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ARTICLE

## THE DRESDEN CONGRESS.

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**F**OR reasons, scores of times enlarged upon in these columns, the Social Democracy of Germany has ceased to be a pace-setter for the Socialist Movement of the world. For the reasons so often analyzed, the Socialist Movement of Germany has been compelled to deflect its course, and face and solve the issues left unfaced and unsolved by the nation's bourgeois. This, notwithstanding, aye, for that very reason, the acts of the German Social Democracy are well worth the close attention of the militant Socialism of this country. As the native land of Marx, Engels and Lassalle, and that in which the Socialist Movement first took tangible shape nearly forty years ago, the forced evolution, that that Socialist Movement has undergone in Germany, is of more than historic interest. The late Dresden Congress typifies the leading features of that evolutionary process, which the sooner they are generally understood the better.

### BIRD'S EYE VIEW.

The Dresden Congress met on September 13 and adjourned on September 20. Altogether it was in session eight days. Subtracting from these eight days the first day and a half, spent in general oratory, in which foreign "visiting delegations" took a part, and about a day given to minor matters, such as Bebel's complaints against the *Vorwarts*, the Polish question, parliamentary activity, the Amsterdam Congress, etc., there were about five days given to the real issues before the body. These were two, at least they were presented under distinct heads and culminated in the adoption of two distinct resolutions—a resolution on the activity of party members in the bourgeois press, and one on the tactics of the party. In point of fact, the two issues were one, the first only serving as a prelude to the second. The issue underlying both was a practical one of tactics. On this subject the debate consumed

all the actual working time of the Congress.

A bird's-eye view of the debate presents a paradox. Feeling ran high. Hard words were exchanged. Indeed, it has been said by those who should know that never was a German Social Democratic Congress so heated. And yet not a disputant on either side, none of any account at any rate, but declared that "at no time was the party so united as it is now." As if this were not enough of a paradox, the resolutions were adopted with virtual unanimity (283 to 24 on the first, 288 to 11 on the second.) Were these men children, who quarreled over nothing? Or were they hysterical school girls, who scratch one another's eyes and as readily kiss and make up? They were none of that. Then, there was an issue? Indeed, there was, and a serious one. To complete the series of paradoxes in the bird's-eye view of the debate, the serenest of the disputants, the most good-natured, those who, with greatest moderation, and dignity withal, retorted to the vehement onslaughts against them, were that nominally trivial minority. Indeed, whatever brilliancy of satire, of wit or ridicule flashed through the Congress Hall, proceeded from that quarter. And well it might. All the facts, hence all the arguments applicable to the situation, were with that side. They knew themselves victors. Hence, why ill-nature? Like a traveler, overtaken by a sudden squall on the road, good-naturedly, though perhaps critically, watches the storm's excesses, taking only simple measures to keep the wet off, and knowing the storm is bound to abate, when he will again regain the mastery, and tranquilly resume the even tenor of his route, so did the nominally trivial minority at the Dresden Congress deport itself. It revealed the aplomb of habitual, certain and inevitable ascendancy. What with the superficial press reports and interested journalistic commentaries, the impression conveyed of the Congress is exactly the opposite. To the extent that this false impression prevails the instruction conveyed by the Dresden Congress is lost.

#### HISTORY OF TACTICS.

The history of the German Social Democracy on the party's tactics, sketched step by step by the nominal minority, and left uncontradicted by the nominal majority, has traversed the following leading episodes:

—At an early date, on the motion of Liebknecht, the small Socialist delegation

in the Reichstag decided upon the tactics they were to adopt. These were to utilize every opportunity in that body to assert their negative and protesting principles, and to keep strictly aloof from parliamentary transactions, proper. And the point was emphasized by Liebknecht in a pamphlet in which the rule of conduct was explained thus:

“This negative position may not be given up, else the party would give up its principle. Under no circumstances, and on no field may the Social Democracy negotiate with the enemy. Negotiations can be conducted only where there is a common ground to stand on. To negotiate with forces, that are hostile on the matters of principle, means to sacrifice principle itself. Principle is indivisible. It is either wholly kept, or wholly sacrificed. The slightest concession on matters of principle infers the abandonment of principle. Whosoever parliamentarizes log-rolls; who log-rolls is bound by purchase.”—This undisputable norm for the parliamentary posture of the Socialistic Revolution, once accepted, was later given up, despite the cry of “treason!” and “Parliamentary Quagmire!” The party since pursued the course of parliamentarizing with its opponent.

