

## THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM.

BY FRANK MACDONALD.

AMERICAN socialists have added greatly to the volume of talk on the war without adding appreciably to the sum of real knowledge. Some blandly assume that the socialists themselves are responsible, that a moral breakdown occurred, that the International failed the first time it was put to a worthy test, or that terrified and trembling capitalism, appalled by the onswEEPing whirlwind of socialism, steered half a score of ships of state upon the rocks rather than permit them to fall into the hands of a new crew.

This is claiming for the socialists a strength and resourcefulness they never had. The other accepted causes, the Kaiser, the Czar, the mailed fist of Germany, the now armored wooden walls of England, the impending breakup of the Dual Monarchy, the hot water habits of Russia, Pan-Slavism, expansion, colonies, territorial acquisition by force or through diplomacy, served as subject matter for long, exciting, acrimonious debates, which went far and at high speed toward nowhere. They also gave the ever welcome excuse to neglect affairs at home.

Our first task when we were certain the Kaiser was not bluffing in order to get increased military appropriations, or that it was not a ruse on the part of the Czar to cover up some particularly murderous act by the Black Hundreds, was to fix the blame on some party, some class, or some fraction of a party or class. Financial capital, our devil of devils, could not alone be held responsible for precipitating the war to wring increased dividends. The ruin was too wide and inclusive for that. Monarchs could not easily be shown guilty of seeking mere military glory. But we were articulate before we were thoroughly enlightened, and many instantly decided that one or another or all of the great European socialist parties had sorely blundered. We differ in fixing the blame, thus showing in our own case, though we are a single nation, that lack of harmony

we believe should have existed among the national units of the European socialist movement. In the face of this state of affairs it seems almost a certainty that we shall once more come through the crisis with all our delusions intact.

We deal in futures. Consequently the first action of our national executive committee was to extend to our warring comrades an invitation to attend an international peace and unity congress in Washington as soon as previous engagements (on the battlefield) would permit. With all the tasks before us, with plenty of work to be done at home, we concluded that it would be well for socialists to come together and talk things over. The period fixed for that gathering is the one in which the nations, victors and vanquished alike, will be prostrate and bleeding. Every man, and above all every socialist, will be sorely needed to bring order out of chaos, bind up the wounds of war and set the social machine once more running. Delegates to congresses are supposed to be picked individuals. Thus the folly of asking them to abandon their pressing obligations at home and come to this country to talk over affairs in general is apparent.

Socialists desperately opposed the war and were unsuccessful. They are now fighting in the war as citizens of their respective countries. The hardest test will come when the war is over and reconstruction begins. What it is to be, how it is to be done and whether on a higher or lower plane than existed before the war rests in a large degree on that force which the socialists are able to exert and on the practicability of our measures. We have not yet been weighed, but we are going to be. The European comrades understood this and politely declined our invitation to a congress.

We should profit by their example. Each national group has so far acted a wise and honorable part. Though we opposed war we were only a feeble voice crying in the wilderness of bayonets. Our strongest unit, the German Social Democrats, voted in the Reichstag for the war budget, though in conference there was a strong minority opposed to going on record for or against. It was courageous and it was as truly facing the facts as the action of the Belgians in hurling themselves on the invaders and the French in rallying to the tricolor. The German Social Democracy is as much the product and expression of German industrialism and social organization as the German army. Antipodal and antagonistic as these two bodies are, nevertheless they show different phases of the national life. Their strength and thoroughness come from the same sources. The rest of the world paid the Social Democracy the

greatest possible tribute in looking to it as a check to the army. It was inevitable, however, in the hour of national peril that the German army and the German Social Democracy should be united in one solid body, the German people.

Competing nations have faced one another in the battle for markets. Side by side with the industrial army and the industrial army's political manifestation, the socialists, have been the soldiers, the modern armed salesmen of the manufacturers. We have been accustomed to look in awe and reverence to the German Social Democracy because of its greatness, solid organization and tremendous equipment in newspapers, expounders, organizers, parliamentarians and industrial leaders. It is an army similarly organized that was thrown into the battlefield. The purpose of an army is no longer the aggrandizement of princes but the protection and fostering of those interests which control the productive forces of a nation. When these interests are threatened or choked the armies must fight. Our conception of right or wrong, justice or injustice, does not influence the fact. The hideous murderous conflict, with all the millions of agonized human beings involved, will be settled by economic might.

