

but women who live in luxury and spend their time over rich gowns, bridge whist, pink teas and beauty shows cannot represent them. Every protest from women of this class against woman suffrage makes votes for it."

To sum up: equal suffrage had against it a coalition of the saloons, the brothels, the trusts, the railroads, the machine politicians and the frivolous society women. Is there any instance in history where all these elements have been found arrayed together on the right side of any public question? Let the most ultra-conservative answer.

An equal suffrage amendment has been submitted in Oregon three times. Twenty-two years ago it was defeated almost three to one; six years ago it was defeated by only a few thousand votes; this year, in spite of the strong combination against it and the great sums of money spent by the opposition, it got a larger vote than ever before.

The negative vote also increased; but in the twenty-two years since the question was first submitted, the anti-suffrage vote has less than doubled, while the suffrage vote has more than trebled.

Under the initiative and referendum law of Oregon, any question can be submitted to popular vote as often as its friends wish; and the women of Oregon are already taking measures to have the equal suffrage amendment brought before the voters again at the next election.

ALICE STONE BLACKWELL.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

PRUSSIA.

Schieder, Prussia.—The Socialist party in Prussia has started a formidable movement in favor of the introduction of universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage for the Prussian Diet and the communities. There seems, however, to be no chance for this demand to become law. It is not because the Socialist party is weak, but because it is strong, that it has no hope for success. At the last election for the Imperial Diet, the Socialists got 3,000,000 votes, and carried 81 districts out of 397. A dozen years ago the German Emperor was reported as having said he would not stay in a city which had elected a Socialist, i. e. a Republican. If he should continue to follow this principle he would not find many cities to stay in. There is hardly a single big city left in the Empire that does not send a Socialist to the Reichstag (Imperial Diet), and this in spite of the condition that the elected candidate must not only have a simple plurality, he must have the majority over all his opponents combined. If the growth of the Socialist party continues then the time is not far

distant when the majority of votes in the Empire will be cast for a Republican party.

It is their republicanism that makes the Socialists so disagreeable to the ruling classes of our country. I do not think that anybody is greatly concerned about the nationalization of the means of production. Most of our Socialist voters do not even know the word, not to say what the word means. The Socialist party here is nothing else than a radical labor party. Our old parties were too exclusive to care for the common people. The Socialists have been the only party that has pleaded the cause of the people, and because of this they have won the confidence of the people.

Our liberal parties are now beginning to recognize the mistake they made in looking with contempt on the beginnings of the labor movement. They are now trying to reform their platforms with reference to social progress. But the confidence of the people once lost will not so easily come back. Moreover there is still much discord among the Liberals. Efforts are made to unite the different groups of advanced Liberals, which will probably be successful; but whether they will revive the Liberal party is not so sure.

It must be remarked that nearly all the Socialist victories in Germany have been won at the expense of the Liberals. The Catholic and Conservative parties have on the whole retained their membership. They have their strongholds almost exclusively in the rural districts, whilst the Liberals and Socialists hold the reins of power in the cities.

Of all the legislative bodies in Germany the most democratic is the Reichstag. It is elected by universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage, much in the same way as the Congress of the United States. The difference is, as I mentioned before, that the elected candidate must have not only the most votes, but more votes than all his opponents combined. If this is not obtained in the first election, a second contest is held between the two candidates who have obtained the most votes in the first contest. Without this provision the number of Socialist members of the Imperial Diet would rise to nearly double the present number. There is still another way in which the Socialist party is grossly and more unjustly injured. The division of the election districts was made 30 years ago and has never been revised. Meanwhile the industrial centers where the Socialists have their strongholds have enormously increased in population, without a corresponding increase in the number of delegates. Thus Berlin elects only 6 delegates, while it ought to have 18; Hamburg 3 instead of 7. This is even in flat contradiction to the constitution of the Empire; however, it is very much to the advantage of the ruling parties.

In the last decade the Southern German States have reformed their election laws, so as to make them more democratic, and practically the same as those for the Imperial Diet. But in the Northern States, especially where the Socialist party is increasing, the opposite tendency is predominant. Saxony reformed its election laws a dozen years ago in such a way that to-day not a single Socialist is sitting in the legislature, though in the last Imperial election the Socialist party got 150,000 votes more than all its opponents combined. Hamburg,

which had a very plutocratic election law, has made it still more plutocratic during the last year, so as to exclude the Socialists almost entirely from the legislature. In Hamburg, also, at the elections for the Imperial Diet the Socialists have a majority over all other parties.

