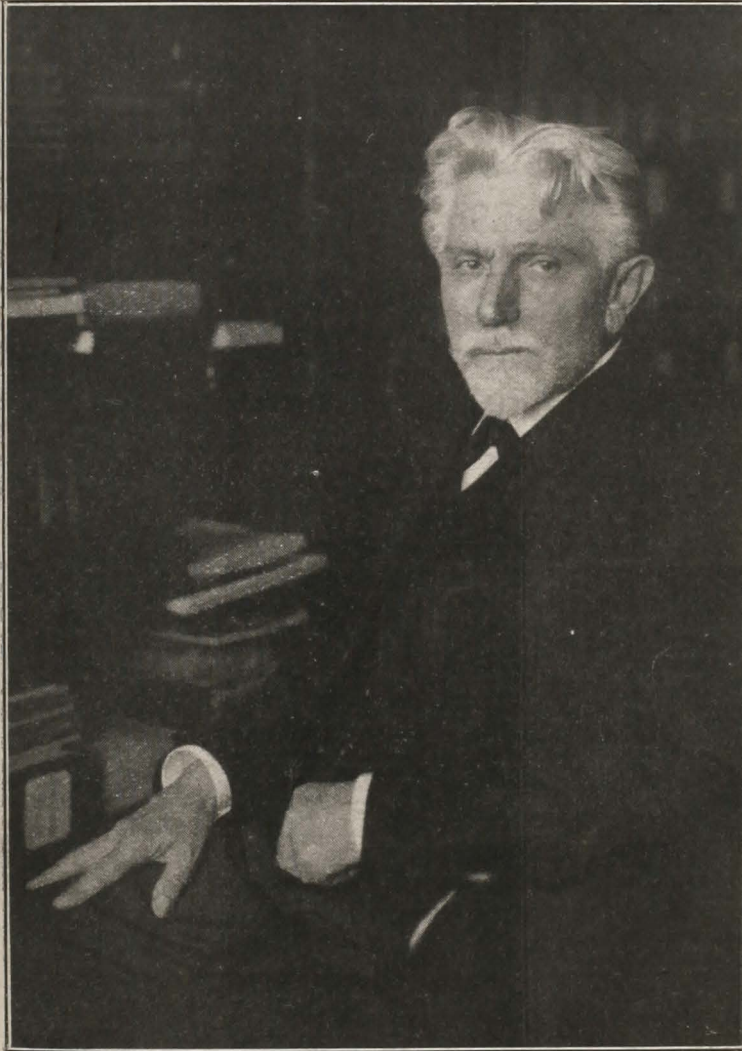




The Socialist Movement in Germany



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THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT IN GERMANY . .

By W. STEPHEN SANDERS.

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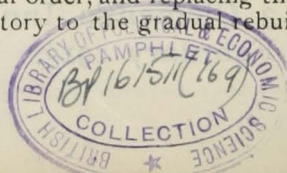
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THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT IN GERMANY.

"THE workers of Germany have always looked to the English working class for example and inspiration, and we hope that our teachers are now satisfied with their pupils." In these words Herr Hermann Molkenbuhr, secretary of the German Socialist Democratic Party and one of the 110 Socialist members of the Reichstag, responded to a vote of congratulation passed at the British Labor Party Conference at Birmingham, in January, 1912, on the occasion of the striking victories of his party at the general election for the Reichstag then just completed. This flattering tribute to the influence on the masses in Germany of English ideas and methods in political and industrial organization should afford lively gratification to the workers of this country; for it was tendered by one of the leaders of the most efficiently organized political party in the whole world. In both the spheres of politics and industry the German workman has adopted the principle of combination evolved in England, adapting it with the patience and persistence characteristic of his race to the peculiar conditions of his own land, and by its means he has attained results which are astounding when the enormous difficulties to be contended with are taken into account.

These results cannot be fully and accurately estimated by simply studying the statistics of the growth of the twin movements of Social Democracy and Trade Unionism, striking and eloquent though these statistics are. Behind the giant numbers there is a powerful feeling of solidarity among the working classes, coupled with a strong sense of responsibility for the moulding of their own future, both created by the unceasing agitation and education of the two movements. The disciplined faith and self-confidence, together with the multifarious opportunities for practical activities, given by the Socialist and Trade Union organizations have prevented their members from becoming mere vague and dreamy idealists or purely destructive critics. Although apparently still believing in the coming of the great day prophesied with magnificent fervor in the Communist Manifesto of 1848 when capitalism will be overthrown at one blow, in reality the German Social Democrat relies on no economic or political miracle for the attainment of his ultimate aim, but steadily, day by day, toils at the task of underpinning the foundations of the present individualistic social order, and replacing them bit by bit with Socialist material preparatory to the gradual rebuilding of the whole superstructure.

Socialism in Germany.



The Founders.

The German Socialist movement possesses the great advantage of having for its founders the two great personalities, Ferdinand Lassalle and Karl Marx. The names of these two men have become the banners and battle cries of the organized masses, giving to their movements the glamor and appeal that comes from historic associations. Lassalle, in the words of one of their songs, forged the sword of the German workers; Marx taught them the purpose for which the weapon should be used.

Ferdinand Lassalle was born in 1825 at Breslau. His father was a prosperous Jewish merchant, who desired that his son should also be a man of commerce. Lassalle, however, declined to follow in his father's footsteps, and decided to enter upon a career of academic training. He studied at the university of his native city and Berlin, passing his examinations with distinction. At the early age of twenty he impressed his friends and acquaintances, including Alexander von Humboldt and Heinrich Heine, with his brilliant intellectual powers and dominating will. During the revolutionary year of 1848 he became acquainted with Marx, and contributed to a newspaper edited by him. In 1849 he was arrested and tried for urging the people to offer armed resistance to the autocratic Prussian Government, and was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. The speech he had prepared for his defence, which was not delivered in court owing to the action of the judges in excluding the public from the trial, but published afterwards, earned for him considerable reputation owing to its logical force and telling rhetoric.

During the fifties he dropped out of public life, but kept up a correspondence with Marx, now exiled for ever from his native country. He resumed his philosophical and literary studies, the outcome of which included the completion of a learned book on Heraclitus begun in his student days; a big book entitled "System of Acquired Rights"; and a historical drama of indifferent merit. In these and other writings he showed himself to be a thorough disciple of Hegel, especially in his attitude towards the State, expressing the great philosopher's view "that the State is the march of God through society" in equally strong but less theological language. In this close adherence to Hegelianism he differed strongly from Marx, who, though heavily indebted to Hegel for the dialectic of which he was both master and servant, was dogmatically materialist in his philosophy.

Lassalle's Agitation.

In 1862 Lassalle left his study for the platform in response to an invitation to lecture to a Berlin Liberal Club. He was now completely out of sympathy with the Liberals, or Progressists, as they were then called, owing to their want of courage and enterprise. He chose for his theme the timely subject of "The Nature of Constitutions." The King of Prussia was at that moment endeavoring to rule without a Parliament, because that body had proved itself, for a German legislative assembly, remarkably intractable and

insubordinate to the royal authority. This lecture, given in two parts, was repeated three times. It annoyed the Progressists exceedingly, mainly because it laid down the doctrine that questions of constitutional right are questions of power, and that if the Progressists wished to defeat the King and his Government it was no use merely arguing about the justice of their position and the illegality and injustice of that of the monarch and his ministers. Action was necessary. The Parliament, he contended, ought to refuse to meet until the King consented to behave constitutionally. This would compel him either to surrender or to rule as a despot; the latter course the sovereign would not dare to adopt. The conservative and reactionary elements were delighted with the disappointment and disgust of the Progressists at Lassalle's derision of their futility; but the Government, displeased with the bold advice given in the second part of the lecture, confiscated it at Königsberg when it appeared in pamphlet form. No proceedings, however, were taken against the author.

