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EDITORIAL

HATS OFF TO FINLAND!

By DANIEL DE LEON

HATS off to the Finnish Landtag! It is the first national assembly in the world in which women deputies appear and the first in which the Socialists are the strongest party. There are nineteen women deputies in the Finnish Parliament. Some are Socialists; one was a domestic servant until she became editor of a Socialist newspaper. The majority of them are very young; and it is said of all of them, "Few if any of the women possessed external beauty, but their evident happiness in their political situation gave a certain charm to their rather stern faces." New conditions not only create new duties but new beauty also. The Socialists number eighty out of 200. Over fifty of them are manual laborers, cabinet makers, shoe makers, house carpenters, filers, conductors and dressmakers, being among them. Their election worries the "cultured" ruling class, who are fearful of their interests at the hands of the new legislators.

This combination of woman and Socialism presented by Finland is a cause for congratulation. It expresses, in a most conspicuous manner, the tendency to return to the sex equality of primitive communism on the higher plane of civilization, that is manifesting itself, perhaps unconsciously, in the most advanced of modern nations. But too much importance should not be attached to it. Finland is under the absolute domination of the Czar, who can revoke the Finnish parliament at will, if he so choose. It should also be borne in mind that neither the women nor the Socialists, nor both combined, are in an absolute majority. Further, Finland, though advanced politically, is so undeveloped industrially and capitalistically as to be unripe for complete Socialism; its working class representatives cannot as a result measure up to the standards prevalent in other countries. Under these important circumstances much will happen or be done that will prove disappointing to the superficial student of great movements. But there is no doubt that the very best

that can be done, under the circumstances, will be done. Of that, the fact that both woman and Socialism are so conspicuous in Finland's parliament, gives ample assurance. Further assurance is found in the encouraging information that the Finnish workers are backing up their political victories by organizing on the economic field.

Hats off to Finland!!

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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