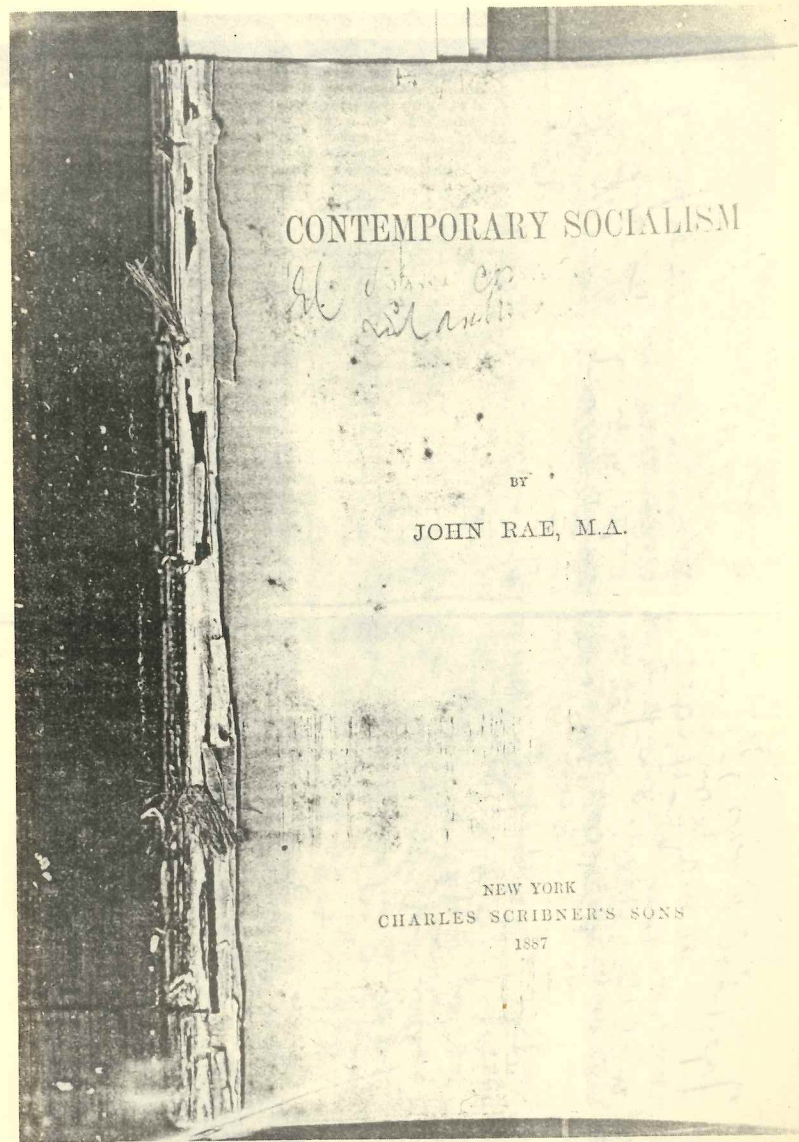


Centro histórico de Concord.



Anotaciones de José Martí en el libro *Contemporary Socialism* de John Rae. Primera anotación en la edición de 1887, publicada en Nueva York por Charles Scribner's Sons. La primera edición es de 1884.

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experience in modern times of two different forms of democracy, which may be called the American and the Continental. In America equality came as it were by nature, without strife and without so much as observation; the colonists started equal. But freedom was only won by sacrifice; the first pilgrims bought it by exile; the founders of the Republic bought it a second time by blood. Liberty therefore was their treasure, their ark, their passion; and having been long trained in habits of self-government, they acquired in the daily exercise of their liberty that strong sense of its practical value, and that subtle instinct of its just limits, which always constitute its surest bulwarks. With them the State was nothing more than an association for mutual protection — an association, like any other, having its own definite work to do and no more, and receiving from its members the precise powers needed for that work and no more; and they looked with a jealousy, warm from their history and life, on any extension of the State's functions or powers beyond those primary requirements of public safety or utility which they laid upon it. In the United States property is widely diffused; liberty has been long enjoyed by the people as a fact as well as loved by them as an ideal; the central authority has ever been held in comparative check, and individual rights are so general a possession that any encroachment upon them in the name of the majority would always tread on interests numerous and strong enough to raise an effectual resistance. Democracy has in America, accordingly, a soil most favourable to its healthy growth; the history, the training, and the circumstances of the people all concur to support liberty.

But on the Continent democracy sprang from very

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modern France. That is why, with all her marvellous efforts for liberty, she has never fully possessed it, and that is why she seems condemned to instability.

A growing minority of the democratic party in France is indeed opposed to this unfortunate over-government, but the democratic party in general has always countenanced it, perhaps more than any other party, because to their minds government represents the will of the people, and the people cannot be supposed to have any reason to restrain its own will. Besides, they are still dominated by the doctrines of Rousseau and the other revolutionary writers, who looked with the utmost contempt on the American idea of the State being a kind of joint-stock association organised for a circumscribed purpose and with limited powers, and who held the State, on the contrary, to be the organ of society in all its interests, desires, and needs, and to be invested with all the powers and rights of all the individuals that compose it. Under the social contract, by which they conceived the State to be constituted, individuals gave up all their rights and possessions to the community, and got them back immediately afterwards as mere State concessions, which there could be no injustice in withdrawing again next day for the greater good of the community. Instead of enjoying equal freedom as men, the great object was to make them enjoy equal completeness as citizens.

From historical conditions like these there has sprung up on the Continent — in Germany as well as France — a quite different type of democracy from the American, and this type of democracy, while it may not be the best, the truest, or the healthiest type of it, has a tendency only too natural towards socialism. It contains in its very build and temperament, organic conditions

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present mandarin control crushing out of the people that energy of character which W. von Humboldt said was the first and only virtue of man, because it was the root of all other excellence and advancement. In short, socialists now seek, like Baboeuf, to establish a democratic republic — a society built on the equal manhood of every citizen — and, like Baboeuf, they think a true democratic republic is necessarily a socialistic one.

This brings me to the next point I mentioned, the interesting problem of the true relations of socialism to democracy. Is socialism, as Stahl and others represent, an inevitable corollary of democracy? If so, our interest in it is very real, and very immediate. For democracy is already here, and is at present engaged in every country of Europe in the very work of re-organising the social system into harmony with democratic requirements. Its hammer may make little sound in some places, but the work proceeds none the less effectually for the silence, and it will proceed, slowly or more rapidly, until all the institutions of the country have been renovated by the democratic spirit. Will the social system, which will result from the process, be socialism? "The gradual development of the principle of equality," says De Tocqueville, "is a providential fact. It has all the characteristics of such a fact. It is universal; it is durable; it constantly eludes all human interference; and all events, as well as all men, contribute to its progress. Would it be wise to imagine that a social movement, the causes of which lie so far back, can be checked by the efforts of one generation? Can it be believed that the democracy which has overthrown the feudal system and vanquished kings will retreat before tradesmen and capitalists? Will it stop