—In 1875, when the then two Socialist wings of Germany—the Marxists and the Lassalleans—were about to unite, Marx issued a circular letter, intended especially for some of the leaders of the Marxist wing. In this letter Marx analyzes and condemns the program, under which the fusion was to be perfected, as “bourgeois,” “objectionable,” “demoralizing,” a “dickering in principles,” a proof that “Socialist ideas were only skin-deep with the party”; and he warned that “everybody knows how pleased workingmen are with the fact of a union, but you are mistaken if you believe that this momentary success is not bought too dearly.” And Bebel, then in prison for his revolutionary attitude, issued from his confinement a letter of protest declaring “he could not join in the fusion, and when his nine months were out, he would raise the banner against it.”—The warning was disregarded: the bourgeois-labeled program was adopted: the fusion was perfected: the threatened revolt never set in.

—In 1884, energetic protests were raised against the representation of the Social Democratic Reichstag delegation in the “Senioren Konvent”—a convention of “captains of industry,” without official functions or power, and intended for the

interchange of views on Labor and kindred matters. Participation in such bodies was pronounced “a violation of the revolutionary principle,” “a disgrace to the dignity of the freeman,” “a comedy,” “a diplomatic flank-move looking to reconciliation,” “a fly in the ointment of the late election successes,” and the “Proletariat was to awake and winnow the chaff from the wheat.” Bebel, reporting the Frankfort meeting that started the protest, wrote of it: “It is not true that the meeting consisted of furious Anarchists. It consisted of the best and oldest comrades, and was animated by the best of spirits.”—“Since then,” said Vollmar in Dresden, “we have grown accustomed to the matter; much is not to be gained from these conventions, but they are valuable sources of information.”

—At the time of the Cologne Congress a bitter debate took place on the subject of the so-called equitable labor or employment bureaus, which had just started, especially in south Germany, and at the first convention of which bourgeois and Social Democratic representatives took a part. It was again Bebel who led the assault. He declared such acts a “prancing in knee-breeches” and a “lowering of tone”; to appeal to the “general philanthropy of the bourgeois classes” was in “direct opposition to the idea of the class struggle.”—Two years later, Bebel and other Social Democrats joined just such a convention of bourgeois philanthropists in Zurich; and their participation in such conventions has since continued in regular order, as a matter of course.

—The attitude of subserviency to the Government, struck by the Trades Unions, notably by the compositors, was at first hostilized by the party as an attitude that “dulled the edge of the class struggle.” It was ridiculed. The Typographical Union was dubbed “His Prussian Majesty’s Union.”—The party gave up that policy.

—The caucuses of the Reichstag delegation of the party are frequently convulsed with heated debates on the attitude to be taken on the bourgeois reform methods, introduced in the Reichstag, especially with regard to the deceptive, but seemingly favorable, “labor” bills. At such caucuses the argument had been made: “It is quite impossible for us to abandon our position and vote for these bills. Who of us would dare appear after that at the labor meetings? The very edge of our agitation and the traditional posture of the party would be dulled and

sacrificed.”—The bills were regularly supported.