Brought into public notice again, Lassalle received a request to lecture to another Berlin audience of a different type—the members of an artisans' club. He complied, and described the subject of his address in a ponderous title containing twelve words, which was afterwards shortened to "The Workers' Program." This lecture, although almost unnoticed at the moment, had great propagandist influence later, when published as a pamphlet, and was, moreover, the direct cause of Lassalle undertaking his famous agitation among the working classes.

"The Workers' Program."

"The Workers' Program" sets forth in a manner suited to the time most of the ideas of the Communist Manifesto. Its economic doctrines, its view of history, its presentation of the fourth estate—the proletariat—as the revolutionary factor in society, as the class whose interests would dominate the future, are almost pure Marxism. But Lassalle does not keep consistently to the materialist conception of history; and in his insistence that the true function of the State is "to help the development of the human race towards freedom," he breaks entirely with Marxian political philosophy. He attacked the *laissez faire* Liberal view, the "night watchman" idea of the State, that it should be nothing more than a protector of property from robbery and housebreaking. But the true function of the State could only be fulfilled by a State which adequately represents the interests of all; in a word, by a State based on the will of the majority operating through equal and universal suffrage.* Economic change, the invention of machinery, and the growth of the factory system had made the wage earners potentially the most powerful class in the modern State: the next necessary step was to make them legally the most powerful by instituting complete democracy. By achieving this the legal recognition of the revolution which had already taken place would be secured. The French Revolution of

* Manhood suffrage was called universal suffrage at this period.

1789 was the revolution of the middle class against the feudal aristocracy, of trade and industry against landed property. The revolution which began in 1848 is the revolution of the proletariat against the rule of the capitalist. The victory of the proletariat, unlike previous class victories, will be the victory of all mankind; the freedom obtained will be the freedom for everyone. Lassalle closed his address with the impressive exhortation: "The great world-historical importance of this mission must absorb all your thoughts. The vices of the oppressed, the idle dissipation of the thoughtless, even the harmless frivolities of the unimportant must find no place in your lives. You, the proletariat, are the rock on which the Church of the present must be built."

It is easy to find errors in Lassalle's presentation of the economic situation in Germany in the early sixties and to point out that the development of capitalist industry had not reached the stage when it could be said that capitalism on a grand scale was dominating politically a vast, potentially powerful proletariat. It is true that in Prussia half the population were then engaged in agriculture; the town workers were largely employed in handicrafts, and only ten per cent. of the whole people were dependent on wages earned in factories. Lassalle made the assumption that the capitalistic industrial, and social conditions then rapidly ripening in England were at the same advanced stage in his own country, and the assumption was of course wrong; hence the small immediate results of his campaign among the workers. But taken as prophecy, the substance of his lecture was remarkably correct; for the astonishing industrial and commercial growth of modern Germany, the beginnings of which were then causing politicians and social students to take thought, has indeed largely created, with the aid of the teachings of Lassalle and Marx, a great and ever increasing army of the proletariat in disciplined revolt against organized capitalism.

Lassalle and Schultze-Delitzsch.

On the publication of "The Workers' Program" the Berlin police suppressed it and instituted criminal proceedings against Lassalle for "exciting the non-possessing classes to hatred and contempt of the possessing classes." He was sentenced to four months imprisonment in spite of his trenchant and able defence, in which severe castigation was meted out to the court and the prosecuting counsel. On appeal the punishment was reduced to a fine, but the confiscation of the pamphlet was upheld. Nevertheless a new edition was printed in Switzerland and circulated among the working classes.

It was issued at an opportune moment. The growth of industrialism, relatively small though it was, had produced the crop of social problems common on capitalist soil, together with the usual well meant philanthropic proposals for their solution. Among the methods popular with Liberals and Progressists of the period for the improvement of the material conditions of the wage earner was that of voluntary self-help associations for production and distribution,

coupled with free competition, advocated by Herr Schultze-Delitzsch. Although he had a considerable following, especially among small masters whose existence was threatened by the factory system, numbers of thoughtful workmen were not enamored of this rather dull and chilly gospel. Moreover, they were desirous of having a direct share in political activity, and were urging the middle class Progressists to admit the workers to full membership of the Progressist Union. The response to their request was that "all workers might consider honorary membership of the Union as their birth-right," that is to say, "they might have the honor to remain outside it."* The chief centre of this movement was Leipzig. In that city a local Workmen's Association had appointed a committee to undertake the task of establishing an association on national lines and to summon a conference at Leipzig for that purpose. This committee, struck with the ideas formulated in "The Workers' Program," invited Lassalle to express in any form he might think fit his views of the movement and the policy it should pursue, and of the value of the Schultze-Delitzsch proposals. They had no doubt that "other ways and means than those put forward by Schultze-Delitzsch might be suggested for attaining the ends of the working class movement, namely, the political, material, and intellectual improvement in the condition of the workers"; and as Lassalle's pamphlet had met with great approval in their ranks, they would be thoroughly able to appreciate further communications from him on these points.

The Universal Workmen's Association.

With Lassalle's reply, on March 1st, 1863, to this invitation begins the actual Socialist agitation which led ultimately to the formation of the present German Social Democratic Party. In his letter known as the "Public Reply" he laid down definitely and concisely the policy a working class movement should adopt. The question had been discussed whether the supporters of the Workmen's Association should abstain from politics altogether or join the Progressists. Lassalle advocated a third course: they must concern themselves with politics, but as a separate, independent Labor Party. Voluntary co-operation, thrift, and self-help on the Schultze-Delitzsch plan would inevitably fail because of the iron law which keeps the worker down to the bare minimum of existence. The only way of overcoming this law was to get rid of the capitalist by establishing a system of co-operative production, and thus secure to the actual worker the gains of the entrepreneur. But no industrial undertaking in modern days could succeed without large capital, and it was hopeless for the worker to expect to secure this absolute necessity by adopting the principles of Schultze-Delitzsch. Where could the capital be obtained? Lassalle's answer was, from the State. The State could lend the required funds at the normal rate of interest, and the workers could then compete with private

* "Ferdinand Lassalle," E. Bernstein, p. 14.

capitalists on equal terms. How was this State credit to be ensured? By the workers becoming the dominating factor in the State through the conquest of political power. Let them form an association throughout Germany on the analogy of the English Anti-Corn-Law League, with the sole object of achieving universal suffrage. With every workman in possession of a vote it would be easy to acquire State aid for the establishment of productive co-operative societies and thus abolish the iron law.

The publication of Lassalle's letter of counsel roused a veritable storm of indignation and resentment in Progressist circles. The struggle of the Prussian Diet with the Government seemed to be reaching a revolutionary stage, and Lassalle's advice "to split the progressive forces" appeared to the Liberals to be that of a traitor. They denied the validity of the iron law; but Lassalle, with a tremendous display of economic learning, defended it brilliantly in spite of its fallaciousness. Defeated in argument, they turned round and maintained that the iron law was a natural law which nothing could alter. Again Lassalle scored an easy victory in debate. In May, 1863, he delivered two great speeches in support of his policy to a conference of Workmen's Associations held at Frankfort-on-the-Main and attended by thirteen hundred delegates. He carried his audience with him in face of strong opposition from the followers of Schultze-Delitzsch, and a resolution was passed in favor of forming a new organization with the Lassallean program. On May 23rd, 1863, at Leipzig the Universal Working Men's Association was formed. Lassalle was elected President, with dictatorial powers. He was now launched on his career as working class leader and agitator.

