

EDITORIAL

PROF. PAUL MILYUKOV'S ADDRESS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ARARE treat is offered in this issue to the readers of *The People* by the publication in full of the address delivered at Carnegie Hall on the evening of January the 14th, before the Civic Forum, by Paul Milyukov, the leader of the Constitutional Democrats in the present Duma.¹

Milyukov is the first non-Socialist who does not misquote the sociology of Marx. The analysis that he makes of the present revolutionary movement in Russia is masterly. Socialists, will of course, disagree with the workableness of the Constitutional Democratic program presented by Milyukov, and it is not unlikely that Milyukov himself, though now a sadder, is also a wiser man. But it is the privilege of the Socialist, just because he is drilled in Marxian philosophy, to pity the fate that compels a Milyukov to “drag his anchor” as he is now unfortunately doing, in the tempest that is raging in Russia.

Milyukov's analysis of the situation in Russia, backed by the facts that he marshals to the front, is about the best vindication yet produced by socio-political development of the Marxian philosophy. The circumstance that the vindication is enacted upon so broad and conspicuous a stage as Russia adds vividness thereto.

The course of social evolution is from anarchy to despotism; from despotism to representative political government; from representative political government to Industrial Administration, or Socialism. To express the same thought in other words—and from another viewpoint—human society starts in the mobocracy of individualism; from the mobocracy of individualism to autocratic individualism; from autocratic individualism to the organized individuality of a ruling class; from the organized individuality of a ruling class to the organized individuality of the

¹ [To be appended.—R.B.]

whole people. Russia found herself, on the eve of the revolution, at the second stage of the process. But that stage was not as clearly marked as it was and is found in other countries. That second stage had not yet solved within itself the elements for the third stage. Milyukov blames the Socialists with “sheer madness” for undertaking “the struggle with the capitalists before their struggle with the autocracy had come to a satisfactory ending.” The charge is correct—but therefore draws the Constitutional Democrats themselves under the ban. Constitutional Democracy under conditions such as Milyukov admits—an insignificant industrial proletariat overtopped by an overwhelming mass of primitive peasantry—is out of the question. Milyukov’s exposition demonstrates the fact—which, strange to say, the Professor does not seem to realize, and at only the consequences of which he sighs—that Russia is not yet ripe to move out of the second into the third social evolutionary stage, and that all that can be expected, by the light of history, confirmed by present experience in Russia, is that the present titanic struggle in Russia—the generous sacrifice of human life, the abnegation, devotedness and lofty morality of the Revolutionary forces—is to frighten and chasten the Autocracy into dropping its extreme barbarous habits and enter into a career of gentleness, or mitigated despotism.

It follows from this estimate—

First, that the orbit in which Russian society is at present moving is that intermediary orbit which preludes the change from autocracy to representative government—an intermediary orbit that all other capitalist nations have had to travel and that some of them, Germany, for instance, is not yet quite out of.

Second, that, although the aspirations of the Russian Socialists were unjustified, nevertheless their TACTICS, that is, their extremely harsh methods, were the correct ones, while the gentler and seemingly more rational tactics of the Constitutional Democrats rather harmed than did good. Barbaric autocracy is only encouraged to persist in its barbarism if assailed with the weapon of civilization. Physical force, and physical force only, only the dread of death can penetrate the hide of barbaric autocracy, and constrain it to gentler ways.

There is a third conclusion—it concerns not Russia; it concerns America—for the very reason that, in Russia, the extreme Socialist tactics were the only ones

from which ultimate practical results could flow, in America such tactics are unnecessary; while, for the very reason that the aspiration of the Russian Socialists were unjustified, it is their slogan—"The unconditional surrender of the Capitalist Class!"—that alone can meet requirements in America.

Prof. Paul Milyukov's address may, for the reasons stated above, be considered a revolutionary chart for the people of America. Nor does the curious circumstance that a Bishop Potter, a political capitalist pulpiter, presided at the unrolling of the chart, detract from its value. The circumstance rather adds zest to the chart by furnishing an additional illustration of the fact that, such is the pulse of the Movement in America, that our capitalists are Providentially driven to counter-act their policy of spreading ignorance, by themselves presiding at the unrolling of so valuable a chart before our people.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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