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IN MEMORIAM OF JOHN MOST

By Stephen Daniels.

THE name of John Most is familiar throughout the country. But of the man himself, of his personality, ideas and struggles there persists the most false and grotesque conception. The very mention of the name pictures to the average citizen the incarnation of "Criminal Anarchy," and conjures up to the philistine imagination a dangerous conspirator against God, kings, presidents, capitalists --- a man in compact with the devil of dynamite and nitroglycerine, an evil-doer that taxed all the watchfulness and power of the American government to keep him within the bounds of law and order. Did not, indeed, a great daily write during the last presidential campaign that "Most was the most dangerous character that ever ran amuck in this country," adding that Roosevelt, however, was even still more dangerous --- a comparison, by the way, that does too much honor to Roosevelt.

That Most was regarded in this light was due to the fact that he was the first vigorous pioneer of Anarchist Communism in America. As such it was inevitable that he should become the target for all the vicious and malicious attacks on the part of those who stand for organized government, whose name is violence. It is hard to walk in untrodden paths. The pioneer must be prepared for the worst. He may devote all his energy, consecrate his whole life, to blaze a new path for civilization. He will generally receive recognition only after he has ceased to be.

At the time when Most came to America (in the fall of 1882) this country was more of a wilderness for the propagation of his ideas and ideals than it is to-day. Then the futility and barrenness of our political liberties as a means toward the necessary reconstruction of the social and economic life was not apparent in the degree that it is now. Almost absolute was the faith in the miraculous power of "free competition," which to-day the great majority realize to have become a plaything in the hands of the monopolists of the money and other trusts. The legend that in this country every industrious and able man could secure a comfortable existence, was then firmly believed; the assertion that here, no less than in other capitalist countries, there are exploited and oppressed classes, was in spite of all visible misery met with a smile of derision. Social questions, a militant labor movement, the proletariat and the social revolution might find justification for their existence in the be-nighted countries of Europe, it was popularly argued; here they could be treated only as empty phrases mouthed by the dissatisfied, restless and incompetent foreign elements.

This air of superiority America has gradually been forced to abandon. The social question is now as vital and burning in this republic as in Europe. It is beginning to be realized by ever growing numbers that a country, whose chief products are multi-

millionaires and paupers, political corruption and economic misery, is not to be glorified as the best and most ideal society in the world.

As the petrel of the Social Revolution, Most had already gained considerable experience before he arrived in this country to continue the publication of the Freiheit ("Freedom"). The existence of the paper had become impossible in England, through the persecution of the British authorities, behind whom was the Russian and German diplomatic influence to suppress Most. An article concerning the execution of Alexander II., in March, 1881, brought Most a sentence of sixteen months at hard labor. The two compositors of the Freiheit, both comrades, were also subsequently arrested and held for court. British freedom of the press proved as empty a boast as that of Germany and Austria, in which countries Most was repeatedly sent to prison for articles published in Social Democratic papers. But the English prison was even more severe and brutal.

Most left Germany for England in consequence of the Bismarckian anti-Socialist laws. He was of the opinion that the party should refuse to submit to the law that muzzled all free expression, holding that a more consequent and energetic propaganda could be carried on from abroad than in Germany itself, where Draconian police regulations suppressed every Social Democratic publication and dissolved every Socialist meeting.

This attitude brought our comrade in conflict with the leaders of the German Social Democratic party, who considered it more "practical" to adapt themselves to the Bismarck law. This diplomacy indeed contributed much toward making Socialism in Germany what it is today: compromising, bureaucratic, and sterily State Socialistic.

To these disappointments which Most suffered in the German Social Democratic party was added his experience as a member of the Reichstag. There he saw machinery of parliamentarism at work, with all the trickery of law-making. He realized the uselessness of parliamentarism as a means of emancipating the proletariat, and it required only his acquaintance with the ideas of Bakunin, Reclus, and Kropotkin to awaken him to Anarchism, towards which his vigorous revolutionary spirit naturally leaned.

Most surely did not come to America expecting to find an Eldorado; yet with a certain affection for a land of republicanism. The traditions of the exiles of '48 were not yet dead, many of whom had found a refuge in America. But men and times had changed. A Carl Schurz could succeed in climbing the political ladder almost to its very top. But Most had brought with him a social ideal that no government and no political party, but only a liberty-loving, revolutionary people could realize. That was the great difference which resulted in the one being sent to prison, while the other was crowned with political laurels.

Most was an extremely powerful and effective popular speaker; as a writer he possessed great originality and a Rabelaisian wit that never failed to hit the mark.

Unique and highly entertaining in personal contact, he won many friends. Nevertheless, he had laboriously to hoe his path, because his character was of the kind that can not adapt itself to the mechanical spirit of a centralized party machinery.

