

thing appearing on socialism in any paper in Germany (or indeed in any western European country), and I give you my word that I never remember having seen any reference to the "republicanism" of the German Socialists. As a matter of fact they make nothing of this phase, and Bebel even went so far not long ago as to declare that the American republic offered little, if any, progress toward freedom, over the German empire. I do not pretend to quote him exactly, but the statement aroused considerable attention in the Socialist press, but was taken as a matter of course in Germany. I receive all the leading German Socialist papers, and as these include a number of dailies with large circulations it is a silly lie to say that "most of the Socialist voters do not even know the word" socialism, since there is nothing to distinguish these papers, so far as their philosophy goes, from the American Socialist papers. Indeed I constantly quote from them, as do all American Socialist papers. This constantly repeated falsehood is particularly stupid, since the German division of the international Socialist movement is the most orthodox in its Marxism of any large division. Incidentally your correspondent proves his own ignorance or mendacity, when in the third paragraph on the same page and column he tells how the Liberals have been driven out by the Socialists. The Liberals, with Eugene Barth, stood for all the things that he says the Socialists stand for. Their literature reads very much like the radical Democratic literature of this country. The only exception (and that an important one I will grant) was that they were Manchestrian in their economics—much the same as Jefferson. If you wish proof on any of these points I shall be glad to lay my material before any one who desires to examine it, and such an examination will quickly show the untrustworthiness of your correspondent.

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The paragraph of Mr. Buescher's letter to which Mr. Simons refers (p. 316), speaks of Socialism in Germany as follows:

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.

This paragraph hardly deserves Mr. Simons's rather violent criticism. While we do not doubt that Mr. Simons's clipping bureau has never sent him any newspaper references to the republicanism of the German Socialists, and acknowledge for all the purposes of Mr. Simons's criticism that there have been no such references to send, we nevertheless think it quite probable that Mr. Buescher is

right in saying that "it is their republicanism that makes the Socialists so disagreeable to the ruling classes" of Prussia. A republican sentiment might very well pervade the ranks of the Socialist party in Prussia without becoming articulate through doctrinaire leaders; and on this probability we prefer the judgment of Mr. Buescher in Prussia without a clipping service, to Mr. Simons in the United States with one. Newspapers are more apt to report the words of party leaders than the thoughts of party voters. Officially, the Socialist party of Prussia may not be republican; we confidently accept Mr. Simons's statement here. Yet the party voters may in great masses be strongly tinctured with republicanism; and on that point we do not think that Mr. Buescher's judgment is to be discredited by anybody's epithets.

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We are at a loss to understand the two other points of Mr. Simons's criticism. Our correspondent explained the indifference of the mass of Socialist voters to Socialist doctrine by saying:

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.

By "the word," Mr. Buescher evidently means "nationalization of the means of production." The context leaves no room for any other construction. But Mr. Simons criticizes him as if he meant "Socialism." Again, Mr. Buescher remarks in a later paragraph that—

Nearly all the Socialist victories in Germany have been won at the expense of the Liberals.

The truth of this statement is to be determined by comparative political statistics, and these bear out Mr. Buescher; but Mr. Simons attacks it as ignorant or mendacious because it doesn't stand the test of a comparison of Liberal with Socialist platforms!

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AUTOCRATIC REPUBLICANISM.

The expression "autocratic republicanism" is paradoxical in itself, but we must at times make use of such expressions in order to give correct form to the idea we wish to define.

As autocracy and republicanism are diametrically opposed, the combination of both terms must mean something which is neither the one nor the other—a form of government that embodies neither principle completely, but professes the one in theory and applies the other in practice. Such a form of government may undoubtedly be one of the steps in the evolution from autocracy

to democracy. It is to be found in any country where the letter of democratic government has been applied, but where the true spirit and ideals of democracy are still lacking expression in the life of the nation. And we may conceive of a government where the outside forms of autocracy remain, but the people's thoughts are so imbued with the democratic idea as to make the government truly popular in spite of its form.

When in any country the change from monarchical to republican form merely substitutes for an irresponsible king an elected executive not directly responsible to the people, the change does not materially affect the conditions of the majority of the nation. If to this we add that the only remarkable change, outside of the one mentioned, as a rule is the transformation of an aristocracy possessing undue influence in governmental affairs into a plutocracy which will possess the same influence even in a more dangerous and oppressive form, then we have what we may term an "autocratic republic." Nearly all republics which have grown out of the natural law of evolution, at first possess a government of this kind, and it depends solely upon the vitality of the democratic spirit in the nation whether further progress is possible, or whether the world will from this rudimentary and incomplete republicanism form the judgment that republican government is a failure.

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The republic which inherits from old established monarchies all their institutions except those which have reference to the executive head of the nation, and the name by which its privileged class is to be known, has fundamentally made no great progress, nor changed its status so as to make itself in any sense more free or more democratic than a monarchical government could be. It is true that the president of the republic is elected by the people, while the king of the monarchy is not. In any modern constitutional monarchy, however, the power of the king is so limited by the power of the legislative body representing the people, as to render the fact that the king is not elected by the popular will nearly insignificant. It is, of course, not to be disputed that the institution of inherited royalty is purely undemocratic in its nature, and that an executive elected by the popular will is an exponent of a higher conception of the idea of government. In the same way it is evident that the recognition of an aristocracy is repulsive to all democratic thought, and that the plutocracy which in all par-

ticulars replaces it, is preferable for the reason that it has not got legal sanction.