An Unpromising Beginning.

The new association grew but slowly. Lassalle had expected that the issue of his "Public Reply" would have an effect similar to that produced by the nailing of Luther's theses to the door of the Church at Wittenberg; but, to his keen disappointment, the working classes remained indifferent. Three months after its foundation there were scarcely nine hundred members of the Association, and Berlin, of which Lassalle had had great hopes, refused to be stirred. His energy, although tremendous, was spasmodic. After six weeks of intense activity he left Germany for three months, continuing his work for the Association, however, by means of correspondence. On his return he undertook a campaign on the Rhine, addressing great meetings at Barmen, Düsseldorf, and other towns. He was now at the height of his power as an orator; his speeches, full of fiery, passionate rhetoric, added to his fame as the evangelist of democracy. He then concentrated on Berlin, but the antagonism of the Progressists, at that time all powerful in the Prussian capital, and the action of the police in rendering it impossible for him to obtain halls for meetings and in confiscating his pamphlets, made the situation overwhelmingly difficult. Twice he was prosecuted; on one occasion the charge was high treason. But although these actions were the cause of much worry and waste of time, they nevertheless

assisted Lassalle considerably in his agitation. The law court was his element. His carefully prepared speeches in defence, or rather defiance, were splendid propaganda; and his knowledge of the law, learned in long legal battles, enabled him to triumph over prosecuting counsel, judges, and juries. The charge of high treason resulted in an acquittal; the other process ended in a sentence of imprisonment which Lassalle did not live to serve.

The Progressist hatred of Lassalle was heartily reciprocated by him. He attacked them mercilessly, contrasting their feeble flabbiness with the stern resolution of their adversary Bismarck. At this period he began negotiations with the Iron Chancellor, which gave grounds for further suspicion that he was playing the game of the reactionaries. Lassalle no doubt hoped to win Bismarck's support for his scheme of universal suffrage and State credit for productive co-operation. The Progressists were then securing good majorities in the Prussian Diet in spite of the undemocratic, indirect, three class electoral system (which obtains to this day), and had therefore no strong desire for a reform of the franchise. What actually took place at the interviews between Lassalle and Bismarck remains a matter of conjecture. Years afterwards the Chancellor, challenged to explain the remarkable acquaintanceship, declared that there were no political negotiations because Lassalle had nothing to offer. He, Bismarck, was glad to have met such a man of genius, who was highly gifted and exceedingly ambitious, "a great man, with whom one might be delighted to converse." But whether there were negotiations or not, Lassalle in his speeches declared more and more positively that the Prussian Government would grant universal suffrage, and wrote of Bismarck as being "my plenipotentiary," whom he thought to use only so long as he should be useful. Three years later, in 1867, when the Reichstag of the North German Confederation was established, Bismarck insisted, in opposition not only to Conservative but also to Liberal politicians, that manhood suffrage should be its basis.*

Lassalle's Romantic End.

In May, 1864, Lassalle went on his last tour of agitation. He chose again the Rhine district, which had proved highly favorable soil for the seed of his propaganda. His progress was a continuous triumphal procession. Workmen greeted him with such enthusiastic jubilation that he wrote, "The impression made upon me was that such scenes must have attended the founding of new religions." But his speeches during this final campaign were not on the same high level of quality and power as those of the previous year. They are marked by a tendency to demagoguery, hitherto held under control, and a strain of egoistic self-praise. On May 22nd, at Ronsdorf, he gave his last address, the most sanguine and extravagant of all. He concluded with a dramatic appeal to his hearers not to let the great movement fall with him. Three months later, on August 31st, he died from the effects of a shot received in a duel.

*"Cambridge Modern History," Vol. XI, p. 459.

The strength and glamor of Lassalle's magnetic personality keep for him the first place in the gallery of German Socialist leaders. The intellectual contribution of Marx to the movement is undoubtedly greater than his. Indeed, Lassalle himself owed no small part of his economic theories and his insight into modern social and industrial conditions to the man who shares with him the veneration of millions of German workmen. But it was through Lassalle's overpowering will, titanic energy, and inspiring influence as a man of action that the thoughts of Marx became embodied in the aims of a great party. The profound intellectual and personal devotion of Marx to the cause of the masses has earned for him the deep reverence of the German Socialists. His writings are still conned by many of them as the Covenanters conned the Scriptures. He remains the philosophic father of German Socialism, although his authority weakens as the movement broadens. But while Marx is honored as a great thinker, Lassalle is adored as a great leader. His striking figure and meteoric career have made a deep impression upon the hearts and minds of the organized masses; his romantic, though foolish, end, his human failings, even his egoism, endear him to them. They have enshrined his memory in poetry and song, while it appears to be as impossible for them to be lyrical over Marx as it is to set "*Das Kapital*" to music.

Marx and the International.

At Lassalle's death the Universal Workmen's Association had a membership of between four and five thousand. The leadership of this small body passed into the hands of Bernhard Becker, who had been nominated by Lassalle as his successor. He was an incompetent and ineffectual person. Through his mismanagement the Association lost ground until, in 1867, he was replaced by Jean Baptista von Schweitzer, who had been largely responsible for the issue, in 1865, of the *Sozial Demokrat*, the first journal of the organization, the forerunner of the present multitude of German Socialist organs. The paper began with an able staff of contributors, including Marx, Frederick Engels, Wilhelm Liebknecht, and Georg Herwegh, but most of these severed their connection with it on the publication in its columns of a series of articles glorifying Prussia and Bismarck. Von Schweitzer, who had been intimately acquainted with Lassalle, was a man of considerable ability. He revived the Association, and remained at its head until 1871, when he retired. He was expelled the following year on a charge of treachery. By this time a rival body, the Social Democratic Workmen's Party, founded on Marxian principles, had arisen, which, after many storms and quarrels with the Association, amalgamated with it in 1875, and formed the existing German Social Democratic Party.

The Social Democratic Workmen's Party was the outcome of the International Working Men's Association, known as the "International," inaugurated in 1864 at St. Martin's Hall, Long Acre, London. Karl Marx, an exile from Germany since 1849, when he was thirty-one years old, had taken a prominent part in the formation of

the International and soon became the most powerful influence in its counsels. At the first conference of the organization, held at Geneva in 1866, the statutes and program drawn up by Marx were adopted. The program, like that of Lassalle, was an adaptation of the Communist Manifesto of 1848. It called to the workers to unite internationally in order to become masters of their economic destiny through the conquest of political power. But Marx, unlike Lassalle, appeared to have had faith in the possibility of raising the condition of the workers even under a capitalist *régime*. This is expressed in his inaugural address to the International, where he speaks of the Ten Hours Act as being, "not merely a great practical result, but the victory of a principle. For the first time the political economy of the *bourgeoisie* has been in clear broad day put in subjection to the political economy of the working class." He further declared that the success of co-operation had spread the hope that wage labor was a transitory form, destined to be replaced by the associated labor of free men, and it was the aim of the International to promote this hope.

The Social Democratic Workmen's Party.

In Germany the ground had been prepared for the Marxist gospel. In 1863, very soon after the foundation of Lassalle's Universal Association, a number of workers' educational societies—in reality political bodies—combined into a league to support Schultze-Delitzsch and oppose Lassalle. The headquarters of the league were at Leipzig, and one of the most important members was August Bebel, then working in that city. Wilhelm Liebknecht, an exile of 1848, who had lived in London for thirteen years, and become an ardent disciple of Marx, learned to know Bebel and helped to win him over to Socialism. In 1868 they succeeded in persuading the annual congress of the league to accept the main items of the program of the International. They received an accession of strength from a number of dissentients from the Universal Association who were dissatisfied with von Schweitzer's policy and rule. In 1869, at Eisenach, the league dissolved, and, after a vain attempt at union with the Universal Association, formed the Social Democratic Workmen's Party, which became known as the Eisenach, or "honorable," Party, and which declared itself, as far as the law allowed, affiliated to the International. Meanwhile both sections scored their first electoral victories by returning, in 1867, seven members to the North German Reichstag, of whom Bebel and Liebknecht and two others represented the Marxian section.

