

剑桥政治思想史原著系列（影印本）

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

社会主义的前提条件

The Preconditions of Socialism

Bernstein

伯恩斯坦

Edited by

HENRY

TUDOR

中国政法大学出版社

爱都阿德·伯恩斯坦

EDUARD BERNSTEIN

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*The Preconditions
of Socialism*

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EDUARD BERNSTEIN
The Preconditions of Socialism

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This is the first complete new translation of Bernstein's most famous and influential work. It will provide students with an accurate and unabridged edition of what has come to be recognised as the classic defence of democratic socialism and the first significant critique of revolutionary Marxism from within the socialist movement. First published in 1899, at the height of the Revisionist Debate, it argued that capitalism was not heading for the major crisis predicted by Marx, that the revolutionary rhetoric of the German Social Democratic Party was out of date, and that socialism could, and should, be achieved by piecemeal reform within a democratic constitutional framework. The historical significance of Bernstein's work lies in its being the focal point of one of the most important political debates of modern times. Its contemporary relevance lies in the light it casts on 'the crisis of Communism'.

The introduction sites Bernstein's work in its historical and intellectual context, and this edition also provides students with all the necessary reference material for understanding this important text.

剑桥政治思想史原著系列

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在政治理论领域，“剑桥政治思想史原著系列”作为主要的学生教科丛书，如今已牢固确立了其地位。本丛书旨在使学生能够获得从古希腊到 20 世纪初期西方政治思想史方面所有最为重要的原著。它囊括了所有著名的经典原著，但与此同时，它又扩展了传统的评价尺度，以便能够纳入范围广泛、不那么出名的作品。而在此之前，这些作品中有许多从未有过现代英文版本可资利用。只要可能，所选原著都会以完整而不删节的形式出版，其中的译作则是专门为本丛书的目的而安排。每一本书都有一个评论性的导言，加上历史年表、生平梗概、进一步阅读指南，以及必要的词汇表和原文注解。本丛书的最终目的是，为西方政治思想的整个发展脉络提供一个清晰的轮廓。

本丛书已出版著作的书目，请查阅书末。

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Hence the Ten Hours' Bill was not only a great practical success;
it was the victory of a principle.

Karl Marx, Inaugural Address of the International

Editor's note

Eduard Bernstein's famous polemic, *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus*, was first published in 1899. It was reprinted several times in subsequent years and then, in 1921, Bernstein produced a revised and enlarged second edition. However, it was the first edition of 1899 that was at the centre of the controversy known as the Revisionist Debate, and that is the one that I have translated. There is already an English translation done by Edith C. Harvey and published in 1909 with the title *Evolutionary Socialism*. It reappeared in 1961 as a Schocken paperback, and two years later it was reprinted with an introduction by the late Sidney Hook.

Harvey's translation was not intended as a scholarly work and she did not feel it necessary to supply the usual apparatus. Nor, for that matter, did she translate the whole book. Chapter 2 was omitted, as were large sections of the remaining four chapters. Indeed, something between a quarter and a third of the book was left out. Furthermore, in the parts of the book which Harvey did translate, many inaccuracies and other defects crept in. Nevertheless, her translation has served as a good first draft, and if the present translation is an improvement, then it is largely because I have been able to build on her labours.

The Introduction inevitably covers much the same ground as my Introduction to *Marxism and Social Democracy; The Revisionist Debate 1896–1898* (ed. H. and J. M. Tudor, Cambridge, 1988) and my short piece on Bernstein in Robert Benewick (ed.), *Dictionary of Twentieth Century Political Thinkers* (London, 1992). I have, however, taken this opportunity to bring in some new material and to develop the analysis a bit further.

Material I have inserted in the text is enclosed in square brackets. Footnotes in the original are indicated by lower-case italic letters; my own notes are indicated by arabic numbers: both will be found at the foot of each page. I am very grateful to Raymond Guess and to my wife, Jo Tudor, for their helpful comments on various parts of this text. They have saved me from committing many errors. I am sure that at least as many remain, and for these I am, of course, entirely responsible.