In practice the rights of the weak have never been regarded. It is only a recent theory that the weak have rights, but that theory cannot be effective until economic conditions square with it. Naturally they cannot square without a revolution in the control of social productive machinery.

It must be remembered that, essentially, this "right of might" so savagely proclaimed by the German militarists is a rephrasing of our own socialist economic determinism. It is no more hideous and repulsive than the facts from which it springs, and our reluctance to admit it is balanced by our reluctance to admit its origin.

What makes us aghast and numb at the spectacle of the present war is that it is fratricidal instead of merely homicidal. We are by race descended from the nations involved. They have lived side by side, and in late years have freely traveled from land to land, and there has been much intermarriage. But each nation was an armed camp and each frontier a rampart. The move by the Germans was staggering. It was not unexpected, for it was due to the same causes that have driven them beyond their borders before, that led them to exterminate the Britons and beget the English, to amalgamate with the inhabitants of France and become the French people, that has sent the English to the ends of the earth in search of ever more territory and power, and that has now started

the glacier of Russian humanity toward the southern seas. When a million people invade our country we advise them to take out their first papers. Western Europe cannot do it. On the contrary they must find new lands or new markets. Such is their destiny under capitalism. The righteousness in every event is decided by the outcome, and not all the misery inflicted, outrages committed and hopes shattered can change it. We feel and suffer. Hundreds of thousands blindly die, and there is no individual justice. It is little consolation, by their ruined homes, to know—

“.....in the end the lie shall rot;  
The truth is great and shall prevail—  
When none cares whether it prevail or not.”

It is for a complete overthrow of such conditions that the socialist movement is organized. We hold that productive science is advanced to the point where ample means of livelihood should be accessible, and that the only thing standing in the way of complete and lasting peace is the private ownership of socially operated machinery.

Hitherto we have based much of our propaganda and most of our expectations on internationalism. National hatreds might exist; the socialists the world over were in accord. In August, when the war started, we were to have held our congress in Vienna. To-day our anti-monarchists, whether socialists, syndicalists or anarchists, are in the armies of the Allies fighting their brothers in the armies of Germany and Austria. Peter Kropotkin, greatest of the anarchist-communists, is at last in agreement with George Plechanoff, whose *Anarchism and Socialism* is one of our standard volumes against anarchy. Jules Guesde, who in the Paris congress of 1900 led the denunciation of Millerand's acceptance of a portfolio from Waldeck-Rousseau, is now in the cabinet with Millerand and with Briand, whose earlier advocacy of direct action and the general strike he strenuously fought. The anti-militarist Gustav Herve fights as enthusiastically with his pen as do Robert Blatchford and Henry M. Hyndman, who these many months have proclaimed that England must prepare for the onslaught of Germany.

Yes, European socialists are united on the side of their own countries. As far as we have unity here it is as partisans, and in our absorption in events on the other side of the ocean many of us are neglecting our own affairs at home.

It is plain that what has unified the national groups in this hour of combat is the rediscovery of patriotism, the reawakened love of

native land and home and the unconquerable impulse to defend them.

Again it is the right of might, economic determinism, that impels them. They could no more keep out of this awful deluge of blood than they could keep out of the hideous grind of industrialism. The world has no onlookers, neutrals or calm and impartial critics, when such a test comes. The socialist Reichstag members might have refused to vote the budget, Emil Vandervelde might have kept out of the Belgian and Jules Guesde out of the French cabinet, and still have gone to war. To do so would have been as hypocritical as it would have been suicidal for the French syndicalists to have precipitated a general strike, or for the followers of Pouget and Sorel to have advocated sabotage on the French implements of war. Theories spike no guns in a crisis like this.