The Union of the Eisenachers and the Lassalleans.

Bitterness between the two groups increased owing to difference of attitude in the Reichstag towards the Franco-Prussian War. The Eisenachers, true to their international principles, voted against supplies for the German army; the representatives of the Universal Association, or Lassalleans as they were now called, more nationalist in spirit, took the opposite line. When France was defeated, Bebel

and Liebknecht urged that peace should be made on generous terms, and without annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. For this they were denounced as traitors, tried, and sent to prison for two years and nine months and two years respectively. The Lassalleans violently attacked the Eisenachers in the streets of Leipzig, thereby reflecting the general sense of outraged patriotism aroused by the conduct of Bebel and Liebknecht.

The tremendous wave of self-conscious national sentiment which followed the German triumph over France naturally swept back both currents of the Socialist movement. To the first Reichstag of the newly created German Empire only two Socialists were elected, of whom one was Bebel. But in a few years the patriotic tide had ebbed, and the working classes were suffering through the economic crisis that arose after the war. The discontent of the masses renewed the strength of the Socialists, who secured ten seats at the Reichstag elections of 1874, of which seven were held by Eisenachers. These successes roused the Government to repressive action, and it declared the organizations of both sections illegal. Attacked in this fashion, the Lassalleans and the Eisenachers drew together, and, as already related, they combined in 1875. The fusion took place at a Congress held at Gotha in May. The official figures of the membership of the two sections at the time of the unification, eleven years after Lassalle's death, appear tiny compared with the mighty host enrolled to-day under the banner he was the first to unfurl. The Lassalleans numbered 15,322, and the Eisenachers 9,121.*

Unity, as usual, was only obtained by compromise. Included in the program of the new combination was Lassalle's proposal for State-aided productive associations, but under democratic guarantees. This and other "unscientific" and crude demands and principles called forth strong opposition from Marx, who considered the program "utterly condemnable and demoralizing." He contended characteristically that common action was of far greater importance than a common creed or program; but if one were adopted, it should not be theoretically unsound and otherwise unsatisfactory. In other words, it should be Marxian or nothing. But the Eisenach leaders were wise enough and strong enough to disregard the advice of their imperious mentor. They replied that it was impossible for him to judge the situation aright from London, and that, although they had great respect for his opinion, they were unable to follow it in this instance. Further, in order to prevent Marx's communication from being used by either section as a means for preventing unity, they decided to treat it as confidential, and it was not laid before the Congress. Marx's inflexible temper was roused to fury at the rejection of his counsel, and he was exceedingly bitter towards Liebknecht, his special pupil. Later, however, he acknowledged he had been mistaken, and that Liebknecht, Bebel and the other Eisenachers had acted rightly in sacrificing orthodoxy to united action.

* The name taken by the unified party was Die Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei (The Socialist Workmen's Party). The title Social Democratic Party was adopted in 1890.

Although Marx objected so strongly to the compromise program, the spirit of his doctrine prevailed therein. On the other hand, Lassalle's organizing genius embodied in the Universal Association brought to the combined party the stern discipline and the knowledge of the importance of incessant agitation, well ordered finances and constant attention to detail which are to-day the outstanding features of the German Social Democratic Party.

The Period of Persecution.

The effect of the union of the two sections was soon apparent. In the Reichstag elections of 1877 the Socialist vote reached nearly half a million, an increase of 40 per cent. on that of 1874. This rapid growth naturally stimulated the reactionary forces to further repressive efforts. The civil law was stretched to the utmost in the attacks made by the Government upon the Socialist movement. The support given to the Government in its anti-Socialist campaign was not confined to the Conservative politicians. The Progressists, weak and pusillanimous as ever, were terrified at the spread of Socialist views, and fled in masses to the camp of reaction. The conduct of German Liberalism completely justified the Marxian principle of *Klassenkampf* (class struggle), and explains the weak position the Liberal parties have since occupied in the politics of the Empire. Among the measures used by the Government to dam back the "red flood" was the issuing of a letter to employers of labor advising them, for their own good, to employ no persons who were suspected of being Social Democrats. In 1876 the party was solemnly declared to be dissolved for offences against the Coalition Laws; but, as individual members could not be suppressed under the existing legal code, exceptional legislation was decided upon. The Government was assisted in its designs by two foolish attempts, made early in 1878, on the life of the Emperor. The perpetrators were obviously lunatics, but the opportunity was too good to be missed. Although there was not the slightest evidence that Socialists were concerned in these feeble outrages, the Government spread the report that the madmen were Social Democrats. Between the dates of the two attempts repressive proposals were laid before the Reichstag, but they were thrown out. A few days after the second attempt the Reichstag was dissolved, and the ensuing election resulted in a majority in favor of the Government's desires. The Social Democratic vote fell for the first time in the history of the party.

The Exceptional Law.

The Exceptional Law against Social Democracy passed in October, 1878, was of the most drastic character. It rendered illegal any association having Socialist aims. Any meeting which displayed Socialist tendencies was to be summarily disbanded, and those which indicated by their purpose that they were likely to promote such tendencies were forbidden. Collection of funds for Socialist purposes was prohibited. No meetings of any kind were allowed without the previous permission of the police, excepting election meetings for the

Reichstag and for the Diets of the various German States. Socialists could be forbidden residence in places where the police considered their influence to be dangerous. All literature or printed matter with Socialist tendencies was interdicted, and persons discovered circulating newspapers or documents of this nature could be deprived of the right to distribute any literature whatever, either by way of business or otherwise. Punishments for breaking the law ranged from fines of £25 or three months' imprisonment for minor offenders to long terms of imprisonment for leaders. The law was to run for three years but successive Parliaments prolonged it, with slight alterations, until October, 1890.

Owing to the enormous powers possessed by the German police, the Exceptional Law was in reality far more harsh than even its draconian provisions indicate. An executive, subject to hardly any checks, could and actually did use these powers to their fullest extent and with very little regard to precise details of legality. Knowing that the authorities were hoping that the Socialists would be driven to desperation, the Social Democratic leaders warned their followers against committing acts of violent resistance and to avoid unnecessary infringements of the law. The Socialist journals dropped their propagandist note, and became mere recorders of news and facts. But the police were not to be foiled. They judged the newspapers by their past, and suppressed all except two of the fifty which were then published. The minor state of siege was declared in Berlin, and sixty-seven prominent Socialists were banished from the city one month after the law had been promulgated. Similar steps were taken in other large towns, including Leipzig, Frankfort and Hamburg. All open agitation and organization was, of course, entirely suppressed, and the movement was driven underground, where, in spite of the keen watchfulness of the all-powerful police, propaganda was carried on quite effectually, chiefly by the means of cleverly arranged secret distribution of newspapers and other literature printed abroad and smuggled over the borders of the Empire. Persecution and imprisonment failed to intimidate the growing multitude of grimly earnest disciples of Lassalle and Marx; instead of daunting them, it spurred them on to greater activity and higher ingenuity in spreading their views.

Futile Sops to Cerberus.