—The election laws for the Prussian Landtag elections are such that, to participate in them, the Social Democracy would have to enter into deals with bourgeois parties. At the Cologne Congress of 1893 the question of going into the Prussian Landtag elections was raised and thunderingly voted down. Bebel again led. “A compromise with the hostile parties,” he declared, “cannot choose but lead to the demoralization of the party.” The proposed step was pronounced “a compromise in the worse sense of the word,” and it was laid down, as a matter of duty, that the party was to abstain from the suffrage at the Landtag elections.—At the Mainz Congress of 1900, Bebel himself ceased to see any objection to the “cattle-trade” (Kuhhandel); he declared he had changed his views; he regretted the strong expressions used at Cologne; and he announced a new principle: “Compromise is an agreement with another for mutual support, to the end of reaching that which cannot be reached with unaided effort. Why raise such a howl against that!”—The Cologne decision was, accordingly, formally reversed, and the new principle was pursued.

—The election laws for municipal elections are open to objections similar to those for the Landtag. The electorate is divided into property classes. In 1884, the Berlin party adopted a resolution against participation in the election for municipal officers on the ground that:

“Participation in class elections is a violation of the party’s platform, and it nowise promotes the development of the workingman’s party. On the contrary, it promotes the opportunities for self-seeking politicians, and this has a corrupting influence.”—The Berlin party shortly after gave up its stand. Closing the argument on this head, and alluding to the anti-Vice-Presidential arguments, which condemned the idea of Social Democrats putting on knee-breeches on court occasions, as required of the Vice-Presidents, Vollmar remarked:

“The municipal officers of Berlin proudly carry a chain of office from which hangs the image of Frederick William III. Think of it! Knee-breeches will burn one’s thighs; but the royal image may be carried on the breast!”

There still remains an episode, the crowning one of all. But this is not yet the

place to cite it. This, however, is a place of sufficient elevation where to pause for a moment, look backward and take a preliminary comprehensive view of the lay of the land.

For one thing, sufficient facts have been cited to warrant the summary with which Vollmar introduced his sketch of the history of the party's tactics, and to quote it here as one of the characterizations of the situation. He said:

“The thought has been recently expressed that it was a pity we had not yet a ‘History of Tactics.’ It might be rather called a ‘History of the Stagnation of the German Social Democracy.’ It would be in no small degree interesting to learn from it what all has been condemned among us as ‘watering,’ as ‘repudiation of principles,’ as ‘violation of traditions,’ as ‘abandonment of the principle of the class struggle,’ etc.; how, regularly after each such sentence, the Social Democracy quaffed down the ingredients of the alleged poisoned chalice, and liked them; and how, thereupon, the old ‘poison’ label was speedily transferred to some new cup.”

For another thing, the outlines of two conflicting streams are plain {plainly?} in sight. Leaping forward for an instant, to the field of the Dresden Congress, the two groups may be described by their leading exponents—Bebel and Vollmar.

#### VON VOLLMAR.

Whether Vollmar is equipped with the requisite erudition to consciously steer his course by the constellations that preside over the German socio-political waters, and sails “by chart,” aware of the currents he navigates and the soundings of the shallows, or whether only instinct guides him, matters not. Vollmar is a Socialist—in the sense that he foresees the ultimate breakdown of capitalism, and is ready enthusiastically to lend a helping hand towards the raising of a Socialist Republic, as the only ultimate goal yet in sight worthy of man's efforts. But he is not a revolutionary Socialist. Whatever else Vollmar might be elsewhere, he can be none in Germany. Intelligent or sentient, he has adapted his conduct to local exigencies. In a country still so feudal that the organic law of the land can be changed only with the consent of the Kaiser; in a country still so far back politically that institutional improvements have, as of olden days, to be virtually octroyed from above; in a country still so politically primitive that, by constitutional enactment,

the Monarch's sword can outweigh in the balance the combined will of the people and parliament;—in such a country there are still tall and wide mountain ranges to be tunnelled by the drill of bourgeois reform, and of useful reform generally. There the season for the Social Revolution is not yet.