The greatest of industrial machines, those of England and Germany, were breaking down long before the war came. There have been plenty of indications that they would. The recent strikes, the nature of proposed social legislation, the rush to organize armies and build up navies and to form new diplomatic alliances, show the coming trouble. We had looked for a peaceful readjustment and the arbitration of various points. We should have known that national antagonisms to-day take the form of strife for trade outlets, and no nation willingly arbitrates such things, for there is always the fear of conceding something. Our socialist movement seeks a new basis of operation. We were opposed by the dominant classes of England and France as bitterly as we were in Germany. Our opposition to militarism in each land was derided for the same reasons. We had the fatalistic feeling that war must be the arbiter under existing conditions, and in striving to end war we began by striving to end these conditions. We failed completely to do so, and this only intensifies real socialist activity for we now face the greatest task, that of settlement.

Our country is not aside from the path of trouble. We spend only a quarter of a billion dollars a year on army and navy. This represents the amount our government feels called upon to pay for our "place in the sun." By the grace of nature we have one of the happiest on earth. But we are convinced, to the extent of a quarter of a billion dollars, that we may be called upon to defend it from those who would push us from it.

Nietzsche, who possessed such a fiendish faculty of pointing out the obvious that to some he is forever accursed, says: "And ye have heard men say, Blessed are the peacemakers; but I say

unto you, Blessed are the warmakers, for they shall be called, if not the children of Jehovah, the children of Odin, who is greater than Jehovah."

It is self-evident. We have more generals, colonels, majors, admirals and captains in the world than priests, and we spend more money for war than for religion. Giving is the test of sincerity in worship, and willingness to submit to taxation is the measure of faith in the objects for which the tax is levied. To the gods whom we would propitiate or from whom we expect benefactions, we make the greater sacrifices. As we give much, even in times of peace, to the God of War, we must believe in his power. We spend one-half as much for war as we spend for schools, and that we do not spend more is because our militarists are not strong enough to exact it. If we kept to European standards we would spend it and send our children from their schools and their churches, where they heard the message of peace and brotherhood, to the armies where they would learn scientifically to kill.

We cannot organize armies to exterminate the armies of those who believe in war. Our method is to restore to all the people control over the things that now constitute the spoils of war. To do this we must begin at home, and there must be sound, intelligent and just nationalism before internationalism will be anything more than a dream. A belief in socialism does not put us outside the psychology of our nation, as is strikingly seen in the case of our Jewish comrades in America. Though even in Russia they were outsiders, were persecuted and saw thousands of their race murdered and were finally whipped forth from the land, many still turn now in hope for success in Russia, because they believe such success means a lightening of the burden carried by their people. While such hopes may be illusory they have never been extinguished in the hearts of men.

American socialists must, for their part, discover or rediscover patriotism before they can make a beginning. In sound nationalism lies unity of action and that conviction of righteousness which is the supreme element in religion. We are not and never have been spiritually dead. The materialistic philosophy of socialism is a splendid foundation for true religion, though sometimes it leads to the acceptance of fantastic creeds instead of sound beliefs. We have been leaders in spiritual hopes and aspirations, and our faith has been boundless; still we have been mole-blind to material things in spite of our philosophy. We have fed fat on windy abstractions and have earnestly spun the clouds of our dreams. But this big

socialist movement is now in the position of the crowd in Hans Andersen's little story of the deceitful tailors. We see our King Abstractions has not as many clothes on as the law and the state of the social weather require.

The first great requisite for progress and improvement is that of learning to mind our own business. We have attended beautifully to many things that did not concern us. Now we might as well pause in the settlement of affairs in Europe and look at things here at home.

As an organized body what is our influence on the growth of the socialist sentiment in this country? We had over 900,000 votes in the last presidential election and we have 82,000 party members, many of them women without votes, or non-citizens. We lost one-third of that vote in 1914. All our socialist papers, including the largest, have not for their daily, weekly and monthly circulation much over 700,000 copies regularly. Making all allowance for duplications, wasted copies and those read by non-socialists, we must conclude that an amazing number of socialist voters are not in touch with the socialist press. They may read a pamphlet, a book or a magazine article now and then or listen to a socialist talk, but this is scarcely sufficient to establish a common basis of understanding or bring about uniformity of action.

