

italist necessity; international exchange is inexorable. Until recently the Ruhr operated on subsidies. Now these have stopped. Stinnes—the voice of Stinnes—averts they should have ceased long ago. Stinnes says that coal production outside the Ruhr costs 22 gold marks per ton; inside the Ruhr, 38. His remedy is the abolition of union restrictions and the 8-hour day, substituting the capitalist paradise—no unions and no restrictions. The withdrawal of the subsidies has resulted in increasing unemployment; the further exhaustion of labor and the actual stoppage of some of the industry. Is that the hand of Stinnes to drive the workers to his terms? Anyway, the lying press propagated his terms, and he asked the French command for support to that end, which was refused, not because France favors the workers, but because France requires the assistance of the German government to secure the spoils of the Ruhr. Apparently the demoralization of the Ruhr industry grows. The railways are on strike—some of them partly destroyed. Hunger riots add to the chaos of “occupied” confusions, stocks are full and prices non-equivalent. Taxes grow and purchasing power disappears; everything suffocating in the “reparations tangle,” and until a political settlement is effected the resumption of industry for the world market is impossible.

Thus, in effect, famine presses on the Ruhr. With the Ruhr is involved the rest of Germany. The rest of Germany is partly manufacturing and commerce, partly agriculture. Owing to conditions in Germany and scarcity of food, the agriculturist has been “doing well.” He hopes to continue; but as industrial chaos and struggles adversely affect his hopes, he resents the aims and agitation of the red towns. He is a natural enemy of Communism everywhere, even in Russia. He is probably a more sinister enemy of Communism than ever the commercial bourgeoisie. He loves his property—by nature. He is knit to it by life-long and age-long traditions, and he will remain so until by nature he is made to realize the meaning of property and its implications.

The manufacturing and trading interests are being ruthlessly driven to ruin. The world market intensifies competition; competition concentrates production into fewer hands, centralizes authority in the vertical trust. The great middle class are no longer captains and directors of business industry; they have become the investors in the projects of a financial oligarchy, whose greater expansion volatilises the investments, the living standards and social status of their clients, which is a necessary prelude to socialist society. In Germany the reduction process is complete. Their poverty, penury, despair and suicide constitute a crying appeal to their class kindred the world over. But their property concept is not yet vanquished. With the blind culture of bourgeoisie “eternities” they vision redress in the reaction of the dead yesterday, prosperity in the stultification of progress. True to human perversity—or human necessity, as one looks at the matter—they fight the nearest effect. In the German case, the agitating Communist within—French dominion without; hence they unite on Nationalism, and the objects of their activities—the unity of German territory and the “opportunity” of German resource—holds diverse political elements in the common affinity of reaction.

Are those the conditions of a successful Communist coup? Misery and desperation will certainly drive a people to action. Will it organize itself in revolution? Will industrial anti-French strike; anti-French demonstrations; hunger riots; transform themselves into political supremacy? If it did, could it maintain that supremacy? Cut off from natural resource on one hand, faced with French terrorism on the other, and afflicted internally with political compromise. Where is its economic power against the farmers? Where its political power against nationalism? Where the organization of the means of life without the control of its resources? Where its powers of resistance disarmed and surrounded by its capitalist oppressor? Where its unity of strength, without common unity of vision?

But there is Russia, and the red army. Yes, and there is also France and the White Terror. Would you have war with Russia, then? Is the ruins of Germany the prelude to war on the issues of class? Is the hegemony of France to end in the armageddon of international carnage? For assuredly it will be no two power affair. Is Russia ready for such an issue? Has she the willing mind of common aim? Is she equipped with the modern means of warfare—planes, bombs, tanks, armaments, submarine, poison gas, disease cultures; lying propaganda, etc.? And the developed means which make those horrors possible? With no limitations of scale or time, except the limitation of capitalist necessity and human endurance? Russia at present is busy on defence of reconstruction. Her interests are peace and development. War is an issue she will neither force nor foster. Trade development, exploitation of her resources, rehabilitation of the havoc of war and famine; the remodelling of her working necessities; the strengthening of her power, the education of her millions; the concentration of practice and theory, all immediately for the supremacy of the Soviet Government. These are the aims of Russia. Whether she can carry them through is, of course another matter. But she will certainly not imperil them on any issue, or offence. She will not hazard her developing security of economy and the stability of political permanence on any romantic excursions of sentiment or false idealism. She understands the capitalist world too thoroughly for that. And what a Reuben is a nationalist working class. Communist Germany will be the work of German Communists. For the simple reason that not all the red battalions on earth could hold a chauvinist working class secure. If the trial of strength is to some, Russia will try to choose her own vantage of time and place. And if it does come, it will come, not as a sentiment of communism, but as the violence of French aggression.

