WESTERN CLARION

A Journal of OURREST EVENTS Official Organ of
THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

HISTORY ECONOMICS PHILOSOPHY

No. 904.

NINETEENTH YEAR.

Twice a Month

VANCOUVER, B. C., DECEMBER 1, 1923.

FIVE CENTS

The Clash of Steel

(By G. T. W. Newbold)

THE situation in which the affairs as regards the relations of the British and French Governments with one another, and with the German Government, are at the present time, is exceedingly difficult for anyone who is ignorant of the identity of the leading political figures in the respective countries to make out.

The Stresemann Government has fallen, and the German equivalents of Thomas, Henderson, and MacDonald—to wit, the Social Democrats—having been disloged because they would not accept the demands put forward by Hugh Stinnes, and could not marshall anyone sufficiently in love with such spineless creatures as they to support them, Stresemann has reformed a Government of reactionaries like himself and others of a still more Tory character.

Before, however, they betook themselves into oblivion these highly respectable and strictly constitutional Laborists were induced to lend their authority to the setting upof a number of dictators, military men all, in various parts of Germany. A bogus rising of a counter-revolutionary nature was arranged in Bavaria, whither Streamann and private saly paid a visit—and when a dictator appeared in Munich in arrangement), Stresemann persuaded the Socia Democrat leaders to join him in appointing counterdictators elsewhere, and establishing what was actually or virtually a state of siege and of martial law. Stresemann had all along been careful that the social democrats did not get control of the Ministry of Defence, but only offices that were without any real power. His Minister of Defence selected the dictators and, once appointed, they were found to be not in opposition to but in connivance with Van Kahr, the "rebel" counter-revolutionary in Munich. The whole thing was a "put up" job.

Once Stresemann had the powers of dictatorship in his hands, he commenced to issue or have issued seemingly past him but, really, for him, decrees to provide for the suppression of all kinds of volunteer forces, working class and junker, but the only ones against which the dictators enforced them were the workers' factory guards or sentries. Having proceeded so far, Stinnes began openly pressing Stresemann to cancel the labor laws safeguarding the eighthour day and other hard-won rights. The Social Democrat leaders opposed this, and at the same time the Nationalist leaders were demanding seats in the Ministry. Stresemann pretended to have a crisis affeeting himself and his colleagues so as to shake them out. The Social Democrats were shaken out, and Stresemann thereupon took in new colleagues, preparing next to dissolve the Reichstag and hold new elections at which the Fascist "White Guards" will stand guard at the polling booths to secure a "selective" vote which will, under Black and Tan terror, choose a democratically elected Reichstag.

The whole thing will be done with due regard to democratic forms no Bolshevist decrees disfranchising anybody, only Fascists standing with hands on revolver holsters suggestively eyeing every free and soveraign elector who is known or suspected as a Communist or Socialist.

What is so interesting is that the press has let the cat out of the bag that Stresemann has been having the benefit of the advice of Lord d'Abernon, British Ambasandor to Berlin, whose Royal Master recently made. Musselini a Knight Commander of the Bath.

Another intriguing item has been the sudden disposition of the British and French Premiers to agree with each other, and of our Mr. Baldwin to insist on the necessity of standing together in these difficult times. One and all, the capitalists of Germany, France, and Britain have shown that they were getting "windy."

Ludendorff and the Bavarian reactionaries have held their hand and temporarily, closed the ranks with Stresemann. Stresemann has abandoned passive resistance to France, and at the same time the French and British Governments have got together. Why?

Well, this is why.

The Social Democratic rank and file has moved steadily and ever more rapidly from support of men who are the German equivalent of Clynes and Henderson to the left and have in overwhelming numbers, flocked into or gathered around the Communist Party of Germany.

TheFasces Come Unfastened

At the same time, thanks to the brilliant propagands of Karl Rabek, who has exposed to the ruined middle class and ex-service men, who had rallied to the patriotic call of the German Nationist or Fascist organizations, the fact that their leaders are more hostile to the masses than they are to the Allied capitalists, and that, in fact, Stinnes has no more regard for his "Fatherland" than Messrs. Kleinwort Sons and Co. of the Lamarkshire Steel Company have Dalriadic fervor for the home of the Lanarkshire wageworkers, the rank and file of German Fascism cannot be trusted to fight for its paymaster, Stinnes, and for Rupprecht brother-in-law of the King of the Belgians.