Abbreviations

Adler <i>BW</i>	Victor Adler, <i>Briefwechsel mit August Bebel und Karl Kautsky, sowie Briefe von und an I. Auer, E. Bernstein, A. Braun, H. Dietz, E. Ebert, W. Liebknecht, H. Muller und P. Singer</i> , collected and with commentary by F. Adler, Vienna, 1954
<i>Capital</i> I	Karl Marx, <i>Capital: A Critique of Political Economy</i> , vol. I, trans. Ben Fowkes, Harmondsworth, 1976
<i>Capital</i> III	Karl Marx, <i>Capital: A Critique of Political Economy</i> , vol. III, trans. David Fernbach, Harmondsworth, 1981
<i>LVZ</i>	<i>Leipziger Volkszeitung</i>
MECW	Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, <i>Collected Works</i> , 50 vols. (incomplete), London, 1975–
MESC	Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, <i>Selected Correspondence</i> , Moscow, n.d.
MESW	Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, <i>Selected Works</i> , 2 vols., Moscow, 1958
MEW	Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, <i>Werke</i> , 39 vols., Berlin, 1972–8
NZ	<i>Die Neue Zeit</i>
<i>Protokoll</i>	<i>Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitag der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands</i> , Berlin, 1890–1913
RLGW	Rosa Luxemburg, <i>Gesammelte Werke</i> , 5 vols., Berlin, 1974–80

List of abbreviations

- Tudor and Tudor *Marxism and Social Democracy: The Revisionist Debate 1896–1898*, ed. and trans. by H. Tudor and J. M. Tudor, with an introduction by H. Tudor, Cambridge, 1988

Introduction

When, in the spring of 1899, Bernstein's *Preconditions of Socialism* appeared, it caused a sensation. In effect, the book was a restatement and elaboration of the reformist standpoint Bernstein had been developing in a series of articles published during the previous two years. The controversy which these articles provoked had culminated in the rejection of Bernstein's position at the Stuttgart Conference of the German Social Democratic Party in October 1898. However, many felt that the issue had not yet been laid to rest. Karl Kautsky in particular was profoundly dissatisfied and he therefore urged that Bernstein produce 'a systematic, comprehensive, and carefully reasoned exposition of his basic conceptions, insofar as they transcend the framework of principles hitherto accepted in our party'.¹ Bernstein agreed, and the result was *The Preconditions of Socialism and the Tasks of Social Democracy*. Hastily written and flawed as it was, it was to become the classic statement of democratic, non-revolutionary socialism.

The background

Bernstein was born in Berlin on 6 January 1850. His father was a locomotive driver and the family was Jewish though not religious. When he left school he took employment as a banker's clerk. In 1872, the year after the establishment of the German Reich and the suppression of the Paris Commune, he joined the 'Eisenach' wing of

¹ Karl Kautsky, 'Tactics and Principles', 13.10.1898, Tudor and Tudor, p. 312.

the German socialist movement and soon became prominent as an activist. In 1875 he attended the Gotha Conference at which the Eisenachers united with the Lassalleans to form what was to become the German Social Democratic Party.² It was not long before the party reaped the benefit of its newly found unity. In the Reichstag elections of 1877 it gained 493,000 votes. However, two assassination attempts on the Kaiser in the following year provided Bismarck with a pretext for introducing a law banning all socialist organisations, assemblies, and publications. As it happened, there had been no Social Democratic involvement in either assassination attempt, but the popular reaction against 'enemies of the Reich' induced a compliant Reichstag to pass Bismarck's 'Socialist Law'.

For nearly all practical purposes, the party was outlawed and, throughout Germany, it was actively suppressed. However, it was still possible for Social Democrats to stand as individuals for election to the Reichstag, and this they did. Indeed, despite the severe persecution to which it was subjected, the party actually increased its electoral support, gaining 550,000 votes in 1884 and 763,000 in 1887. Party conferences could still be held outside Germany, and party papers – such as, the official party organ, *Der Sozialdemokrat*, and Karl Kautsky's political and literary review, *Die Neue Zeit* – could still be published abroad and smuggled across the frontier. In short, the party survived and, in certain respects, it even flourished.

Shortly before the 'Socialist Law' came into effect, Bernstein himself fled to Switzerland to take up a post as secretary to Karl Höchberg, a wealthy supporter of Social Democracy. A warrant subsequently issued for his arrest ruled out any possibility of his returning to Germany, and he was to remain in exile for more than twenty years.

It was shortly after his arrival in Switzerland that he began to think of himself as a Marxist.³ In 1880, he accompanied Bebel to London in order to clear up a misunderstanding over his involvement in an article published by Höchberg and denounced by Marx and Engels

² See Bernstein's account in his *Sozialdemokratische Lehrjahre* (Berlin, 1978), pp. 41ff; Roger Morgan, *The German Social Democrats and the First International 1864–1872* (Cambridge, 1965), gives an excellent account of the German socialist movement prior to the Gotha Conference.