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The election of an executive by popular will, and the abolition of an aristocracy, do not, however, create a truly popular or democratic government. The executive head may in all respects occupy the same position as a king, if the democratic spirit is not asserting itself in the hearts of the people. The inauguration of the president may become a pure imitation of the coronation of a king. It may be made equally elaborate and luxurious. It may be made equally expensive to the state treasury, and even more so, because of its frequent repetitions. The president's person may be plunged into all the formalities characteristic of royal usage. His family may be exalted above that of the ordinary citizen's, and by popular folly be placed in a position similar to that occupied by members of royal families. His irresponsible authority may, if not checked, become greater and more dangerous to free institutions than that of a king. In his relation to foreign Powers he may assume an attitude in no way different from that of the ruler of a monarchy. He may go beyond his constitutional rights even more freely than a monarch, for while the latter is usually dependent in all his actions, the president of a republic is a freer and more independent agent, and his actions are not likely to be so closely scrutinized by the officials of his government. In the same degree as his responsibility is increased theirs seems lessened; and the secretaries of the various governmental departments do not occupy so responsible a position in relation to the people as is usually the case in a monarchy.

The travels of a president through the country may be equally conspicuous with those of royal persons. He may travel in special trains, and be accompanied by a suite of attendants of such a kind as to place him on a level with royal extravagance. His every saying may be reported as authoritative, and, in fact, he himself may be considered as in no particular differing from a king except in name, and in the limitation of his term.

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The position occupied by the plutocracy may be, to an equal degree, a reflection of the position of the aristocracy. By means of the special privileges which create plutocracy the privileged class once created, will manage to retain its power and influence. And while such a thing as "honor" may be thought of in aristocratic surroundings, it

is a thing that does not necessarily make itself conspicuous in plutocratic circles. While aristocracy and plutocracy are fundamentally one in their nature, there is a vast difference in their application to practical life. The former, basing its claims of superiority on ancestral honor and achievements, naturally will become to a certain degree more idealistic in its nature than the latter which rests its claim solely upon abundance of possessions. If special privilege were not at hand in the case of plutocracy, abundance of possessions would simply be indicative of greater ability, energy and forethought, and would then be the true sign of mental superiority, at least in certain lines. But a plutocracy, created by privilege, is in fact more disgraceful to a republic than is the aristocracy of the monarchy; and it is apt to influence movements towards better and higher ideals in a more detrimental way.

When a people lack democratic ideals to such a degree as to make their president in all essential respects the equal of a king, and their privileged classes equally exalted with the aristocracy of monarchies, then the danger to true democratic institutions is greater in such a republic than in a monarchy. The people in a republic will naturally be apt to consider themselves more advanced in the science of government than are the nations still remaining monarchies, and while the monarchy may be advancing rapidly towards democratic ideals because of the object lesson of autocratic power constantly before the people, the republic, once established, may remain at rest, influenced by the supposition that all it is necessary to achieve is already attained.

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The greatest danger to free institutions in a republic, particularly in one of great intellectual and material power, is not any assumption of autocratic power, nor the corrupting influence of privileged interests in itself, but the self-sufficient ease of the people who from childhood up have been accustomed to look upon their republic as the only spot in the world where freedom is an established fact, and where the form of government is already so perfect as to make improvements either useless or impossible. In the monarchy, the same republic being looked upon from a distance with its advantages in the foreground, the feeling of the necessity of progress is always predominating, and the greater the obstacles to be overcome, the greater the energy expended.

Thus it has come to pass that we now witness the spectacle of a European monarchy, Norway, where popular government is carried to an extent

unknown to any republic except Switzerland; and of a republic, the United States, where the popular will is constantly defeated by privileged interests, not because of the unconquerable power of those interests, but because of the failure of the people in general to perceive their duty, their power and their interests.

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It is not enough in the establishment of a republic to simply abolish the title of the king and replace him by a president elected by the people for a limited time, and then say: "This is a free country." It is not enough to abolish titles of nobility, and at the same time retain institutions which originally created the nobility. It is not enough to change the outward manifestations without changing the inward spirit. A republic trying to do this will find that no true rule of the people has been established. The constitution must provide for a president who is rather the servant than the ruler of the nation. The people must ever be awake to see that this constitution is not violated. The popular will must be expressed directly, and without undue technicalities. There must be no "house of lords" in its legislative body, nor any privileged few permitted to coerce the expression of the people's wishes. Not until the government from which the republic is evolving has been thus perfected, can there be any justifiable pride in the free institutions of the nation?

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Nevertheless, the republic even in its most rude and imperfect state, is an advance towards higher and better ideals. It is the vague democratic idea of equality asserting itself in the heart of a nation. If we continue to build upon the foundation laid; if we are willing to admit that we have not yet reached perfection, but that every year will carry us nearer to it if we are alert to our duties, then the true republic will grow up out of the elements of democracy which we have been collecting hitherto.

The republican idea has not proven a failure, as was once predicted. But whether it shall prove a real success or not, depends on us who now are responsible, each in his place, for the future of genuine democracy, of the supremacy of the people, and of the republican idea.

ERIK OBERG.

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"Poverty's no crime."
"It aint? Then why is it punishable by hard labor?"—Anon.