumentada su familia con un beboto, al que anarquicamente han puesto el nombre de REIVINDICACION; que seguira llevando mientras este en aptitud de escoger el mejor le agrade.

Como es natural, siendo sus padres anarquistas de convicciones solidas, el pequenuelo no ha sido ni sera ensuciado por las manos asquerosas de los frailes, ni llevado al registro civil a ser numerado como borrego.

Que mejor podemos desear a sus padres y a la misma criatura que el que cuando esta crezca sea util a la humanidad?

E. F. M.

LADISLAW SANCHEZ

Tus amigos de Seguin, Texas, de quienes te separaste hace un ano, desean comunicarse contigo para asuntos de familia. Dirijete a: D. CARAMILLO, R. 5, Box 28, Seguin, Tex.

Dos Números Más

Recibimos ya los números 13 y 16 de REIVINDICACION, el periódico amigo anarquista que está siendo publicado en Barcelona, España, por un grupo de buenas camaradas que reconocen la importancia de la Revolución Social Mexicana, se han impuesto la noble tarea de desbaratar la labor de embustes y de constancia y de consciencia al proletariado mundial, y está ensañando a éste que el único medio que exi le para conquistar la libertad política, económica y social de los trabajadores, es el de la revolución armada contra la Autoridad, el Capital y el Clero, ejerciendo durante ella la expropiación de la riqueza social a beneficio de todos.

Tenemos la pena de decir que el número 14, así como los números 6, 7, 8 y 9 y 10 del referido semanario, no han llegado a nuestro poder.

Por estas líneas encaremos al grupo editor de REIVINDICACION que nos remitan los números que faltan, para poder servir las suscripciones que se nos piden.

DERIBO al gran recargo de trabajo que tenemos desde hace varias semanas, nos hemos retrasado en la correspondencia. Sirva esto de disculpa con los compañeros a quienes no hemos podido contestar aun sus cartas.

Por tener gran recargo de trabajo nos es todavia imposible publicar la seccion de administracion esta semana.