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EDITORIAL

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POLITICAL Movements, great and small, and the greater more so than the smaller, are attended with periodical jars and clashes of tongues. Great confusion is the inevitable result. If the confusion limited itself to “outsiders,” the evil thereof would be felt less. Unfortunately and inevitably it extends, in fact, it begins with the “insiders.” The injury done thereby to Movements is incalculable: it prevents the contestants from understanding as promptly as they should the issue that they are evolving, and, consequently, keeps them from quickly perceiving the direction in which they are moving; then, also, it conveys to outsiders and prospective recruits the idea of an inextricable tangle, which deters them from joining, lest they too be “tangled.”

To well-grounded Socialists, especially those active in the work of organization, this evil is not whined over. They know that it is inevitable. They reckon with it. They know what capers material interests will drive some folks to, and that, themselves ashamed of the thoughts that dominate them, such folks are apt to confuse the issue through the arguments that they seek to conceal their thoughts with. A not unimportant task that frequently falls to the Socialist militant is to strip controversies, that break out in the camp of Socialism, from the trappings of false pretence and thus bring out clear the issue.

Such a period of jarring and clashing tongues, attended with the usual confusion, the Socialist Movement is going through just now, both in Europe and America. The presentation of the Kautsky Resolution at the late Paris International Congress, with its express desertion of the guiding principle of the Class Struggle; the support it received from a majority of the delegates; the attitude of these elements in America on taxation, on Armory-building, on capitalist or “pure and simple” Unionism, on acceptance of “donations” from such capitalist hands as Homestead-Carnegie and Coolie-Hearst;—all these incidents, accompanied by the arguments advanced in their defence by the elements that brought them on, and that, jointly in Europe and

America, are using the terms “practical” and “broad” in self-justification, while, all the while, violently protesting their staunch Socialism, have created a situation to which “confusion” would be a mild term, but for an exceptional occurrence. In this instance a virtual miracle has happened. A frank utterance has issued from the camp of the back-sliders. And that utterance clarifies the situation.

Already the situation was confused enough when Mr. Edward Bernstein, now reconciled with the Prussian Government, delivered himself of his “economic and sociologic” theories. These might have been thought vague; but the situation grew still more confused when Messrs. Kautsky, Adler, Branting, Hyndman, and what not, in Europe, and Messrs. Gruntzig, Schlueter, Leib, and what not, in America, took the further step of repudiating the Class Struggle, and especially when both sets—the Social Democracy of America and that of Europe—struck a close alliance and shielded each other. What does it all mean? was the puzzled question that went up from many a quarter. The answer has come. It has come from the American Social Democracy. The Milwaukee, Wis., *Wahrheit*, the leading organ of the Social Democracy, in a painstaking characterization of the Socialist Labor Party and its French sister organization, the Parti Ouvrier Français, pronounces both the S.L.P. and the P.O.F. “Utopian,” and hints, as the reason therefor, the VERY FACT OF THEIR BEING MARXIST. In other words, Marx is utopian; he is reverently to be shelved.

Credit where credit is due. The *Wahrheit* has distinguished itself as the sole manly organ of the Social Democracy on both sides of the water. It leaps ahead of the Bernsteins, the Kautskys, the Brantings, the Hyndmans, the Leibs, etc. What it says openly, they all think secretly. Now their term “broad” acquires definiteness; now their expression of “practical” is understood. Marx’ great sociologic thought—the thought from which all Socialist tactics must flow—to wit, the absurdity of endeavoring to revolutionize society behind its back, the futility of expecting to overcome an enemy by running away from, while “making your peace” with him,—that is “Utopian” holds and says the International Social Democracy.

Clearness is restored. “What it all means” is no longer a puzzle. The far-apart-forking roads of the Socialist Labor Party, to the right, and the Social Democracy, to the left, is no longer blurred by the dust of quibbling phrases. Whosoever now takes either, knowingly takes his choice.