Bismarck's openly confessed attempt to reconcile the working classes to the loss of the small amount of political freedom they had possessed by granting doles of social reform in the shape of measures of State Insurance was equally unsuccessful. It is true the Socialist vote in 1881 fell again, and more heavily than in 1878; but in 1884 and 1887 it grew with extraordinary rapidity, rising in the latter year to over three-quarters of a million. In 1890 it jumped up to nearly a million and a half. It was now evident that the law had been not only an iniquitous crime but a colossal blunder. Instead of destroying the Social Democrats, its blows had hammered and welded the political and industrial discontent of the masses into a solid and ten-

acious Socialist movement. The party had been tried as by fire, and had stood the test magnificently. During the twelve years of brutal coercion its members, including the chief leaders, had suffered in the aggregate 831 years imprisonment, not to mention fines, banishments and other forms of persecution. Yet the Socialist vote had more than trebled itself and the representation in the Reichstag had grown from nine to thirty-five. Still more important, there had been created in every industrial centre a nucleus of determined men who had proved by suffering their devotion to the Socialist cause and who were prepared to give the best of their tried capacities to its service. The experiment in Russianizing Germany had brought about the very conditions its authors had sought to prevent. When Bismarck was dismissed in 1890 by the present Kaiser the Exceptional Law went with him. An attempt was made in 1895 to revive it in a new form, but it was defeated in the Reichstag. Since that date no distinctively anti-Socialist legislation has been put forward by the Government, although Conservative politicians still clamor for strong measures against the "Red Peril."

Although the Socialist movement flourished in defiance of the Exceptional Law, it went through many internecine conflicts and encountered many internal difficulties which could not be fought out or overcome until the law had lapsed. The extreme elements demanded militant action, and when their agitation met with no response, the leaders, as is usual under such circumstances, were charged with cowardice and with being corrupted by futile and enervating parliamentarianism. But after 1890, when annual congresses could again be held on German soil without police interference, frank discussion of the situation ended in a complete vindication of the old leaders Bebel, Liebknecht and Singer, and the final overthrow of their critics. In 1890 the organization of the party was reconstructed as far as the Coalition Laws would permit, that is to say, in a very restricted fashion. Then, in 1891, at Erfurt, the present program of the party, in which Marxian principles have swept the remnants of the Lassallean proposals for State-aided co-operation off the field, was drawn up and agreed upon.

The Erfurt Program.

But although the Erfurt Program is binding upon the party as a whole, and influences very largely its political policy, there is a wide divergence in the ranks with regard to the significance to be attached to its various parts. The orthodox section, who cling with passionate intensity to the Marxian prelude as though it were an inspired document which should determine the actions of the party for ever, have constantly to meet the criticisms of another section, heterodox and opportunist, who, while recognizing to the full the greatness of Marx, are not prepared to allow the dead hand of a fallible philosopher to guide them in new and unforeseen circumstances. This section is known as the Revisionists, while the strict Marxists are called Radicals. The two groups have always existed in the party, and they are the products of differing social, industrial, and

political conditions. In Prussia, the home of unbending, autocratic, and able bureaucracy, the Radical section naturally flourishes, for there the *Klassenkampf* theory appears to be absolutely in accord with facts. Contempt for democracy is the prevailing element in the stifling, police ridden atmosphere. The masses are shown on every possible occasion how little the governing class cares for their opinions or respects their wishes. Reforms, social or otherwise, when granted are given in the shape which pleases the authorities and are administered in a manner which arouses keen resentment among thoughtful, self-respecting people. Hence any suggestion of enlarging the power of the present bureaucratic State, even for useful purposes, is looked upon with distrust and suspicion by the Socialists of Prussia as likely to lead to further unwarrantable limitations of personal liberty. The lamentable history of North German Liberalism has also helped to strengthen the hard, uncompromising spirit of the Radical section, and has prevented any successful working agreement between Socialists and Liberals for securing popular control of the Government.

The Revisionists and the Radicals.

Revisionism has its home in South Germany, where industry is less developed and political and social life is far more free and democratic. Georg von Vollmar, the leader of the Bavarian Social Democrats, has always declined to accept the dogma of the inevitable concentration of the ownership of capital and land in fewer and fewer hands, especially with regard to the latter. Furthermore, he has maintained that the party should drop its irreconcilable attitude and endeavor to win immediate reforms, contending that by doing so it would win support from the agricultural population of small proprietors, who naturally find nothing attractive in the Marxian view that they must first be ruined before they can be helped.

The Revisionist School received a great impetus when, in 1899, Eduard Bernstein published "*Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie*,"* in which he criticized Marxian economics and philosophy, and denied that Socialism was dependent upon economic necessity, or that it was necessary to found it solely on materialism. He pointed out that the German Social Democratic Party had grown great through acting in opposition to the theoretical basis of its program, and urged that it should openly declare itself to be what it really is, a democratic socialistic reform party. It is interesting to note in passing that just as "*Das Kapital*" was the result of Marx's studies in England, so the intellectual basis of Revisionism was formulated by Bernstein during his stay in this country when banished from Germany on account of his Socialist activities.

Although the struggle between the Revisionist and Radical wings of the party is still undecided, there can be no doubt that the influence of the former has gained ground in recent years. This is

* Translated and published by the Independent Labor Party under the title of "Evolutionary Socialism."

shewn in the greater emphasis now laid upon the practical side of the Erfurt Program and the tacit abandonment of the idea that nothing short of the Social Revolution can prevent "the increase of the insecurity of the existence of the proletariat, small masters and peasants, and the intensification of misery, oppression, slavery, humiliation, and exploitation" under capitalism. The contradiction between the theoretical argument of the program, which propounds the fatalistic view that the present social order offers no hope of improvement for the masses, and the demands which follow for immediate political and social betterment provides ample justification for the position of the Revisionists. The logic of circumstances and the illogicalness of the strict Marxists are factors on their side. Trade Unionism, formerly held to be useless in face of the iron law of wages, has refused to accept the validity of the law, and has grown so tremendously that the party has been compelled to admit the need for and efficacy of industrial combination, and gradually to concede it equal importance with political organization. Fortunately this attitude was adopted in time; otherwise antagonism would most probably have arisen between the two movements. With a wise indifference to consistency, the party has encouraged the formation of fighting Trade Unions, the *Freie Gewerkschaften*. Most of the leaders of these bodies are well known Social Democrats, chiefly of the Revisionist school. There is a close connection between these so-called Social Democratic Unions, which now have a membership of close upon two and a half millions, and the party itself; and frequent consultations take place between the heads of the two organizations, although the unions are not allowed by law to take part in politics. Further, the growth of co-operation has been aided by the party, and the great bulk of the members of distributive societies are now Social Democratic in opinion.

Compromise and Compacts.

In the political sphere the Social Democrats began to practise very early in their history the art of compromise, which is decidedly out of keeping with their revolutionary phraseology. It had been decided at the Congress held in 1887 at St. Gall, during the period of the Exceptional Law, that Social Democrats should vote for no Reichstag candidates except those run by the party. But in 1890 the party leaders issued instructions in connection with the elections of that year, that, in the absence of Social Democrats, candidates of parties pledged to oppose the renewal of the Exceptional Law were to be supported. This advice was bitterly attacked by the ultra-revolutionary elements, the "*Jungen*," who soon after 1890 split off, developed Anarchistic tendencies, and died of them. Since then the party has voted in second ballots for various other parties. For instance, in 1907 it supported its most able and bitter opponent, the Centre (or Catholic) Party, because for the moment, and for the moment only, the Centre had gone into opposition. In the election of 1912 it threw its weight on the side of Liberalism, and the Executive Committee even went so far as to instruct its members in six-

teen constituencies, where there were second ballots between Social Democrats and *Freisinnige* (Liberals), not to be too enthusiastic in support of their own candidates, and to let the *Freisinnige* win, thereby securing Liberal aid in thirty-one other constituencies for Social Democrats who were fighting Conservatives or Catholics. Naturally this daring order, although successful, in that it probably gained seats for the party, caused considerable resentment among the Radical section, but it was endorsed afterwards at the party congress.