With guile, or innocent purpose, the effort is often made to blur "Revolution" into "Reform," and "Reform" into "Revolution"; and, with innocent purpose, or with guile, the attempt is not infrequently made to stampede the argument into an acceptance of the blur by holding up "cataclysm" as the only alternative. Dismissing the "argument" of cataclysm as unbecoming, and the "cataclysmic threat" for the mere phrase-bogey that it is, the point of contact between "Reform" and "Revolution"—meaning by the latter the Socialist Revolution—lies too far back to here merit attention. They are "horses of different color," or, dropping slang, children of different parents. The line that separates them is sharp. "Reform" infers a common ground between contestants; "Revolution" the absence of such ground. The two terms are mutually repellent in social science. Socialism is nothing if not Revolution. There is no common ground between the contestants. With Socialism, on the one hand, and the system of private ownership in natural and social opportunities, or class rule, on the other, each stands on ground that is mutually abhorrent. The two can not deal, barter or log-roll. They can meet only to clash, and for extermination.

It does not alter the principle here laid down that, at a time in England, and even now, in Germany, bona fide reform could and can be wrung from the possessing classes for the working class. On the contrary, where such reforms are possible, they are so just because a true Socialist Movement is not yet possible,—a feudal class, still mighty, though crowded by its upstart rival, the capitalist, and just because of being thus crowded, will lend a helping hand to what instinctively it feels to be its rising rival's predestined slayer. SO LONG AS SUCH REFORMS ARE TO BE GAINED, THEY SHOULD BE STRIVEN FOR; but so long as they are to be gained, the struggle is not yet between Socialism and private property in natural and social opportunities, that is, between two foes standing upon irreconcilable ground: the struggle still is between capitalism and feudalism, that is, foes standing on the common ground of class rule: the reign of the bourgeois is not

yet absolute: the path is still barred by feudalism: the season is not yet for a Socialist Movement. Per contra, the moment feudalism is swept aside, and capitalism wields the scepter untrammled, as here in America,—from that moment the ground is ready for Revolution to step on; what is more, from that moment reform becomes a snare and a delusion. It virtually is no more to be had. As shown in the second of the *Two Pages from Roman History*, reforms then become palliatives, and these are but palliations of wrong; or it is sops, and these are banana-peels under foot—in either case destructive of the revolutionary fibre and directness, a bane to its alleged beneficiaries. Where the thought of “Socialism” rises in conjunction with that of “Reform,” or of “Reform” with that of “Socialism,” the Socialism can only be, either—as is happening here in America in the instance of the so-called Socialist, alias Social Democratic party—a manifestation of puerility doused with speculative schemes; or—as one time in England, and now in Germany,—a latter-day adaptation of the “Christianity” of Clovis, that is, an aspiration after an ideal, too ideal, however, to be seriously contemplated, and, consequently, decorously put away in a niche to be revered, while serious, practical thought is turned to the hard, practical reality.

The group in the German Social Democracy, of which Vollmar is the leading exponent, sentient or intelligent, strained for the only field of vantage that the backward conditions of the land provided. Seeing the absence of the field for revolutionary Socialism to deploy on, it strained and carried the Movement to take its stand on the field of radical bourgeoisism, that is, of Reform. With the common ground among the contestants, implied in Reform, the Socialist Vollmar parliamentarizes—with all that that implies. Nor does such conduct at all infer intellectual obliquity. Nothing more natural, aye, unavoidable, than that a belated radical bourgeois movement in our days should be strongly flavored with revolutionary Socialist feeling and terminology,—least of all when, as in this instance, it started Socialist. Accordingly, as sketched above, the early and wise warning of Marx against fusion at Gotha was reverently niched; Liebknecht’s masterly apophthegm on the parliamentary attitude of the Socialist Movement was decorously shelved, by himself excluded; and one after another, despite opposition and condemnation, those tactics were successively taken up and enthusiastically

pursued, which denoted the gradual placing of itself by the German Social Democracy on that common ground of battle where the contestants may, are expected to and must barter.

