

Making Tomorrow's World

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GERMANY—A REPUBLIC?



Munich, Bavaria.—Every Social Democrat is synonymous with enemy of the nation and of the fatherland." The words are from an official letter of William II., emperor of Germany. Again and again, in spirit if not in exact substance, he has repeated the statement. Nor has the German emperor, more powerful than any other European monarch, hesitated to use his enormous power toward suppression of the party which he so vigorously denounces.

Electorate 30 Per Cent. Socialist.

He is allied with him in this determined opposition the clerical and conservative classes, combinations of capital and possessors of privilege, the agricultural interests, the less radical liberals of the middle class and yet—nearly one voter in every three in Germany is a Social Democrat, the largest single party is the Social Democratic party and its membership, organized on military and well-disciplined lines, is, with occasional and temporary lapses, steadily increasing. The figures which political statistics furnish showing its progress are sufficiently impressive as to its growing strength and importance. In thirty years it has increased the number of its voters from 300,000 to more than 3,000,000, from 6 to 30 per cent. of the total number of votes polled, with 110 representatives, despite an absurdly inequitable suffrage system, in a reichstag or parliament of 397 members.

Far more impressive even than these figures are the conversations of the Man in the Street, the program which to him is gospel, the organization which he has built up and maintained, and Vorwaerts (Forward) the trenchant daily newspaper which he reads. These will count, whether we approve or disapprove, in tomorrow's Germany, and tomorrow's Germany is to loom large in tomorrow's world.

What Social Democrats Demand.

The party platform or program may be summed up in few words. The editor of Vorwaerts declared it thus: "Adult suffrage, one vote for each man and each woman; government responsible to parliament; local self-government; referendum; voluntary militia; freedom of speech and of the press; equality of woman and man before the law; no state church; compulsory attendance, with free tuition at state schools; free legal proceedings, medical attendance and burial, provided by the state; progressive income tax and succession duty."

In advocating this program the Social Democratic party has other and less clearly defined purposes. It is committed, through its leaders, to an attack upon the church which has led its more radical members and official utterances to approve atheism. "The party is confessedly and entirely atheistic," said a Berlin Conservative Journalist. On the contrary, the man in the street, while attacking the church as a kind of class privilege is frequently careful to distinguish between church and religion, between ecclesiasticism and the Deity. Indeed, an entire section of the party or ally of it, the Christian Social Union, as its name suggests, is at variance with the doctrines of atheism.

For Peace and His Throne.

The abolition of monarchy is, of course, held as an end to which the Social Democrats look forward. It is not strange that the emperor views the party with such scornful and vehement disapproval. The assertion is often heard in German cafes that the emperor, war lord as he is, and seeker after military renown, has been constrained to become an advocate of peace many times, and just now in the latest—but not the last—Balkan struggle, for the predominant reason that a war might and probably would mean the downfall of the monarchy. Peace and a throne have been preferred above war and William Hohenzollern, private citizen. The Kaiser keeps his own counsel and the assertion may be wholly unjustified, but there have been twenty-five years without war and the emperor at Berlin still reigns and rules.

The purpose of a program is sometimes more indicative of a party's desire than the program itself. This huge workmen's party has expressed its purpose in much writing. Of making many books on the Social Democratic party in Germany there is no end. Much translated quotation therefrom is a weariness to the flesh. A single quotation from an official handbook of the party, with an early announcement of purpose, furnished at the office of Vorwaerts, the official organ, will suffice:

"The aim of Social Democracy is not to divide all property, but to combine it and use it for the development and improvement of mankind, in order to give to all a life worthy of man. Work shall become a duty for all men able to work. The word of the Bible, 'He that does not work neither shall he eat,' shall become a true word."

Declares for Love Marriages.

"Marriage, in contradiction to religious teachings, is in innumerable cases a financial transaction pure and simple. Woman has value in the eyes of man only when she has a fortune and the more money she has the higher rises her value. Therefore marriage has become a business, and

thousands meet in the marriage market, for instance, by advertisements in newspapers, in which a husband or a wife is sought in the same way as a house or a pig is offered for sale. Consequently unhappy marriages have never been more numerous than at the present time, a state of affairs which is in contradiction to the real nature of marriage. Social Democracy desires that marriages be concluded solely from mutual love and esteem, which is only possible if man and woman are free and independent. If each has a free existence and an individual personality, and is therefore not compelled to buy the other or to be bought. This state of freedom and equality is only possible in the socialistic society.