In Bavaria have occurred still greater departures from rigid adherence to the principle that all "bourgeois" parties being capitalist in origin must be equally opposed. There being no second ballots for the State Parliament, the Bavarian Social Democrats, in 1912, made a compact with the Liberals for a division of the constituencies, and agreed that there were to be no opposing candidates, but mutual support. This glaringly opportunist alliance excited only a few murmurs of reproach from the stern cohorts of North Germany. On the other hand, the recent action of the Social Democrats in the Parliaments of South Germany in voting for the State budgets has been condemned by the party congress; but, nevertheless, the offenders have openly stated that in this question they intend to be guided by their own State organizations rather than by the congress.

Other Aspects of Revisionism.

Another change has taken place in the party which may be considered to be of a Revisionist character, namely, in its attitude towards nationalism. It is no longer the general opinion that under the present capitalist system it is a matter of indifference to the workers whether their capitalist masters and rulers are German, Russian, or English. Even Bebel has declared that he is prepared to fight for his Fatherland in a defensive war, and the party congress of 1907 refused to censure another Socialist member of the Reichstag for an even more militant patriotic declaration. Here the spirit of Lassalle has conquered Marx. While still distinguished for its efforts to maintain peace and goodwill among the nations and its opposition to militarism and the demand for a larger German navy, the party has become, if not less international, less cosmopolitan in its outlook, especially during the last decade.

The stress now laid by the party on immediate reforms is nowhere so pronounced as in the domain of local government. There are over 10,000 Socialist members of town and village councils acting, not merely as propagandists, but as administrators with a practical program of municipal Socialism. To their efforts are due, as their opponents sometimes admit, much of the rapid extension of municipal activity and the remarkable improvements which have taken place in the big cities of the empire. Here the Social Democrats have found a valuable and almost inexhaustible field for their energies, and one which is increasingly engaging their attention. A special organ, *Kommunale Praxis*, is published by the party to

educate and inform its members on subjects appertaining to municipal and other forms of local government.

The Strength of the Party.

The conflicts of various currents and differing opinions as to policy and tactics within the party, leading often to fierce literary and vocal battles, have not prevented the rapid continuous increase either of the Social Democratic vote or of the Socialist organization. Industrialism, in its swift advance during the last fifteen years, has drawn huge numbers of workers from the rural regions to urban areas, converting small quiet centres into large and important manufacturing cities. Free from the tyranny of the Prussian Junker, the despot of the countryside in North Germany, the mass of this new population quickly comes under the influence of the ceaseless agitation of the Socialists, who claim support for the party as the only one that demands for the people those political rights which in England are either the achievements or the program of ordinary Liberalism. No other party can be relied upon to defend the workers' industrial organizations from attack or to advocate further extensions of the right of combination. Moreover, all other political groups stand more or less for a continuance of the present policy of Protection, which has brought about a big increase in the cost of living. The disunited remnant of German Liberalism, which at one time aspired to be the voice of democracy, suffers from a chronic inclination to bolt to the enemy at the slightest encouragement or patronizing attention from the Kaiser's ministers. Hence the workmen and even middle-class democrats have come to look upon the Social Democratic Party as the only faithful champion of their interests and aspirations.

Since the expiration of the Exceptional Law in 1890 the party has gained nearly three million votes, securing four and a quarter millions in January, 1912, over one-third of the total number cast. The Social Democratic Party in the Reichstag has grown in the same period from 35 to 110, and is now the largest group in that chamber, which has a membership of 397. The organization has developed even more remarkably. In 1875, when the party was formed by the fusion of the Lassalleans and the Eisenachers, it had, as we have seen, barely 25,000 members; in 1912 it could boast of a membership roll of 970,112, of which 130,371 were women, though they were only in 1906 permitted by law to belong to it. In 1890 the income of the Executive Committee was about £5,000; in 1912 it had risen to close upon £100,000. These figures do not, of course, include the incomes of the local organizations existing in nearly every constituency, which together make up a far larger sum. These local organizations are of tremendous strength in the large cities and other thickly populated areas. In six mammoth constituencies there are organizations each with over 20,000 paying members: namely, Hamburg III., 42,532; Teltow (near Berlin), 32,885; Leipzig-Land, 32,219; Berlin VI., 31,408; Berlin IV., 25,267;

Nuremberg, 20,118.* The yearly incomes of these several bodies, made up chiefly of monthly subscriptions of about fourpence per member, each attain the respectable sums of five to seven thousand pounds. These financial statistics are all the more noteworthy when it is remembered that the money is given entirely for political purposes and, in most cases, in addition to contributions paid to trade unions.

The Social Democratic Press.

The party possesses 91 newspapers and journals, of which 86 appear daily. All but eight are printed in establishments owned by the party. The total circulation of the Social Democratic press in 1912 was about one and a half million. The income derived from sales and advertisements amounted in the same year to nearly £800,000. The central organ, *Vorwärts*, published in Berlin, has a daily circulation of 170,000, costs about £98,000 per annum to produce, and yielded a net profit to the party of £15,000 in 1912. The humorous, illustrated party journal, *Der Wahre Jacob*, has a circulation of close upon 400,000, costs about £14,000 per annum to produce, and earned a profit of £2,500 in 1912. *Die Gleichheit*, the women's journal, has a sale of 107,000, costs £3,500 to print and publish, and made a profit of £500 in 1912. The more or less academic weekly review, *Die Neue Zeit*, circulates to the extent of 10,000, costs £3,000 per annum, and, unlike most party reviews has a balance to the good amounting in 1912 to £160.

In addition to the party newspapers and journals, of which one appears daily in every large German town, the numerous local party presses issue countless books, pamphlets and leaflets, especially during election times. For the electoral agitation of 1912 it is estimated that eighty million copies of Socialist leaflets were printed and distributed. In the same year the central press at Berlin alone issued seventy different publications, ranging from complete editions of Schiller and Heine and other books to tracts and leaflets of a few pages, amounting in all to $2\frac{3}{4}$ million copies.† The turnover of this department reached £40,000 in 1912, with a profit of £2,500.

Organization and its Results.

Since 1905, when the Coalition Laws were amended to allow greater freedom of political combination, the organization of the party has been placed upon a firm foundation. The basis is the local organizations in the Reichstag constituencies. These are linked up into twenty-nine district federations, and the district federations into

* The Reichstag constituencies are all single member divisions, and they vary tremendously in size, from Teltow, with 338,798 electors, to Bückeberg, with 10,709. The Government refuses to redistribute the seats because it fears this would lead to a large increase in the Social Democratic representation.

† As an instance of Social Democratic publishing enterprise it may be mentioned that the *Partei Vorstand* commissioned Herr M. Beer, until recently London correspondent of the *Vorwärts*, to write an exhaustive history of British Socialism, which was issued in one large volume in January, 1913, under the title of "*Geschichte des Sozialismus in England.*"

State organizations in the various States of the Empire. The chief authority is the annual Congress, which consists of delegates from the local organizations, the number from each depending upon the size of membership, together with the Social Democratic members of the Reichstag and the members of the Executive Committee. The Congress elects annually the Executive Committee, which consists of the *Partei Vorstand* (comprising a chairman, vice-chairman, a treasurer, six secretaries, one of whom must be a woman, and two assistants) and the *Kontroll Commission*, or Committee of Control, consisting of nine members. The *Vorstand* are mainly paid officials; nearly all of them devote their whole time to party business. They are responsible for the heavy detail work of the party, and have a large clerical staff at their disposal. In order to assist the Executive in arriving at decisions on political policy and other important matters a Council, consisting of representatives from the executive committees of the various district federations, was instituted in 1912. This was done, it was said, "to check the growing bureaucratic tendencies" of the *Partei Vorstand*. There are now forty-nine paid secretaries of district and state federations and eighty-four paid secretaries of local organizations.