#### BEBEL.

The struggler with the Vollmar stream is the stream typified by Bebel. Bebel's Dresden speeches which have thrilled the hearts of the militant Socialists the world over, and will be translated for the readers of *The People* as a type of the revolutionary lyric—vigorous, unsparing, elevating, uncompromising, and pure—is the most fervid of the series that has yet proceeded from his side of the house, at the various stages in the above-recorded evolutionary process of his party's tactics. "All the world loves a lover." Infinitely more sympathetic than the practical Vollmar, Bebel, it must, nevertheless, be conceded, has failed to subordinate his ideal to the circumstances. His fires proved proof against facts. Though banked, they never have been extinguished. Always heating the mass, that, in the end, ever prevailed against them, and thus ever imparting a glamor to his party, they periodically would break and leap forth in tongues of lambent flame,—soul-stirring, warning. But their language could be none other than that of protest. Periodically, when a new shoot downward was shot in its course by the current that Bebel was constrained to drift with, a new shock was felt. Ever at such recurring periods, the reminiscences and ideals of his own and his party's youth would re-assert themselves: they would then win the upper hand of their latest enforced silence, as they now did at Dresden, and carry the day: and then—as happened regularly before, and poetically expressed by Vollmar—the ingredients of the alleged poisoned chalice would be quaffed anew and found palatable, and the "poison" label transferred to some fresh cup; the Bebel-swollen flood of the nominal majority would again recede; the Vollmar ebb of the nominal minority would return and resume control.

#### A THIRD ELEMENT.

None who ever studied history closely, none who ever watched the actions of large masses of men, will fail to scent from the preceding sketch the existence of a

third, not stream, but body, besides the two leading streams above outlined. To the flux and reflux of such streams of human action, there must be a third—not stream, because it has no life of its own, but—group, or pool; a group, not made up of the shadings of the two main streams, but of distinct physiognomy, a physiognomy *sui generis*. Indeed, there is such a group. Devoid of convictions, devoid of the practical sense of a Vollmar that tends to solidify ideals, devoid of the moral and mental exaltation of a Bebel that tends to idealize the practical, the group in question consists of theorickers, who riot in theory. Their delight is to turn out such merchandise according as occasion and the most contradictory, at that, may demand, in phrases symmetrically rounded. The type of this group is Kautsky: its feature “to run with the hares and bark with the hounds.” Here is the place to cite that latest and crowning episode, merely referred to above, in the tactical history of the German Social Democracy as furnished by the Dresden Congress itself, and from the elevation of which the eye will be enabled to embrace a full view of the lay of the land.

#### MILLERANDISM.

The Socialist Movement of France held its breath in amazement when, in 1898, Millerand, a member of one of its organizations, accepted a cabinet portfolio at the hands of the bourgeois government, and took his seat in that executive body, beside General Gallifet, the butcher of the Commune. Whatever hope against hope may have at first lingered in the minds of the serious French Socialists was soon dispelled by Millerand’s placid continuance in the cabinet, after the orders issued that provoked the military butcheries of the striking workingmen at Chalon and that upheld the military butcheries of the striking workingmen at Martinique. That which, based upon a long uninterrupted series of facts, theory had before then established, was but confirmed in the instance of Millerand. It is no longer a matter open to discussion. The Socialist Revolution has no common ground with class rule. Despite the bugaboos of “Clericalism!” and “The Republic in Danger!” periodically gotten up by the French Bourgeoisie, France, though not advanced to the capitalist height of America, is well out of her feudal swaddling clothes. There, like here, “Reform” is now a snare and a delusion; there, like here, the ground is solid for the

Revolutionary Movement to step on, and proceed from: to tread the path of barter, as Millerand did, is there, as it is here, when not visionary, corrupt. The Millerand barter rent the French Socialist Movement in twain. The earnest Socialists, headed by Guesde, repudiated Millerand; the Reformers, headed by Jaures, upheld him. The International Socialist Congress met when the discussion was at its height. The two factions (if the Jaures element can, except in scorn, be termed a Socialist faction) rushed into the hall, the latter seeking international justification, the former the international condemnation of the theory, to say nothing of the practical betrayers of Socialism. It is enough of a commentary on the structure of these international Socialist congresses that such an issue could at all rise in their midst. It did. It was the one issue before the body: and it took shape in a resolution, since known to fame as the

“KAUTSKY RESOLUTION.”