³ Bernstein, *Sozialdemokratische Lehrjahre*, p. 72; Bernstein to Bebel, 20.10.1898, Tudor and Tudor, p. 324.

as being 'chock-full of bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideas'.⁴ The trip was a success. Engels in particular was impressed by Bernstein's zeal and the soundness of his ideas.

Back in Zurich, Bernstein became increasingly active in working for *Der Sozialdemokrat*, and in the following year he succeeded Georg von Vollmar as the paper's editor, a post he was to hold for the next ten years. It was during these years that Bernstein established his reputation as a leading party theoretician and a Marxist of impeccable orthodoxy. In this he was helped by the close personal and professional relationship he established with Engels. This relationship owed much to the fact that he shared Engels's strategic vision and accepted most of the particular policies which, in Engels's view, that vision entailed.

Engels, being convinced that the transition from capitalism to socialism could never be achieved by peaceful parliamentary means, argued that the main task of the party was to prepare for the inevitable revolution. However, to do this the party had first of all to survive, and that meant avoiding any action that might provoke the state into further acts of repression. It also meant using all available means to build up the strength of the party and increase its popular support. In the Reichstag, Social Democratic deputies should, therefore, adopt a position of intransigence within a framework of strict legality. Engels agreed that there was no harm in supporting measures that might improve the lot of the working man. But any measures that might strengthen the government against the people should be resisted.⁵ These included the programme of welfare legislation which Bismarck initiated in the 1880s and also such apparently innocuous measures as state subsidies for the construction of steamships.⁶

For Engels, the danger was that a concentration on peaceful parliamentary activity might cause Social Democrats to forget their revolutionary objective. He therefore saw it as an important part of Bernstein's task as editor of the official party organ to halt the spread of 'philistine sentiment' within the party. Bernstein was glad to oblige.

⁴ MESC, pp. 388 ff; MEW, vol. XXXIV, pp. 394ff.

⁵ Engels to Bebel, 24.11.1879, MEW, vol. XXIV, p. 424.

⁶ The party opposed the 'steamship subventions' because they formed part of Germany's policy of colonial expansion. At the same time, the subventions gave employment to dockyard workers and were, for that reason, supported by many Social Democrats. For Bernstein's account of the controversy see *Sozialdemokratische Lehrjahre*, pp. 155ff.

In one leading article after another, he spelled out the case for intransigence.⁷

In 1887, the German government persuaded the Swiss authorities to close down *Der Sozialdemokrat*. Bernstein moved to London where he resumed publication from premises in Kentish Town. His relationship with Engels soon blossomed into friendship. He also made contact with various English socialist organisations, notably the Fabian Society and Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation. It is clear that he was impressed by the liberal political climate that prevailed in England at the time.⁸ Indeed, in later years, his opponents routinely claimed that his 'Revisionism' was due to his having come to see the world 'through English spectacles'. It is, of course, impossible to determine how far the charge was justified. For what it is worth, Bernstein himself denied it.⁹

In 1890 Bismarck fell from power. One of the factors that contributed to his downfall was the remarkable success the Social Democrats scored in the Reichstag elections of that year. They gained nearly one and a half million votes. Bismarck proposed to respond with further repressive measures, but the new Kaiser, Wilhelm II, favoured a policy of reconciliation. Bismarck accordingly resigned. Shortly afterwards, the 'Socialist Law' was allowed to lapse, and it was once again possible for Social Democracy to operate openly as a political organisation in Germany. However, the warrant which had been issued for Bernstein's arrest remained in force, and Bernstein therefore stayed in England until 1901 when it was finally withdrawn.

The electoral success of the party opened up new prospects and caused many Social Democrats to reconsider their strategy. This caused a certain amount of turmoil within the party. On the left, a group of intellectuals, known as the Youngsters, mounted a campaign in which they warned against opportunism, deplored the party's obsession with parliamentary success, and insisted that socialism could be achieved only by revolutionary means. They had reason to be concerned. The fall of Bismarck and the conciliatory attitude of the Kaiser had led many Social Democrats to think that socialism

⁷ For instance, the three articles by Bernstein from the *Sozialdemokrat* in Tudor and Tudor, chapter 1.

⁸ This is particularly evident in Bernstein's *My Years of Exile: Reminiscences of a Socialist* (London, 1921).

⁹ Bernstein to Bebel, 20.10.1898, Tudor and Tudor, pp. 325–6.