

The Friend in Need of German Big Capitalism

By LUDWIG LORE

That the French government would refuse to consider the latest German mediation offer was obvious. It was hardly likely that Poincaré, after rejecting all offers made in the past, should accept a proposal that was far more unfavorable to the interests of the French than any hitherto made, at a moment when he has the basic industries of Germany firmly by the neck.

Political developments in Germany itself since the refusal of the proposed settlement, may, however, cast some light upon the motives that prompted this unsuccessful venture. It is being indicated that the Cuno ministry is about to resign, since it has no solution to offer in the face of the refusal of the French to come to terms.

A strongly socialistic cabinet, under the leadership of Breitscheid is under consideration, a solution that is more than probable in the very near future. Ostensibly such a cabinet is formed because it is hoped that Poincaré would be more sympathetic to its position than to that of the openly capitalistic Cuno.

As a matter of fact, there is not the slightest indication that Poincaré will be one iota more approachable to the arguments of the Social-Democrats than to those of their predecessors.

France demands the domination over the Ruhr district. French industrialists insist upon a 55 per cent control of the mining industries of the Ruhr, absolute control over the vital nerve of German economic life. Months past Germany offered France a 40 per cent interest in the industries of the Ruhr, without making the slightest impression upon the French industrialists, who feel that the future of French industrial greatness can be gained only over the dead body of German production.

The months of French occupation in the Ruhr have practically brought German industry to the verge of collapse. German capital faces bankruptcy on the one hand and a restless, resentful, revolutionary working class on the other. It has determined to make even greater concessions to its adversary, provided this can be done without casting the responsibility

upon the present regime. In other words, these gentlemen stand ready to betray the national interests of their fatherland in order to safeguard their profits, if they can find someone who will shoulder the responsibility.

Once before in a similar situation, the German Social-Democracy was the friend in need to a bourgeoisie trembling in fear before the consequences of its own acts. Then, too, the Social-Democrats were allowed to take the reigns of government while the bourgeoisie stood idly by, until the peace negotiations were at an end and the treaty of Versailles, with all its damnable provisions had been signed, and put into effect. With the result, that not the bourgeoisie, but the Social-Democracy was held responsible for the hopeless condition into which the country had fallen. And just as they have had to bear the stigma of betrayal before the eyes of the German nation, so they will go down a second time, more discredited, more hopelessly ineffectual in the face of every great crisis, than ever before.

It is hard to conceive of a better man than Breitscheid for this purpose. An opportunist whose statesmanship made him impossible even in the Independent Social Democracy, he is the combination of imperial minister and capitalistic lackey that is necessary in the man who will undertake this unpleasant job of selling out the industrial future and national integrity of the German nation for a mess of pottage.