We are far from uniformity. On the Pacific coast socialists are as much under the spell of the "yellow peril" as other people are. On the Mexican border affairs on the other side are the supreme question. In the South is the fear of the negro. Socialists in the industrial centers have no comprehension at all of what is needed in rural communities. We presented a revolutionary program and nearly a million people were sufficiently drawn to it to cast their vote for it. Such a vote involves the most solemn responsibility, and to meet it we must begin by knowing America first.

I have met some of our nominees who did not know for what office they were running, the district they were supposed to represent, the simple geography of their district or the names of their opponents. Democrats and Republicans were rhetorical figures of speech or impersonations of evils to be remedied. While this may have been satisfactory to us it carried no conviction to many of those who listen to us. They were incredulous of our ability to improve conditions because they often sensed the fact that we took no pains to find out what were the actual conditions to be remedied. Still socialist sentiment grew and spread so rapidly that we must

awaken to the fact that there are forces outside ourselves making for it and that it is we who must catch up.

We have especially failed to make any real impression on the trade unions. Neither the conservative nor the radical bodies look with much favor on us. Our members are of varying degrees of wealth and training, and socialism has had an especially strong attraction for professional men and women. The comedy battle between "proletarians" and "intellectuals" has had one strange aspect. The "intellectuals" have generally swung to the side of the radical or revolutionary trade unions and worked for the organization of the unskilled or the unorganized. This action, which may be the outcome of keener insight than is possessed by most, is not so considered by the conservative members of skilled trades.

These workers believe that such advocacy of the cause of the unskilled, or "playing their game," is not born of real sympathy but of an inherent antagonism between the "intellectual" and the organized skilled worker. The pose of condescending can be maintained toward the unskilled and criminally underpaid, whereas the skilled worker often meets the "intellectual" as his economic equal. He considers, further, that his equipment as a worker is of as high an order as that which is obtained in college, and he refuses to be "uplifted" unless the uplifting is done by himself. Furthermore he distrusts the "intellectual" who fights the conservative unions as one who is in revolt as a pastime or who is looking for adventure or copy, while he, the skilled worker, is in a grim fight to defend his economic position and advance it where he can. Consequently he resents what he believes to be an attempt, not to raise the standard of the unskilled workers, but to pull himself down. It is undoubtedly a mistaken belief, but we have not convinced the unionists that it does not exist.

We, more than most people, have groaned under the tyranny of words and the absolutism of print. The war offers an excellent chance to scrap our old vocabulary and send much of our literature to that supreme editor, the old-paper handler. Our failure in some instances is explained by ourselves on the ground that our ultimate object is so great that we cannot do anything now. It is similar to the explanation of the complete lack of success of one of our speakers that his inability to make any impression on his audiences was because he knew so much they could not understand him.

Whether or not we trust our European comrades to settle their own affairs, and settle them in their own lands, makes no difference. They are going to do it in any event and without help or hindrance

from us. At the same time we might take a lesson from them and begin a study of our own problems. Two years ago one person in each one hundred of our population was a Socialist voter. One out of each sixteen persons who voted in the presidential election cast his ballot for the Socialist candidates. This surely should give us enough work to do, for socialist sentiment has increased and socialist claims are being more and more closely studied. In order to make good we must have an American movement. Membership in the International is not enough and generalities no longer suffice.

Whatever may be the effect otherwise of the war on the socialist movement, of one thing we may be assured. The nihilism inherent in all Russian philosophy will in a large measure oppose the highly organized and many-officered German Social Democracy. Long before the war there was a revolt in Germany itself against the machinery of the socialist organization. Paid party secretaries were usually the delegates to national conventions and international congresses. The great body of editors, organizers, lecturers and writers constituted the officialdom of a party state within the German nation. It is not probable that success could have been won on any other lines. It is likewise inevitable that the success of such a body should create a movement for its disruption and destruction. The philosophy underlying such a form of organization is in all ways Germanic. The contrary philosophy of social revolution is of the Russian nihilistic school. It centers largely in Switzerland, and the booming of the opening guns of battle had scarcely died into an echo when the exiles in Switzerland began pointing out the defects in the German form.