There is no doubt as to the efficiency of this ably officialled organization. The rank and file members are not allowed to remain mere passive payers of subscriptions. They are expected to be active in the distribution of literature, in making converts by constant argument and discussion among their workmates, and in sharing the heavy toil of electioneering and the organizing of meetings and demonstrations. In the big industrial regions at election times the Social Democratic battalions work like a machine. Hence in Berlin and Greater Berlin, with its eight Reichstag divisions, there is now only one which has not gone "red," and that, the West End division, in which are situated the Kaiser's palace and the houses of the wealthy, was only saved to the Liberals in 1912 by nine votes on a poll of over 11,000. In the seven other constituencies at the same election the Social Democratic vote was 559,678 out of a total of 805,730, or nearly 70 per cent. In the purely working class divisions of these seven the proportion reached 80 per cent. Results almost equally startling were obtained in other big centres of population, including Munich, Hamburg, Leipzig, Dresden, Nuremberg, Stuttgart, Cologne, Hanover, Frankfurt, Königsberg, Strassburg, Breslau, and the like. With few exceptions every large German city throughout the empire has now a Social Democrat representing it in the Imperial Parliament.

Socialism and Philosophy, Science and Art.

The political sphere, however, is not the only one to which the party devotes time, energy, and money. "We German Socialists," says Engels, "are proud of our descent not only from Saint Simon, Fourier, and Owen, but also from Kant, Fichte, and Hegel. The German Labor movement is the heir of German classical philosophy." Lassalle claimed that he wrote every line armed with the

entire culture of his century. These proud boasts have doubtless helped to inspire the Social Democrats to become the bearers of art, philosophy, and science to the masses. One of the most active branches of the organization are the education committees, which have been established in 317 localities. Of these the greater number are formed in conjunction with the trade unions. There is also a central education committee, whose duty is to promote and assist the local committees. The expenditure of these bodies amounted to more than £32,000 in 1912. They arranged about 2,000 lectures on economics, history, literature, art, socialism, philosophy, co-operation, trade unionism, political science, and technical subjects; and innumerable concerts, entertainments, and dramatic and operatic performances. These are, of course, in addition to the ordinary propaganda and election meetings, of which about 30,000 were held. The musical and dramatic performances are carried out on a large scale. Theatres, with complete companies of actors, actresses and orchestras, are engaged to perform plays of Shakespeare, Goethe, and Schiller, as well as modern dramas of a propagandist type. The Education Committee of Hamburg reports successful renderings of Beethoven's symphonies to large audiences of working men, and the Cologne Education Committee found that Bach can secure good attendances from working class members of the party. The cinematograph has also been brought into the service of Socialist instruction.

One of the most interesting institutions connected with the educational work of the party is the Socialist School or College at Berlin. Here every year 31 selected men and women of various ages are given instruction in general, social, and constitutional history; political economy; history and theory of Socialism; social and industrial law; the art of speaking and writing; journalism; and other subjects. Each scholar is allowed a full maintenance grant during the school period. By this means a steady supply of trained agitators and officials is provided for the party. The cost of the School is £2,000 per annum, of which £1,000 is spent in maintenance grants.

Socialist Women and Young People.

A special department, the Women's Bureau, deals with the work of the 130,000 women of the party. One day a year, May 12th, the Social Democratic Women's Day, is specially devoted to demonstrations and meetings to demand the extension of the suffrage to women. Special pamphlets, leaflets, and other publications are prepared for the agitation among women, and a special women's conference is held just before the annual congress of the party. A valuable social service is carried on largely by the women of the movement through the medium of Committees for the Protection of Children. These purely voluntary bodies are established in 125 localities. They seek to prevent breaches of the various laws to protect children, especially those connected with child wage earners; and they are said to be more effective than the State factory inspectors.

Although young persons are forbidden by law to belong to the Social Democratic organization, steps are taken by the party to provide means for keeping them in touch with Socialist ideas. Committees for this purpose exist in 574 localities, through which a special journal, *Arbeiter Jugend*, is sold to the number of over 80,000 copies. Libraries for young persons are also provided in 138 districts. The committees, in 1912, held 3,500 lectures and 1,623 concerts and entertainments, and organized 384 visits to museums and picture galleries and the like, and 4,682 walking and other excursions. In these various functions many tens of thousands of young people took part. The Central Bureau, which directs these activities, issues special literature for the young. In 1912 about 650,000 copies of various books, pamphlets and leaflets of this nature were published. The local committees have powerful enemies in the various organizations established by religious and other societies to protect youths and girls between fourteen and eighteen years of age from Socialist infection; but, in spite of all opposition, the recruiting to the army of the "Reds" grows at a pace that strikes terror to the hearts of the anti-Socialists, who, in their panic-stricken attacks upon the Social Democrats, descend to the lowest depths of misrepresentation and vituperation.

The Party and the Trade Unions.

It will be readily understood that the manifold operations of the Social Democratic organization require in every city quarters of no inconsiderable magnitude. In most large German towns, and in some of the smaller ones, the Socialists and trade unionists have joined hands and built splendidly equipped offices and meeting-places for the two movements. These *Gewerkschaftshäuser* or *Volkshäuser*, as they are called, are notable features of Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig, Chemnitz and other big centres. In their erection many thousands of pounds, subscribed by the organized workers, have been invested. The *Volkshaus* usually contains the offices of most of the trade unions and other labor organizations of the city, halls for large meetings, a restaurant, recreation and reading rooms, and sometimes lodging rooms and baths for trade unionists travelling in search of work. In Berlin the Social Democratic activities are so numerous and extensive that a separate establishment has always been required for them. In 1911 the *Partei Vorstand* acquired, at a cost of £225,000, four large blocks of buildings in Lindenstrasse, one of the main thoroughfares of the capital. Here in due course will be housed all the central agencies of the party: the executive committee, the central committees of the education, women's and young persons' departments, the party school, the archives, the *Vorwärts*'s printing and publishing works, and the book store. These new headquarters will be worthy of the mighty and marvellously organized movement to which they belong. It is interesting to note that, by a curious stroke of irony, among the present tenants of the buildings now paying rent to the hated Social Democrats are two strongly Conservative newspapers.

Equipment for Conquest.

The secret of the extraordinary achievements of the German Socialists lies in their remarkable combination of idealism and practicality. Though their heads are sometimes among the stars, their feet are always on the solid earth; though many of them still believe in the early Marxian myth of a final collapse of capitalism from which Socialism will rise in full splendor, they never use the plea "that nothing but Socialism is of any use" in order to shirk the task of grappling with immediate problems. So multifarious are the ways in which they are equipping themselves for the conquest of political power, and so intent are they on the making of their organization equal to the great mission which Lassalle declared destiny had laid upon the working classes, that to many thousands, as to Eduard Bernstein, "the movement is everything, the ultimate aim is nothing." The movement is a constant, many-sided struggle for political, economic and social emancipation in which, more and more, experience is replacing abstract theory as a guide. And the training and discipline induced by the ceaseless battling of the movement with opponents and obstacles of all kinds is producing a self-respecting, self-confident and purposeful democracy which, when it does attain political power, will have learned to use it soberly and with judgment in the tremendous task of changing the German Empire into the German Co-operative Commonwealth.