At the same time the Allied Governments are alarmed because there has developed a deep and growing split between Mussolini and the other Fascist leaders in Italy; the Bulgarian revolt has not been decisively quashed, and at the same time all the little countries have learned from what happened to Greece that the greatest humbug of the ages, the League of Nations, is no guardian of the rights of small states and are all looking towards Moscow and away from either Geneva, Paris or London.

Temporarily, the Governments have drawn together, and the capitalists have formed the United Front against the workers and the weak peasant peoples who, everywhere, are taking their lead or their hope from Communist Russia.

But this truce between the Powers is no permanent peace. A few weeks ago they were all at logger-heads about Corfu and Fiume and the Ruhr and Tangier and a few other little places. Now, they have all rushed together in a panic of fear lest the Communists should conquer in Germany.

The Communists in Germany are in no great haste to fight. They are playing a waiting game. The British, French and German capitalists wish to provoke a premature revolution as the prelude to a savage suppression. They may succeed, but I think they are more likely to fail.

In any case, should they have no revolution immediately to cope with, or should they suppress it temporarily, the conflict of interests between the British and French Governments and between the French and German Governments will very rapidly break out anew and with aggravated virulence.

Two's Company, Three's None.

The French Government desires the break-up of the German Republic into a series of succession states such as have replaced Austria-Hungary. She desires to see a Rhineland Republic, leaning upon herself, and a Bavarian Kingdom, affording a link with Czecho-Slovakia and the other states of the Little Entente.

The British Government desires Germany to remain intact, but would, probably, welcome a restoration of the monarchy—not, of course, Hohenzollerns, were they not all to be hanged—but the Hanoverian Guelphs or the Coburg Wettins. Failing the maintenance of a United Germany, the British Government would incline to the recreation of the Kingdom of Hanover, associated with Russia and the Baltic ports, hitched on to Denmark.

Both Governments, it must be remembered, are frankly reactionary or Tory, alike in London and Paris. Everywhere throughout Europe all who are not leaning towards Labor and Communism are inclining towards Monarchism and a Fascist Dictatorship.

But behind all these political manoeuvres, these selections of kings and states to set is tools, disguising the "mandates" they will held for respective groups of financiers and industrial magnates, are the struggles of the titans of capitalist concentration.

Billy and Boodle.

Just as Willian of Orange came to these shores not—as I read on his statue on Brixham quay the other day—"to defend the Protestant faith and the liberties of England," but to rule in the interests of a cabal of Anglo-Scottish land-thieves and a nest of Dutch Jews who set up amongst us the Bank of England and the South Sea Company, so the kings and republican Governments of today appear and disapper at the behest of the money-lending cliques.

We have seen here, in Paris or in Berlin, a succession of Premiers and their Ministries come and go. We have seen in Berlin, Bathenau and his successor, Wirth, representing the banks and the engineering syndicates, give place to Cuno, the tool of Stinnes, but a man who favored an alliance of Anglo-American money with German coal and steel. We have seen him fall, and Stresemann come to the top in the interests of the finishing trades but too weak to stand alone, and falling, again to rise as the puppet of Stinnes, who himself has been playing British and French banks and iron interests against each other, keeping his independence only by leaning now on one, now on the other.

Allons, enfants de la Patrie!

In Paris, we had the "Tiger," Clemenceau, concerned only to ensure that "never again" should Germany attack France of the peasant farmers and petty tradespeople whom she must pay a tremendous indemnity that would relieve them of the burden of paying for the war, and who, in his keenness to secure all this, allowed Lloyd George to write into the Treaty a settlement that made France have to buy dear coal and oil from Britain. He went before the awakened wrath of the French capitalists, and Millerand took his place. He was the creature of the steelmasters, having been that equivalent of Rufus, Isaacs, viz.—their lawyer. He set himself to get from Germany by agreement coal and coke, bargain-

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