It is a gifted imagination that sees in present conditions an advantageous situation. It is prolific in suffering and misery. It is lured with fire and death. It is black with wantonness and crime; foul with treachery and hate. But it shows little of class unity or social understanding. It has little defense in the organization of class consciousness. It grasps at the Momus of political freedom, and spurns the Pallas of economic reality. And though a faithful few are untiring heroes in the vanguard of the revolution, the social mass, who must accomplish the revolution, are a “people that walk in darkness.” Till that darkness is dispelled, and a true concept of social relations is obtained, there may be chaos, but not revolution; there may be struggle, but not triumph. The vials of a deeper wrath are yet to be poured out on man. It may be true that through war and death we go to revolution. But it is also true that only through knowledge of its cause can we obtain the victory. A ghastly Europe tortured by the Inquisition of Imperialism may be a ready subject for speculation, but it is a doubtful theme for hope. Europe will not bring us the revolution, Russia cannot present it to us. The mechanic of conditions will not adjust itself. We ourselves must achieve it. We can help Europe only by freeing ourselves from the traditions of property. We can conquer the battalions of force when we conquer the prescriptions of power. We can have Socialism only when we have—its concept. The henchmen of capital tell us that a people have the government they deserve. Probably they are right. It is up to us to apply the formula. R.

THE CLASH OF STEEL.

(Continued from page 1)

ing with Britain by means of a huge oil concession to Lloyd George's friend, Sir Basil Zaharoff. Lloyd George was, however, one too many for him, slipping a little clause about the price to be paid for coal and coke into the Spa Agreement. Millerand went, and in his place appeared Briand, who, in conjunction with the French edition of Sir Robert MacAlpine, M.Loucheur, set himself to get money from Britain, oil from America, and building material from Germany. He disappeared after Cannes, giving place

to Poincare, another lawyer to the steelmasters, who means to get the Ruhr coal for his clients, and with it the reversion of all the collieries, blast furnaces, and steel works. He dare not betray the peasants and the petty shopkeepers, who he knows will never receive the reparations, but will require to pay for the war themselves, until after the election next spring, when he can safely march his black troops back from Germany to keep France in order. Then he will be able to make a pact with Stinnes unless Britain makes one first.

George for England.

Here, in “this land of hope and glory, this Mother of the Free,” we have had the war-profiteers and shipowners' miracle-manager, Lloyd George, whose “crowning mercy” was that he took the iron ore from Germany and gave it to France, and the ships from Germany and sold them cheap to the British shipowners, who thereupon countermanded orders for ships from the shipbuilders, and they orders for steel from Motherwell. The immediate upshot of it was that Lloyd George's “pals” were selling coal and coke dear to the French and iron-ore dear to the Germans, and were carrying to them both at the shipowners' freight charges. It was just the sort of “smartness” you would expect of the slippery Welshman.

This kind of capitalist statesmanship—company promoter's statecraft—raised a hornet's nest—or rather to suit the metaphors to the mischief-maker—caused the waves of worldwide storm to sweep “the captain” off “the bridge” into the scuppers.

Andrew Bonar Law, formerly of Jacks and Co., iron-ore and metal merchants, took his place and, in a spirit of “tranquillity,” interfered just enough to keep Stinnes and the French coming to an agreement and having, so to speak, pushed the French into collision with the Germans, washed his hands of the whole business. “Tranquillity” meant leaving the French and German capitalists to emulate the Kilkenny cats. Unhappily, the process was unduly prolonged, and the trade of Britain suffered severely whilst the French were beginning to understand that “once a hawk of iron-ore always a hawk of iron-ore.” So Andrew had to go.

Piggie-Wiggie Wee.

In his place we had a man who, from his youth up, like his father before him, had been and still was a great steelmaster, Baldwin of Baldwin's Ltd., ex-director of Lloyds Bank, Ltd., a man who believes in selling Newfoundland iron-ore to the Germans, South Wales coal to the French, and lending money to the French state and the German capitalists. He has a deep interest in pigs—especially the kind that the “sows” litter at Coltness and Wishaw blast furnaces. In fact, his interest runs up to £190,000 in Baldwin's, Ltd. He does not so much mind the French Government winning the steel works and the coal of the Ruhr as long as, at the same or a shortly anterior time, the said French Government borrows, as it is expected to do, a very large sum of money from the British capitalists.

It is believed that Baldwin of Baldwin's Ltd., when at Aix-les-Bains, spent much time in sucking “soft drinks” through a straw and learned much concerning the principle of the syphon. When he went to Paris he set himself to apply the principle of the straw syphon to old man Poincare. Poincare is to tap the riches of the Ruhr for the French Government and the London banks, and the British steelmasters are, by lending money to that Government, to connect up their lips with the straw as the straw has connected up with the Ruhr.

Baldwin of Baldwin's Ltd. knows a thing or two. He knows how to suck, and how to do it without making a noise. In fact, he is a fine type of an English gentleman—he knows how to suck profits out of steel-workers at Port Talbot and how and when to suck even greater profits out of steel-workers on the Ruhr.

I have great admiration for Baldwin of Baldwin's Ltd., just as I have for all these class conscious steelmasters. I wish I could say that I had an equal admiration for the blast furnacemen, melters and rollers who submit themselves to be sucked.