

# The Social Jig Saw

**I**S THE REVOLUTION really in sight? Many of us are of that opinion, and look forward confidently, eagerly, to the near future of success. How much of this hope is desired? How much fact? What is the bias of probability?

This hope of revolution rests upon the dreadful social conditions of Europe in general; on the disruption and disorganization of Germany in particular. The extremity of Europe is obvious and need not be dwelt upon. It seems an eminently reasonable proposition that torn and dismembered society cannot much longer tolerate the misery of its conditions, and the repressions of its rulers. Yet misery, although a condition of revolution is not a cause of revolution. Nor does repression, although it engenders conscious resistance, necessarily engender the resistance of social revolution. Misery and repression are in themselves but witness of a society whitening to the harvest, and the time of that harvest may perhaps be measured, not so much in the sufferings of misery, as in the power of repression. For, if that power be strong, it is weighty evidence of the vague conceptions of social realities. The forces of progress determine the direction of development; the direction of resistance is determined by the concepts of social affinities. Now, if the line of resistance does not coincide with the line of development, that resistance may nurture chaos and disruption, but not (at least not immediately) social revolution.

Social revolution is the proletarian ordering of the forces of progress; more especially in the stages of transition. If the organization of that movement is not inspired with the vitality of proletarian understanding, and therefore not ready to meet the onslaughts of repression, society in mass may suffer under the whip of dominion, and may in its struggles modify the ambitions of dominion; but it cannot take over the guidance of its own affairs, because it has not the conscious concept of its fundamental realities and necessities. Proletarian consciousness is a necessity, either before, or very immediately after the event. That is the darker side of the picture; an aspect of the situation not to be ignored, or glazed over, with the sweet icing of imagery.

Personally, I know not what is really transpiring in Europe; how much of fact and hope may exist in the middle of surmise and distraction. That there is some data for hope is evident. But how strong? On what evidence? Surmise is not fact. Information is scarce and unreliable, and deduction, no matter how logical, is valueless, if its premise is false. It is with such a dim rushlight that we look into the dark and darkening future.

Out of the great struggle in Europe La Belle France has emerged dominant. Not much may happen without the counter-seal of the grand Republic. And sub rosa, much is happening through the wiles of that august body. It is the post war struggle of France for the hegemony of Europe which has retarded and almost frustrated, the "re-adjustment" of capitalist spoilation, and reduced Germany to her present straits. It is the power of France that holds Europe generally to French ideas of "justice," and French ideals of progress. And the power of France is only to be broken by the robust force of war. The preparations for that war are going on apace, military, financially, politically. The British Empire is being girded together, with that possibility in view. British and American finance are of a mind in ending the European tangle; politically the governments have drawn closer together, while General Smuts has recently dotted the "i's" of the straight issue. When the British Lion feels equal to the tussel, i.e., when Britain has negotiated Dominion and allied assistance, the war drums will begin to beat. Still, although that fight is presumed—and contemplated—it is not yet imminent, because the means are not yet fully prepared, nor the board yet completely set.

The reason for the struggle is commerce; the

European market. Europe is the greatest market in the world. Naturally the confusion in Europe has dislocated the entire comity of trade. As naturally the greatest imperialism in the world has been "hard hit," Britain is waging a tremendous struggle for life. Her debts are heavy and pressing, her industries dormant, declining; her exchange falling. The only way of redemption is vast and increasing trade. Normally, Europe absorbs more than a third of all British products, and Germany was one of her best—if not greatest—customers. That has all gone by the board. As an offset to that trade loss, there is a great "putsch" for inter-Empire trade. But Empire trade is not sufficient to make the offset. Neither capitalist "prosperity" nor Imperialist rivalry can brook any such artificial restrictions. The Dominions themselves are commodity producers, requiring ever-growing markets, while the gathering volume of their obligations demands an ever-increasing commerce. Neither Britain nor the Dominions can live for and within themselves. They must extend their commerce and encroach ever more conflictly on the imperialist rivalries for the world market. Hence the grim struggle for European hegemony and the commercial supremacy which goes with it.

The same principles apply with the same force to France. But France is dominant in Europe: She has military status, political prestige and commercial potentialities. To transform them into revenue producing actuality is the issue at stake. It is for that reason that France now holds the Rhur—directly it has been detached from Germany. France, facing the deluge of bankruptcy, requires reparations. Reparations require trade, and trade bespeaks French interest. In other words that France, guarding the spoils of war, requires primarily the European market for its disposal. After French needs are satisfied, the other nations may come in. That is the fundament of the conferences held and impending.