The “Kautsky Resolution” is a product typical of its source. It is a panel, painfully put together, of symmetrically rounded theses and antitheses on the ministerial question, in which “the head eats up the tail.” This feature of the resolution is so marked that—despite the closing sentence distinctly enough gives up the class struggle by conceiving the possibility of “impartiality on the part of a capitalist government in the struggles between Capital and Labor”—it gave rise to a verbose controversy as to whether or not it favored Millerandism. The Dresden Congress shed, however, such a light upon the matter that further controversy is now more than ever vain, and in the light that it shed, the crowning episode, so far, in the consistent history of the German Social Democracy, is fully illumined.

In the course of his speech, Auer, the gifted lieutenant of Vollmar, deliberately let fall a pregnant scrap of information. Said he:

“I went along as a delegate to the International Congress at Paris. It devolved upon me to speak in the name of the German delegation. And to what motion did I speak? To the Kautsky Resolution on the ministerial question. Kautsky and others had framed the resolution. It contains not a syllable of my own. I do not tackle such dangerous experiments, when I know there are comrades who are better hands at such matters. I SPOKE AMID THE PLAUDITS OF ALL OUR DELEGATES, OF KAUTSKY INCLUDED, who was the father of the whole affair, and who had furnished me with the line of

argument for my speech. Kautsky was then delighted to see ‘Old Auer’ again pull through so well. There was not one among us German delegates in Paris who, at that time, took upon this question the stand that, for reasons which I care not here to enlarge upon, shaped itself later. And it has come to the pass that now a fellow is actually looked upon as a very questionable comrade who does not consider the ministry of Millerand an act of turpitude, and does not see in Jaures a man, who, as a result of his revisionist inclinations, means to lead the party away from class-consciousness and into the bourgeois camp. Gentlemen, THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN STATED AT THE TIME, IN PARIS. In that case I would, probably, not have spoken, and the charge could not now be made. If Kautsky was then of an opinion different from that he holds to-day, he surely has no right to blame those who to-day are still of the same opinion as he was then.”

And Kautsky, who spoke after, taken off his guard, left these statements of fact uncontradicted, and even supplemented them with the information:

“Auer said in Paris: ‘True enough, a Millerand case has not yet arisen among us [in Germany]: we are not yet so far: but I hope we may reach the point at the earliest day possible.’”!!!

Thus, the gory specter of the traitor Millerand stalking across the floor of the International Congress at Paris, and the very window-panes of the hall still rattling to the musketry that butchered the workers of Chalon and Martinique, the “Kautsky Resolution” was introduced, was recommended by such language and was carried, the German delegation voting solid for it, and—typical of the modern international status, and to the lasting glory of the Socialist Labor Party—the rank and file of its delegation forced the wobbly Lucien Sanial to stand straight, and cast the solid vote of the delegation against it.

Was it an accident that Auer was chosen by Kautsky to make the speech of the German delegation at Paris? “Do you imagine,” asked Kautsky at Dresden, affecting horror, “that I approved these utterances of Auer’s?” If he disapproved, yet held he his tongue there where, as Auer well observed, disapproval should have been expressed, and he indulged in applause only. But nine-tenths of the European Movement is either caught in the identical trammels of belated and now necessary radical bourgeois reform, that the German Social Democracy is caught in; or its representatives, as happened with the English Social Democratic Federation, were