PROGRAM OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF GERMANY.

(ADOPTED AT THE ERFURT CONGRESS, 1891.)

From "German Social Democracy," by Bertrand Russell, and "Modern Socialism," by R. C. K. Ensor.

The economic development of bourgeois society leads necessarily to the disappearance of production on a small scale (*Kleinbetrieb*), the principle of which consists in the workers owning the means of production. This economic development separates the worker from his means of production, and transforms him into an unpropertied proletarian, while the means of production become the property of a comparatively small number of capitalists and great landlords.

Hand in hand with the monopolizing of the means of production goes the supplanting of scattered small businesses by colossal businesses, the development of the tool into the machine, and a gigantic growth of the productivity of human labor. But all the advantages of this change are monopolized by the capitalists and great landlords. For the proletariat and the declining intermediate classes—small masters, peasants—it betokens growing increase of the insecurity of their existence, of misery, oppression, slavery, humiliation, and exploitation.

Ever greater grows the number of the proletariat, ever more extensive the army of surplus workers, ever sharper the contrast between exploiters and exploited, and ever bitterer the class warfare between bourgeoisie and proletariat, which divides modern society into two hostile camps, and is the common characteristic of all industrial countries.

The gulf between propertied and unpropertied is further widened through the crises, rooted in the essence of the capitalistic method of production, which constantly become more far-reaching and more devastating, which make general insecurity into the normal condition of society, and furnish the proof that the productive powers of modern society have outgrown its control, that private property in the means of production is irreconcilable with the due application and full development of those powers.

Private property in the means of production, which was formerly the means of securing to the producer the possession of his own product, has to-day become the means of expropriating peasants, handicraftsmen, and small producers, and of putting the non-workers, capitalists, and great landlords in possession of the product of the workers. Only the conversion of capitalistic private property in the means of production—land, quarries, and mines, raw material, tools, machines, means of communication—into common property, and the change of the production of goods into a Socialistic production, worked for and through society, can bring it about that production on a large scale, and the ever growing productiveness of human labor, shall develop, for the hitherto exploited classes, from a source of misery and oppression, into a source of the highest well being and perfect universal harmony.

This social change betokens the emancipation, not only of the proletariat, but of the whole human race, which is suffering under the present conditions. But it can only be the work of the working classes, because all other classes, in spite of conflicts of interests among themselves, take their stand on the ground of private property in the means of production, and have, for their common aim, the maintenance of the foundations of existing society.

The struggle of the working class against capitalistic exploitation is of necessity a political struggle. The working class cannot carry on its economic contests, and cannot develop its economic organization, without political rights. It cannot bring about the transference of the means of production into the possession of the community without acquiring political power.

To give to this fight of the working class a conscious and unified form, and to show it its necessary goal—that is the task of the Social Democratic Party.

The interests of the working classes are the same in all countries with a capitalistic mode of production. With the extension of the world's commerce, and of production for the world market, the position of the worker in every country grows ever more dependent on the position of the worker in other countries. The liberation of the working class, accordingly, is a work in which the workmen of all civilized countries are equally involved. In recognition of this, the Social Democratic Party of Germany feels and declares itself to be *one* with the class conscious workmen of all other countries.

The Social Democratic Party of Germany does not fight, accordingly, for new class privileges and class rights, but for the abolition of class rule and of classes themselves, for equal rights and equal duties of all, without distinction of sex or descent. Starting from these views, it combats, within existing society, not only the exploitation and oppression of wage earners, but every kind of exploitation and oppression, whether directed against a class, a party, a sex, or a race.

Proceeding from these principles, the Social Democratic Party of Germany demands, to begin with :

1. Universal, equal, and direct suffrage, with secret ballot, for all elections, of all citizens of the Empire over twenty years of age, without distinction of sex. Proportional representation and, until this is introduced, legal redistribution of electoral districts after every census. Biennial legislative periods. Holding of the elections on a legal holiday. Compensation for the elected representatives. Abolition of every limitation of political rights, except in the case of legal incapacity.

2. Direct legislation through the people, by means of the rights of proposal and rejection. Self-determination and self-government of the people in realm, state, province, and parish. Election of magistrates by the people, with responsibility to the people. Annual voting of taxes.

3. Education of all to bear arms. Militia in the place of the standing army. Decision by the popular representatives on questions of war and peace. Settlement of all international disputes by arbitration.

4. Abolition of all laws which limit or suppress the right of meeting and association.

5. Abolition of all laws which place women, whether in a public or a private capacity, at a disadvantage as compared with men.

6. Declaration that religion is a private matter. Abolition of all expenditure of public funds upon ecclesiastical and religious objects. Ecclesiastical and religious bodies are to be regarded as private associations, which regulate their affairs entirely independently.

7. Secularization of schools. Compulsory attendance at the public national schools. Free education, free supply of educational materials, and free maintenance in the public schools, as well as in the higher educational institutions, for those boys and girls who, on account of their capacities, are considered fit for further education.

8. Free administration of justice and free legal assistance. Administration of the law through judges elected by the people. Appeal in criminal cases. Compensation of persons unjustly accused, imprisoned, or condemned. Abolition of capital punishment.

9. Free medical attendance, including midwifery, and free supply of medicines. Free burial.

10. Graduated income and property tax for defraying all public expenses, so far as these are to be covered by taxation. Obligatory self-assessment. Succession duties, graduated according to the amount of the inheritance and the degree of relationship. Abolition of all indirect taxes, customs, and other economic measures, which sacrifice the interests of the community to those of a privileged minority.

For the protection of the working classes, the Social Democratic Party of Germany demands immediately :

1. An effective national and international legislation for the protection of labor on the following principles :—

(a) Fixing of a normal working day, which shall not exceed eight hours.

(b) Prohibition of the employment of children under fourteen.

(c) Prohibition of night work, except in those industries which, by their nature, require night work, from technical reasons or for the public welfare.

(d) An unbroken rest of at least thirty-six hours in every week for every worker.

(e) Prohibition of the truck system.

2. Inspection of all industrial establishments, investigation and regulation of conditions of labor in town and country by a central labor department, district labor bureaus, and chambers of labor.

3. Legal equality of agricultural laborers and domestic servants with industrial workers. Abolition of the special regulations concerning servants.

4. Assurance of the right of combination.

5. Taking over by the Imperial Government of the whole system of working people's insurance, though giving the working people a controlling share in the administration.

6. Separation of the Churches and the State.

(a) Suppression of the grant for public worship.

(b) Philosophic or religious associations to be civil persons at law.

7. Revision of selections in the Civil Code concerning marriage and the paternal authority.

(a) Civil equality of the sexes, and of children, whether natural or legitimate.

(b) Revision of the divorce laws, maintaining the husband's liability to support the wife or the children.

(c) Inquiry into paternity to be legalized.

(d) Protective measures in favor of children materially or morally abandoned.

GROWTH OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC VOTE IN GERMANY.

Year.	Social Democratic vote (First Ballot).	Percentage of total vote.	Social Democrats Returned.
1871	124,655	3	2
1874	351,952	6.8	10
1877	493,288	9.1	13
1878	437,158	7.6	9
1881	311,961	6.1	13
1884	549,990	9.7	24
1887	763,128	10.1	11
1890	1,427,298	19.7	35
1893	1,786,738	23.2	44
1898	2,107,076	27.2	56
1903	3,010,771	31.7	81
1907	3,259,020	28.9	43
1912	4,250,329	34.8	110

The Reichstag is composed of 397 members. If the Social Democrats were represented in proportion to their vote of 1912 they would have 138 members.

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