In all the play of recent German politics, just who dictates, to what extent and for what complex of reasons, is difficult to say. Broadly speaking, the German capitalist class demanded a goodly share in Rhur production—in the eyes of France an excessive share—for a vanquished rival. In this invisible struggle Britain aided—or more properly speaking, through the gentle arts of diplomacy and the subtle magic of psychology—influenced the former in their demands and resistance. Because, to Britain, for her prestige and supremacy, not only was the German market and German trade a need in itself, but it was the point of departure for the stabilization of the wider field of European exchange. The desperate urgency of British need was plain enough in the British offer to cancel the French and Italian war debts, in toto, if only France would stay out of the Rhur. Alas, the happy entente exists only if France consents to play the bass.

During this struggle the German Reich subsidized the Rhur industries, because owing to market conditions and exchange depreciations, the Rhur could produce, but could not sell. And it had to produce anyway for reparation claims and domestic necessities. (Reparation claims, of course, have gone off color with the occupation). Under the increasing pressure of France and the deepening strain of "passive resistance," Germany completely collapsed, to the dismay of Britain: apparently to the joy of France. But with the gathering chaos of German disruption, the menace of riot and revolt, and the necessity of France for the formal aid of the German government for the operation of the Rhur, Germany and France reached at last a tentative conclusion in the division of the hoped-for spoils of industry.

In present-day Germany there are three main political movements: Separatist, Nationalist and Communist. To what extent Communism prevails we know not. Probably it is greater than appears. But, if the "news" is anywhere near the fact, it

is certainly eclipsed by the other two, and decidedly mixed with political aspirations and party contentions, which can hardly be classed as Communist. Nationalist is the expression of prewar unity and its prewar prosperity, mingled with more or less radical elements, finding, as usual, rapprochement of particular interests in the trend of general appearances, and, of course, colored and excited with the new wine of specific circumstances, yet altogether working, in effect, though not in intent, for the consummation of the central idea of bourgeoisie nationalism. The Separatist movement is an activity inspired by reaction, for monarchy or autocracy, or any ancient divinity of tyrann, used and connived at by France, either for the furtherance of her ambitions of political and economic aggrandizement, or as a bulwark against the "red terror," or a combination of both.

Be that as it may, the combined result is a social jig-saw that readily lends itself to speculation, but veils its actual solution in its own awesome darkness. The Communist movement is altogether hidden, perhaps overwhelmed, in a welter of tumult, riot, strikes, industrial degradation, nationalist hatred and social passions. Whatever of social understanding and proletarian unity exists is hidden under the clouds of strife. The nationalist movement wavers in apathy, suffering and hysterical excitement, stung into action by the iron necessities of trade depression, or aborted by the magic spells of corporate monopoly. While Separatism, panicky and ruthless, waxes and wanes with the political fevers of Berlin, or the industrial ague of the Rhur. Bavaria, the centre of monarchy and Facism, is in reactionary revolt. The Rhur, the centre of German industry, favors—or is forced into—the Republic of the Rhineland. Thus the Rhineland, the source of German wealth and power and prosperity, is in the hands of France, i.e., the Comity of Forges, in association with Stinnes and Wolff, the German ironmasters. Bavaria is ready to aid in the settlement of a White government; while on the other side of Germany, the eastern centre of coal and iron, Silesia is either a Polish acquisition or under Polish jurisdiction. In other words, under the dominion of the comity. And by what is known as the "Danzig corridor," Poland has access, somewhere along the valley of the Vistula, to the Baltic sea.

Take a map and look at the situation. What is now actually Germany is comprised within a line running from Danzig along the new Polish frontiers to Saxony; skirting the southern boundaries of Communist centres, Saxony and Thuringia; thence along the borders of the Rhine Republic to the Dutch frontier. At the same time, French influence, and to a certain degree actual control, is paramount in the great stretches of territory from Posen to Leuberg; to Munich; to Belgium and Holland; not to speak of what power of suggestion she may be able to exert on Italy and Turkey, and the reactionaries of Hungary. Clearly, France, by "peaceful penetration" has wedged herself between Bolshevik Russia and a possible Communist Germany. She has secured herself a goodly portion of economic power—the agricultural regions of central Europe, and a considerable market of exchange. She has clipped the spreading wings of Albion, and she has separated Germany from the prime sources of industrial prosperity.

The proposition, then, is: are the German omunists strong enough within the existing limitations of their conditions, to organize and entrench themselves in political power, against the disruptions of Nationalist counter-revolution within and Imperialist, anti-Communist aggression without? The Rhur as the key to German prosperity is, maybe, also the key to Communist vitality. That the Rhur is detached from Germany does not make any difference. For although that fact may alter its political destiny, it in nowise affects its economic unity. Capitalist trade sits four square on cap-