stage-strutters, seeking notoriety. At the Paris Congress an anti-Millerandist attitude was decidedly unpopular; there Kautsky was “running with the hares.” Subsequently, when the reaction set in; when the stand taken by the trivial minority at Paris began to operate; when the baneful effect of the “Kautsky Resolution” upon the French Socialist movement was realized, then followed a series of excuses, dodgings and hedgings, to the extent that *Iskra*, the organ of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, wittily satirized both author and resolutions as the “Kaoutchouc (India rubber) resolution.” The situation in Germany was, moreover, aggravated by the top-heavy and irritating pranks of Bernstein—a gentleman whose measure The People took at an early date and exposed—and of other “free speech” intellectuals of his ilk. The fires of Bebel (who was absent from Paris) long dormant, leaped forth again in tongues of flame, until the landmark of Dresden was reached and passed, with Kautsky again to the fore, now “barking with the hounds.”

#### VIRTUAL UNANIMITY DESPITE SEEMING DIFFERENCES.

If the Marxian-Morgan law of social evolution holds good; if the attestation of its soundness—as recorded in the sketch of the history of the German Social Democracy on the party’s tactics, culminating with the “Kautsky Resolution” and Auer’s speech hoping for a German Millerand, both enthusiastically supported by the German delegation at Paris, together with the document, published last year in these columns,<sup>1</sup> with which the Social Democratic Reichstag delegation opened the late campaign—points to any conclusion, then the conclusion is that the Dresden Congress turned no new leaf, and could turn none, but, *mutatis mutandis*, rehearsed a scene often and periodically rehearsed before in the party’s course—the scene of the revolutionary spirit of Socialism being conjured up by Bebel at periodically arising new departures, then melting away again, and the resumption of the practical course. Some essentially rotten branches of the brigade of “free thought” intellectuals may have been cracked in the Dresden storm and be sawed off to be cast away:—that has happened before. The vanities that prompted in some

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<sup>1</sup> [See “Manifesto of the German Social Democratic Party to the German Voters,” appended to “The German Elections,” *Daily People*, June 18, 1903.—R.B.]

breasts the panting after the hollow honor of a vice-presidency, even if it had to be log-rolled for, may have been, probably were, cauterized:—even serious movements have a way of occasionally squelching trifles with a great display of strength, in order to pursue their prescribed path with all the freer hand. All this may be. But the principle, now christened “revisionism” and which, as shown in the debates, had previously undergone a series of equally damaging christenings, and survived them all, and in the end asserted itself, is in the nature of things un-uprootable—so long as the feudal soil lasts. Conditions, still peculiar to Germany, have forced the Social Democracy to come down from the air and place itself upon the only field there was to take a stand on—the field of reform. On that field the contestants have a common ground. On common ground contestants can deal, and barter may there be a handmaid of progress—such as is possible.

Thus the fury of the Dresden debates, the paradox they presented, is explained. Unconsciously, one set of the delegates, the Vollmar element, were in nervous apprehension lest the party was rhetorized from the ground that all agreed it had made stupendous progress on; unconsciously, another set, the Bebel element, were under a nervous strain lest the party’s beloved Socialist halo was dimmed. THESE WERE THE ISSUES, and quite momentous they were. Upon them depend the downfall of the German Empire, that is, the completion of the bourgeois revolution for Germany. Under such apprehensions, mutually affecting the contestants, ultimate unanimity and good will were assured. Indeed, almost puerile were the measures taken toward that end. After a violent discussion had convulsed the party’s press and public meetings, before the meeting of the Congress, upon the issue of ACCEPTING THE OFFICE OF VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE REICHSTAG, and after the original resolution on the subject, truthfully reflecting the sentiment of the preceding discussion, expressly disapproved the acceptance of such an office, a watered resolution was subsequently substituted, approving the acceptance of the office, but emphatically repudiating its accessories, of which the wearing of knee-breeches at court is one—a turn-about that gave the whole pre-congress violent discussion the aspect of having been all about gala knee-breeches only! Hence the mental placidity of the nominal minority, amidst the intense earnestness of all. Hence the virtual unanimity at the final vote.

A candle having been burnt to St. Michael, his dragon could continue to be worshipped.

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