National extremity has for the time being merged all the socialist groups with the other people. When the pressure is removed they will again become distinct political factors. They cannot be what they were before and it is certain there will be a fight of a nature similar to the memorable battle between the Marxists and the Bakuninists in the reorganization of the parties.

We may stand aside from this if we wish. Probably we shall not. Our American Socialist party is a gathering of fragments, some of them discordant, and has within it tendencies that are the product of European, not American, conditions. The Socialist party in order to claim the right to existence must meet the needs of this country. It must be patriotic.

True patriotism is not jingoistic, nor does it declare for "my country right or wrong." It is no longer an argument in denun-

ciation to shout that "this is worse than Russia," for evidently the people of Russia have found the country one for which they can valiantly fight. Her exiled children, Jews, Finns, Poles, and Letts turn in hope to her. Outrage and exile have not killed their nationalism, and persecution could not stifle the identity of their real interests with the interests of the vast body of people in their country. It is still their country even when they are driven from it and they can no more help thinking in terms of its interests than they can help talking in the accents of its speech even to the end. It is a patriotism they denied and they believed did not exist. Here it is in them as in all others when the great crisis comes.

To say that our socialists must be American means that socialists here, like all other people in this country, are affected by American conditions and those conditions are the great concern. We hope to make a better world. The place to begin is in our own street, and from there we can extend our influence to Washington and thence to the rest of the world.

Sound nationalism is the only safe foundation for internationalism. The work of a Socialist party in this period of transformation and readjustment of necessity can be nothing other than a juster use of existing social and governmental machinery. The few victories we have so far won have been because of the belief by the voters that Socialism would be more efficient.

Few of the persons who voted the Socialist ticket had revolution as their object, though the Socialist program contemplates a sweeping social revolution. The voters desired better social service and believed the Socialists were best qualified to give it.

When the desire for better material conditions for yourself is coupled with the knowledge that you can gain nothing lasting that is not likewise to the benefit of your fellow men, you have reached the highest patriotism. Internationalism is the brotherhood of the world, the world as our country, the world as our fatherland. But to win it we must begin at home.

Many of the poets of England and some of her statesmen refer touchingly to the "mother" and her many "daughters" throughout the world, and her most wonderful "daughter," the United States, who left the mother's house long ago because of a quarrel, a family strife, that should be forgotten in the mother's sore hour of need. The German's plea is to the sons of the fatherland who live in the new world. It may seem banal, foolish, alluring, throbbing, the heights of appeal or the depths of inane and drivelling sentimentality, just as you choose to look at it. There may be another feel-

ing, and that is one of intense resentment against the presumption that the United States is simply a breeding place for men to be used in European wars, or of producers who toil that others may fight.

The daughters and the sons have work in their own house, and the house must soon be put in order. Feelings and sympathies may be inherited, and traditions concerning our fathers' home may sway us. That was home; this is. It is to this home that we are bounden.

In war only two things are certain. To victor and vanquished alike there is the burden of unutterable agony and to the unborn there is the heritage of debt and hate. Americans, being of all the peoples now in arms, will in some way share that burden. We have outlived the keener antagonism of the Civil War, and most of us have forgotten the sorrow of those families to which the war had left only the memory of boys they had loved. There are only a few of the maimed survivors to-day. But that war which was small, and is merely history this half century, left a deal of sorrow, and all the wounds are not yet healed and not all the mourning is stilled.

The socialists are planless for the future as they proved to be weak in the past. They hope that a revolution, or something, may turn up. They are doing little, and they will continue to do no more until they rediscover patriotism, begin to build in this country and make a study of the problems here. It does not matter of what stock they come or what their ties of intellectual sympathy may be with the people in Europe. They live here, and their hope in this country must be as true as that of the Belgians, the French, the Germans, the Servians, the Austrians and the English who are fighting for their national lives.