Similarly to the leaders of the German Social Democratic party who antagonized Most because of his strong and original personality, the foremost circles of the German Socialists in America hastened to excommunicate him. His path was therefore a thorny one, full of struggle and difficulties. He had constantly to fight against public opinion that was incited against him by the denunciation and misrepresentation of the hostile capitalist press, and soon the police made it a sort of specialty of arresting Most on every possible occasion and haling him to court. Newspaper reporters and journalists, whose ability as

translators was more than doubtful, were in the habit of placing in his mouth the most ridiculous expressions, for which he was in all seriousness held responsible by the stupidity of the public and the courts. He was vilified, persecuted, and thrown into prison on general principles, so to speak, because he was the Anarchist Most.

To illustrate to the "native Americans" the nature and stupidity of that persecution, we shall recite a couple of incidents.

In a village of Long Island there had been arranged a picnic by the local German workers, on which occasion Most was an invited guest. The presence of the dangerous man aroused the authorities, who forthwith prepared to save the country. The police descended upon the assembly of picnickers, attacked them in a most brutal manner, and arrested a number of the participants, foremost among them Most. At the station the Chief gathered his police and detectives, making a speech to them, in which Most was characterized as the lowest dregs of hell, the Chief concluding with the order, "Whenever you happen to catch sight of this man in this district, arrest him at once and bring him to me." On another occasion Most, arriving in St. Louis to keep a lecture engagement, was pounced upon by the police and arrested without explanation or warrant, and forcibly taken to the Illinois border.

It is conceivable that the frequent sojourn in police stations, jails and prisons, did not serve to increase our comrade's love and respect for the Republic and its institutions. That these persecutions, instead of being perpetrated in the name of the Kaiser or Koenig, as in Germany or Austria, were in America masked with the "sovereignty of the people," served only to accentuate the hypocrisy of the American system of suppression and tyranny.

Notwithstanding all these miserable conditions, sharpened by poverty and need, Most bravely held aloft the banner of Anarchy, to the very end. He died at the age of 60, on March 17th, 1906, in Cincinnati, while on a lecture tour. His memory in the international revolutionary movement, in the great struggle for social justice and liberty, will remain green when the last trace of his petty and vicious persecutors has long been lost.

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AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

By: HALLETT ABEND

"THY will be done," we say, and bow our heads

In meek submission to Thy laws, Oh God,

But as the long years pass we suffer much.

Renunciation palls, until at last,

Although our lips still say, "Thy will be done,"

In our secret hearts we plan revolt,

And seize at last upon some furtive joy

With which to brighten our sunless lives, ---

Illumined only by Thy altar fires.

Dear God, forgive! Thy creatures are so made

That they crave ever light and joyousness.

Indeed, indeed we know not if the laws

The priests propound are laws of Thine at all.

Is it Thy will that half Thy creatures starve,

Starve heart and soul, ascetic to the end?

Born with capacity for happiness

We crave so many things Thy priests deny.

Yet, if the laws they teach us veil Thy will,

And if transgression means but lasting doom,

Take not away these burnings of desire,

This glad, exultant urge to life and love,

But rather let us keep them till the end

That splendidly we may transgress Thy laws

Which surely are not just if they deny

The right to love our lives, --- to live our loves.

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## THE TROUBLES OF SOCIALIST POLITICIANS

By M. B.

IF it were not for the Syndicalists and Anarchists, the politicians of the Social Democracy would be happy folk. They could gloat undisturbed over the fractional increase of Socialist votes and they would have the required equanimity of soul to undertake the much-needed revision of the materialist conception of history, so that it could be made to apply to all emergency cases. They would also have time to direct evolution, so that it should not fail to follow the lines laid down for it by the party Executive. They would even have leisure to prepare a few hundred rigorous regulations and laws for the great moment when after the second or third deluge, they shall have a sufficient majority in Congress to usher in the Socialist State. There would be no one to disturb them when they declare their party --- whose leaders are chiefly lawyers, editors, and cockroach bosses --- to be the only real class-conscious proletarian party. It would all be nice and smooth sailing --- according to programme --- if the bad Syndicalists and Anarchists could only be persuaded to hand the labor movement over --- bound hand and foot --- to the Social Democracy, as its sole copyrighted and patented monopoly.

But the Syndicalists and Anarchists are a stubborn lot. They even presume to become bolder every day, deluding ever-greater masses of labor with new inspiration and energy. They are inculcating the proletariat with a mission that fills the workers with fire and purpose, and makes life worthwhile. They point toward the horizon where there is appearing the vision of a brighter day, the Dawn of Anarchist Communism, and this goal is inspiring the agitation for direct action, Sabotage, and the General Strike.

Wherever these appear in the arena of the great struggle, the "representatives of labor" in the halls of legislation lose their inflated importance --- to the great anguish of the Socialist politicians, for their whole scheme is based upon the claim of representing labor. These representatives --- be they a Socialist sheriff, alderman, or mayor --- soon make it quite clear that their oath of office demands faithful service to the State, and that they are determined to exert their best efforts to improve the bureaucratic administration, and to do their duty, even far more loyally and honestly than their bourgeois predecessors, as the legally elected officials of a system whose only purpose is to perpetuate capitalism and wage slavery.

