

«Préface» à la traduction de *Anarchism and Socialism*
d'Eleanor Marx Aveling

George Plechanoff (1909). *Anarchism and Socialism*. Translated by Eleanor Marx Aveling. Introduction by Robert Rives LaMonte. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company.

PREFACE

The work of my friend George Plechanoff, "Anarchism and Socialism" was written originally in French. It was then translated into German by Mrs. Bernstein, and issued in pamphlet form by the German Social-Democratic Publishing Office "Vorwärts." It was next translated by myself into English, and so much of the translation as exigencies of space would permit, published in the *Weekly Times and Echo*. The original French version is now appearing in the *Jeunesse Socialiste*, and will be issued in book form shortly. The complete English translation is now given to English readers through the Twentieth Century Press. I have to thank the Editor of the *Weekly Times and Echo*, Mr. Kibblewhite, for his kindness in allowing me to use those portions of the work that appeared in his paper.

As to the book itself. There are those who think that the precious time of so remarkable a writer, and profound a thinker as George Plechanoff is simply wasted in pricking Anarchist wind-bags. But, unfortunately, there are many of the younger, or of the more ignorant sort, who are inclined to take words for deeds, high-sounding phrases for acts, mere sound and fury for revolutionary activity, and who are too young or too ignorant to know that such sound and fury signify nothing. It is for the sake of these younger, or for the sake of the more ignorant, folk, that men like Plechanoff deal seriously with this matter of Anarchism, and do not feel their time lost if they can, as this work must, help readers to see the true meaning of what is called "Anarchism."

And a work like this one of Plechanoff's is doubly necessary in England, where the Socialist movement is still largely disorganised, where there is still such ignorance and confusion on all economic and political subjects; where, with the exception, among the larger Socialist organisations, of the Social-Democratic Federation (and even among the younger S.D.F. members there is a vague sort of idea that Anarchism is something fine and revolutionary), there has been no little coquetting with Anarchism under an impression that it was very "advanced," and where the old Unionist cry of "No politics!" has unconsciously played the reactionary Anarchist game. We cannot afford to overlook the fact that the Socialist League became in time- when some of us had left it- an Anarchist organisation, and that since then its leaders have been, or still are, more or less avowed Anarchists. While quite recently the leader of a "new party"- and that a would-be political one!- did not hesitate to declare his Anarchist Sympathies or to state that "The methods of the Anarchists might differ from those of the Socialists, but that might only prove that the

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former were more zealous than the latter."

It is also necessary to point out once again that Anarchism and Nihilism have no more in common than Anarchism and Socialism. As Plechanoff said at the Zürich International Congress: "We (*i.e.*, the Russians) have had to endure every form of persecution, every thinkable misery; but we have been spared one disgrace, one humiliation; we at least, have no Anarchists." A statement endorsed and emphasised by other Russian revolutionists, and notably by the American delegate, Abraham Cahan- himself a Russian refugee. The men and women who are waging their heroic war in Russia and in Poland against Czarism have no more in common with Anarchism than had the founders of the modern Socialist movement- Carl Marx and Frederick Engels.

This little book of Plechanoff will assuredly convince the youngest even that under any circumstances Anarchism is but another word for reaction; and the more honest the men and women who play this reactionist game, the more tragic and dangerous it becomes for the whole working class movement.

Finally, there is a last reason why the issuing of this work at the present moment is timely. In 1896 the next International Socialist and Trade Union Congress meets in London. It is well that those who may attend this great Congress as delegates, and that the thousands of workers who will watch its work, should understand why the resolutions arrived at by the Paris, Brussels, and Zürich International Congress with regard to Anarchists should be enforced. The Anarchists who cynically declare Worker's Congresses "absurd, motiveless, and senseless" must be taught once and for all, that they cannot be allowed to make the Congress of the Revolutionary Socialists of the world a playground for reaction and international spydrom.

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