Prussia has always had the most plutocratic election laws in the world. The voters both for the legislature and for the county and city councils are divided into three classes, the principle of this division being as follows: The total amount of income tax paid in a community is divided into three equal parts. The richest voters who pay the first third of the total amount of the income tax form the first class; the less wealthy voters who pay the second third, form the second class; while the "poor people who have to work" are in the third class. Each class elects a third of the city councilmen, and for the elections of the legislature a third of election delegates who have to elect the members of the legislature for an electoral district in common sitting; that is to say, for city and county councils each class elects its representatives separately, while in the elections for the Diet their votes are cast together. The result is that while in most of the big cities the Socialists are carrying the total number of elections in the third class, thereby securing for their party a third of the town council, they are so completely overruled by the first and second class in the elections for the Diet that not a single Socialist is to be found among the 424 members of this legislature, though they have polled at the last election in Prussia more than 1,700,000 votes.

There are many instances where this system works in a way that is well-nigh comical. In a factory town of Westfalia a rich manufacturer paid two-thirds of the total amount of income tax. He therefore elected two-thirds of the town council, while the other 18,000 inhabitants elected the other third. In Berlin the highest officials of the State and Empire often belong to the second or third class, because their incomes are too small in comparison to those of the multimillionaires of Berlin. If I remember rightly, the present Chancellor of the Empire and Prime Minister of Prussia is only a third class man, while real estate speculators and Jewish merchants who know nothing but buying cheap and selling dear, are in the first class, and have by means of voting many hundred times more influence in the legislature of the kingdom than the Prime Minister.

Perhaps Americans will suppose that such a system would be a great source of corruption. But this is not at all the case. Boodling and grafting are unknown in German cities, at least to the extent that they are practiced in the United States. To bribe a legislator would seem here as impossible as to bribe the man in the moon. This is no exaggeration. I have never heard here of even a single town councilman's being accused of being bribed, and I am perfectly sure that anybody convicted of such a crime would disappear out of public life forever.

There is no doubt that in German cities public affairs are much better managed than in America. After having walked through the dirt and darkness of American cities it is a delight to travel over the brilliantly lighted, well-paved streets of German cities, whose inhabitants are so much poorer but so

much cleaner and so much more polite. Nearly all of our cities have municipal ownership of public utilities, and our railroads are nationalized nearly without exception, with the result that we have the most up-to-date railroad service on the continent.

A few days ago an incident happened in this department that is worth being mentioned. The Prussian minister of railroads, who had been sick for a long time, died suddenly. His death was a great loss to our country, for he was one of the best and ablest men in the service. He had done very much to improve the conditions of the many workmen on the Prussian railroads. When he felt his death approaching he ordered a message to be sent to all railroad men in the country, conveying to them his last greetings and his good wishes. One cannot read his message without being touched by the feeling he thus expressed in his last hours. I doubt if any private railroad president ever did the same.

The Prussian Diet, elected entirely by our rich people, has passed a heavy graduated income and property tax, which, moreover, is really enforced. When a dozen years ago we introduced the self-assessment of incomes, instead of assessment by officials, in nearly all our cities the amount of taxes paid increased enormously, because the people assessed themselves much higher than the officials had ventured to do. There were instances where the self-assessment compelled a taxpayer to pay four or five times as much as before.

By special recommendation of the Prussian minister of finance our cities are now beginning to tax land values. Many cities have established a housing department and housing inspection, the chief object of which is to improve the housing conditions of the poor. This branch of activity is especially encouraged by the Prussian government.

A very instructive lesson is furnished by a comparison between France and Germany. In Berlin where the city council is elected in large majority by the wealthy classes, the chief sources of revenue are the income tax and the real estate tax; while in democratic Paris most of the city's expenses are covered by duties on fuel and food and other necessities of life. The Prussian ministry is recommending taxation of land values to the communities; while in France an old law providing for the taxation of land values is completely ignored, and a movement for this purpose has not yet been heard of. In Germany the state railroads have proved a complete success; while in France railroads and tramways are managed by private corporations, of ill repute throughout the world of travelers, for the bad service they give. In France the development of commerce and industry has come to a standstill, except the automobile industry; while in Germany export and traffic are constantly increasing. And the military force has been used against strikers in the last years more often and more brutally in France than in Germany.

Thus it may be seen that the German government is not so bad as according to democratic theories it ought to be. Of course it has its faults, and very big ones too; but its faults are the result of the faults and prejudices of its people, for every people surely has the government which it deserves to have.

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