

EDITORIAL

## BERGER AS MIDWIFE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A** GREENABLE to the promise, made last week,<sup>1</sup> we take up this week the second of the two points, made by Victor L. Berger in his *Social Democratic Herald*, against Socialist Labor politics, which he considers “Impossiblism.” The second point made by the gentleman is that he is an “evolutionary Socialist.” By implication, “evolution” is a thing repugnant to “revolution,” and “revolution” to “evolution.”

The fact is that, in the domain of social science, he who says “evolution,” if he knows what he is talking about, contemplates EVENTUAL “revolution”; and he who says “revolution,” unless he uses words without understanding them, contemplates PREVIOUS “evolution.” If that which is termed “evolution” does not CULMINATE in “revolution,” it is a fizzle; if that which is termed “revolution” is not USHERED IN by “evolution,” it is a shot without charge. In fact, evolution is inconceivable without its culmination in revolution; nor is revolution conceivable without preceding evolution. Evolution and revolution are but stages of the same process of development. The one is cause, the other sequence. The one is the lightning flash, the other the thunder clap. No lightning, no thunder; no thunder, no lightning, somewhere. And the one breeds the other.

Much lies in the bearing of this biologic fact, which has its strict analogy in sociology.

In life, from the instant of impregnation, EVOLUTION sets in; when the hour of the ninth month sounds, REVOLUTION is due. If attempted before that hour, mother and child may perish; if it fails at that hour, the same catastrophe is imminent. Infinitely closer than a mere figure of speech is the simile between

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<sup>1</sup> [See “Impossibilism’ for Fair,” *Daily People*, August 19, 1906.—R.B.]

Society and Woman, between the forming foetus and a gathering new social system. In the womb of Society the evolution of the Co-operative Commonwealth has been going on—in this country, since the revolution that gave it birth. That evolution consists in the concentration of the means of production and distribution, apace with the perfection of the machinery that renders the concentration possible. As with Woman, all premature attempts for the deliverance of Society of the child with which it is big may prove fatal, likewise all delay when the social foetus is ripe. As with Woman, with whom, evolution having taken its course, and the hour of revolution having sounded, the child is born, not piecemeal, but complete, so with Society. The social evolution having ripened the fruit in the womb of Society, the new social system is born complete, not in adult shape, any more than with man, yet complete; all at once; not piecemeal. Woe to Society, as to that hapless woman, upon whom the midwife should practice that bizarre conception of evolution according to which the child is to be brought to light one eye today, one leg to-morrow, the nose the third day, the entrails the fourth, and so on. The child would be charnel, and the mother would lie with it in the same coffin. Not by municipalizing or nationalizing this bakery to-day, that railroad to-morrow, yonder factory the third day, lavatories the next, and so on, will Society be delivered of the child of the Co-operative Commonwealth. As in biology, so in sociology,—such a conception of the evolution before birth and of the revolution of birth, marks its holder unfit. He who were to hold such a conception in biology could not but be ignorant of the anatomy of the human body; to him who advances such a conception of social evolution, the book of social science is a sealed codex. As the human body is not the addition of a number of members, but an organic entity, neither is the Co-operative Commonwealth the sum of a number of parts, but an integral, organic whole.

The hour of the ninth month is sounding. Society is heaving to-day with the pangs of travail. The evolutioned child of the Co-operative Commonwealth, or Socialist Republic, is throbbing and ready for the revolution of its birth.

If Mr. Victor L. Berger, instead of hanging out his shingle as a “Social Midwife,” hung out his shingle as a “Physical Midwife,” then out of love for one’s friends, one would be forced to warn them against fetching in such a quack: he would widow

their home and blast it with childlessness. No less baneful to the home of mankind, to pregnant Society, pregnant with the Socialist Republic, and to the child, now a-borning, would be the ministrations of the social midwife Berger.

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