This is the situation. The Social Democrats will soon be at the end of the blind alley into which "political success" has lured them. But far from placing the blame where it belongs, they lay it at the door of the Syndicalists and Anarchists, who are causing so much mischief in the labor movement. These they attack with the Jesuitic methods of Marx, Engels, Hyndman and Plechanov, and curse them after the good precept of the infallible Pope with his bulls against the heretics.

At present one of the Socialist crusaders, Robert Hunter, has entered the lists and drawn his pen against the disturbers, determined to vanquish and annihilate them, root, branch, and all.

Some of his articles are very readable, indeed, since they incorporate long quotations from Syndicalists and Anarchist thinkers. They have been selected by Hunter to demonstrate the close affinity between Syndicalism and Anarchism, and they really give an air of living vitality to the series.

Hunter labored hard to adduce this proof of relationship between the philosophies of Syndicalism and Anarchism. Can there be a stronger condemnation of Syndicalism than to prove its kinship with Anarchism, in view of the ignorant popular prejudice against and misconceptions of Anarchism?

But the Hunter gentlemen may be mistaken. The time is here when the philistine fear of Anarchism is beginning to be dissipated among the ranks of labor and soon it will be more generally realized that it was always Anarchism that gave the greatest impetus to the international labor movement, that kept it young and energetic, thus saving it from sinking into the mire of parliamentary cretinism. Not the Social Democratic politicians, but the Anarchists and Syndicalists have ever kept burning the fire of true Socialism --- i. e., Communism.

Marx and his clique succeeded at one time to misrepresent Bakunin and his comrades. The political Socialists have always been past masters at this sort of propaganda. But after almost two generations of political rope dancing, the labor movement is beginning, on a scale larger than ever before, to pick up again the thread of those ideas which had been propagated by the Anarchist-Syndicalist wing of the old Internationale. The years that passed since then and the experience learned have clearly proved that the degeneration of true Socialism into political schemes has caused deep wounds to the international labor movement, which it is the highest time to begin to heal.

Hunter says that the Anarchists falsely understand by political activity mere voting and office seeking. Political activity means much more, he claims. But, unfortunately, his articles fail to point out the "much more," and it remains a mystery. The Anarchists can substantiate their assertion that political activity means nothing more than vote gathering by proving that the Socialist parties of every country have always persecuted and excommunicated all those whose conception of political activity transcended mere voting and office getting. The Social Democracy has everywhere "developed" and become "purified" by driving the revolutionary elements from its ranks and ever welcoming the reformists, busybodies and politicians sans phrase.

Tearfully Hunter complains that in America also we could have a Social Democratic movement of the wonderful proportions of Germany, were it not for the activity of that bad man, John Most, who destroyed the promising beginnings with his Anarchist-Syndicalist propaganda. This reference of Hunter directly bears upon Haywood, for the purpose of creating the impression that Haywood, as dangerous a character as Most, might prove the rock upon which Socialist politics would be wrecked, if he is not speedily thrown out of the party --- which has since come to pass, Haywood being voted out of the National Executive Committee by a two-third majority. If it be true that Most succeeded in preventing the establishment in this country of a Socialist Vatican similar to that of Germany, it would be immensely to his credit. For it is due mainly to the Social Democratic party of Germany that Socialism has degenerated to the point where nothing but politicians can find a welcome in it. Its deadening discipline, its dogmas, intolerance, and machine politics have exalted the political office seekers in every country where German Socialism has been taken as a model. The more thoroughly the international labor movement frees itself from the influence of the German Social Democracy, the sooner it will grow to manhood and come into its own.

In this sense our Comrade Most had fought against the paralyzing influence of the German Social Democracy. But Hunter does not give Most's position in the true light. To carry his point, to emphasize the danger of harboring Syndicalist elements in the Socialist party, Hunter creates the impression that Most propagated his subversive ideas in America within the Social Democratic circles. That is false. Already in London Most was persona non grata with the Social Democratic party. The Marxian bishops on both sides of the Atlantic had put him under the ban, long before he came into American exile. Moreover, his logical development to Anarchism had entirely alienated our Comrade from the party.

In his articles Hunter naturally tries very hard to prove the Anarchists and Syndicalists to be hopeless impossibilists; yet evidently without much satisfaction to himself. He expresses the fear that, all odds notwithstanding, they have a future in the labor movement, and that the solemn exorcism of the Social Democratic statesmen is powerless to suppress them. In one place he says, "It is perhaps inevitable that the views of the Anarchists should gain a larger and larger following. Political action is slow, and many of the younger, the more petulant and impulsive, are impatient." Political action is not only slow; it leads nowhere save into the swamp of barrenness, disappointment, and futility. It is worse than slow; it is rotten. It is a most encouraging sign that the young generation is beginning to lose patience with it.

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ANARCHISM-The philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by manmade law; the theory that all forms of government rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary