

NOTES

THE STUTTGART CONGRESS

The recent international congress of socialist and trade-union organizations at Stuttgart forcibly emphasized the fact that a great change is taking place in the character of the socialist movement. Until recent years the socialists have been devoting their attention largely to philosophical and economic controversies, to the formulation of programmes, and to the dissemination of socialist ideas. Today they are turning from theoretical discussions, preaching and agitation to a policy of action. The socialist movement is ceasing to be a more or less doctrinaire agitation for an ideal co-operative commonwealth, and is becoming a genuine battle of the working-class for economic and political supremacy.

At the Stuttgart congress interest was centered upon such practical problems as militarism, trade-unionism, immigration, colonial policies, and woman suffrage. The congress declared that socialists should fight militarism by organizing the young into anti-military bodies; that they should co-operate with trade-unionists in battles against the capitalists; and that they should make every effort to secure the ballot for the working women, not as a matter of sex right but as an instrument to be used in the class struggle. These facts show that the socialists propose to **seize** upon every weapon that can be used against capitalists and to fight vigorously for working-class supremacy.

This trend from theoretical discussion to practical activity is doubtless in large part the natural expression of the growing strength of the socialist movement. In practically all European countries the Socialist Party is now supported by a relatively large body of voters. There is reason to believe that this support cannot any longer be held or at least increased by a policy of inaction. The Socialist Party now has the power and the workers demand practical results. Mere talk no longer suffices. Hence the socialist leaders feel the necessity of laying aside such issues as revisionism in order actually to do something with the power already at their command.

This necessity for action is reinforced by the recent growth and

practical success of trade-unionism. The socialist worker has been finding out that the direct action of the unions often secures more material and political concessions than the oratory of the doctrinaires. Hence the recent growth in European countries, especially in France and Italy, of the syndicalists. This group claims that the trade-union is the only genuine working-class organization, and that the main battle against capitalism must be waged through the trade-unions and not in parliamentary bodies. By means of the strike and other trade-union weapons it hopes to force economic and political concessions, and ultimately to gain possession of the mines, mills, and workshops.

The success of recent great political strikes has profoundly impressed the socialist leaders with the strength of this position. In Russia the first general strike, of less than 10 per cent. of the population, practically paralyzed the country for several days. In Italy the general strike of 1904 against the use of the army to overawe striking working-men was entirely successful. In Belgium suffrage concessions were gained by the first general strike. In Austria and Finland the great demonstrations of the workers secured universal male suffrage in the former country and universal suffrage for both sexes in the latter. The list of these successful general strikes and demonstrations might be enlarged. They have shown conclusively that direct action is sometimes more effective than parliamentarianism. This probably had much to do with the strong sentiment at the Stuttgart congress in favor of placing more emphasis on direct methods.

It is probable, however, that shrewd parliamentary leaders, such as Bebel, Jaures, and Vandervelde, are only too glad to encourage the consideration of practical problems on more general grounds. Some of them, at least, realize the weak points of Marxian theory and appear to dread the disintegrating effects of higher criticism. A continuation of the fight over revisionism and other theoretical questions would not only check the growth of the Socialist Party but might lead to its disruption. On the other hand failure to revise would make little practical difference in the long run. The class struggle would go on just the same since, according to their view, it is the result of conditions which are independent of theoretical interpretation. Moreover, the leaders are well aware that real battles against the capitalist class will do more to solidify the ranks of the workers than any amount of preaching about the class

struggle. They call attention to the fact, for example, that no event in recent years has done more to solidify the ranks of the American workers than the trial of Haywood.

Whether these explanations fully cover the case is perhaps somewhat doubtful. There is no doubt, however, as to the main fact. Socialism is of course in some countries still in the propagandist stage and is likely so to remain for a considerable time. But on the Continent mere agitation is passing. "Revisionism is dead. The class struggle today is a fact and not a theory; a battle and not a book." This, declares one of the leading and ablest American socialists, is the one idea that he brought away from the Stuttgart congress.

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TAXATION IN MISSOURI

Tax reform is making progress in Missouri; a joint and concurrent legislative resolution to amend the state constitution submits to popular vote in November, 1908, the following proposed amendment:

1. The general assembly shall separate the sources of state and local (that is, county, school, and municipal) revenue and establish local option for the counties and municipalities of the state in the selection of the subject of taxation.

2. The separation of the sources of state and local revenues, and the establishment of local option and home rule in taxation, shall be effected by the discontinuance of the levy of a general property tax upon the real and personal property of the state, . . . and the revenues required for state purposes shall thereafter be secured either by the exercise by the general assembly of its power of taxation upon the subjects of taxation other than by the general property tax upon the real and personal property of the state. . . .

3. . . . The counties and cities of the state may subject to taxation for local purposes the real and personal property within their jurisdiction, and may exempt any class of property within such jurisdiction from taxation, either wholly or by reduction of the rate of taxation thereon; Provided, that any taxation or exemption in any county or city shall be uniform upon the same class of subjects within such territory. . . .

6. The separation of the sources of state and local revenues and the establishment of local option as herein provided, shall not be construed as impairing the authority of the general assembly to levy any tax upon the