"Who desires to belong to a church shall not be hindered, but he only shall pay for the expenses of his church together with his co-religionists."

"The schools and the whole educational system shall be separated from the church and religious societies, because education is a civil matter."

Wants Brotherhood of Nations.

"The God of Christians is not a German, French, Russian or English God, but a God of all men, an international God. God is the God of love and peace and therefore it borders upon blasphemy that the priests of different Christian nations invoke this God of love to give victory to their nation in the general slaughter. It is equally blasphemous if the priest of one nation prays the God of all nations for a victory over another nation. In striving to found a brotherhood of nations and the peaceful co-operation of nations in the service of civilization, Social Democracy acts

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August Bebel.

In a most Christian spirit, and tries to realize what the Christian priests of all nations, together with the Christian monarchs, hitherto would not or could not realize. By combining the workers of nations, Social Democracy tries to effect a federation of nations in which every state enjoys equal rights and in which the peculiarities of the inner character of every nation may peacefully develop."

The anti-socialist finds in these principles attacks upon the state, society, the monarchy, the family, the church, and is quick to denounce both program and principles.

Leaders Able; Followers Devoted.

The Social Democratic party is remarkable in the high personal character and ability of its leaders and in the well-nigh blind devotion of the followers. Almost exclusively a party of workmen, strongest in the industrial centers, its leaders are men from the ranks who, in many cases, give their services without pay, supporting themselves and their families by daily toil in shop or factory.

The funeral in Switzerland of August Bebel, long the leader of the party, took place a few days ago. The praises to Bebel's intellect and character were numerous even in the government press. Before his portrait, draped in crepe in the window of the Vorwaerts newspaper office, was seen a veritable procession of German workmen, reverently pausing to pay silent tribute. While Bebel was alive the great German historian, Professor Mommsen, had written: "Everybody in Germany knows that with brains like those of Bebel it would be possible to furnish forth a dozen noblemen from east of the Elbe in a fashion that would make them shine among their peers." Of the followers Professor Mommsen wrote: "The devotion, the self-sacrificing spirit of the Social Democratic masses, impresses even those who are far from sharing their aims."

Some Causes of His Growth.

Some German government tried forces to suppress the growth of the Social Democratic party and then presentment of its leaders, but without avail. Workmen's insurance followed—minus the unemployed benefit of Great Britain—but this, too, had no effect. The party continued to grow. The immorality suggested by the advertising in the newspapers and by the terrible fact that one of every ten births in Germany is illegitimate, the low wages and crowded housing of the working classes, the official caste system, even the democracy taught in the schools, where sons of Kaiser and day laborer sit on the same benches—were causes contributing to its growth.

The founder of the Social Democratic party in Germany was Wilhelm Liebknecht who began, at the suggestion of his wife, the movement. Liebknecht was a poor journalist. When

he had created and organized the party and was serving in his old age as editor of Vorwaerts, after having been in jail from time to time for his political opinions boldly expressed, he was sharply cross-examined by a committee of the party as to his household expenses and censured for keeping a domestic servant and accepting a salary as editor instead of living like an ordinary workman.

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What is the future of the Social Democratic party? Others than the German Kaiser and those of the established order are asking this question most seriously. In part due to its influence, though perhaps more largely due to the paternalism of the government and other causes, much progress has been made in the wide field of social reform. The party has remained substantially a unit. Bebel's towering influence aided in maintaining this unity. His successor, without Bebel's historical importance though possessed of his ability, may not be able to prevent the rise of discordant factions and the destruction of the party, as so many other parties have been destroyed, on the rock of personal ambition.

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Already three distinct schools or factions struggle for supremacy. The older and more radical faction wish to insist on all their reforms in their entirety or none; the younger, or revisionist elements, apparently now the stronger, are willing to join with the Liberals and others to get half a loaf today rather than no bread, expecting the whole loaf tomorrow; a third and influential faction seek to harmonize the old and the new schools, preserving unity of action.

Party's Future Provision.

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