

EDITORIAL

THE CONFLICT AT CADINEN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

GERMAN character is not spectacular. Almost anywhere else such an outbreak as that between the Kaiser and the German Agricultural Council might be discounted. The outbreak would not necessarily point to the basic dynamite of economic evolution. Otherwise in Germany.

The Kaiser, it appears, owns a farm at Cadinen in West Prussia. The farm, it appears, was rented to one Herr Sohst. It, finally, appears that the Kaiser summarily ejected his tenant, simultaneously nailing on the tenant's brow the charge of "incompetence"—whereupon the Agricultural Council, it is reported, protested with a stiff resolution, one of the signers of which is Count von Posadowsky-Wehner.

The story looks and sounds "mixed":—

That the Kaiser, a landlord, should treat a tenant with feudal brutality and contemptuousness—that "fits."

That, however, tenants, agricultural tenants, at that, should sport the prefix "Herr" to their names, one of them going so far as to underscore the circumstance with the title of "Count"—that "fits" not. "Herr" and "Count" don't fit the peasant status. Nick-names, in which German patronymics tell-taleingly abound, would more accurately fit the historic status of the one-time serf, now "Bauer."

The mix-up notwithstanding, the facts are probably all true. How are they to be harmonized? How is the fact of a feudal landlord, behaving like one, and true to the traditions of his caste, to be harmonized with the fact of his being "sassed" back by his "Bauer," and that "Bauer" a "Herr," and one of the "Herr's" "Bauer" associates a "Count"? There must be a "reason."

West Prussia may be far "out of the way." But even West Prussia—being on earth; and in Europe; and, moreover, in the rapidly capitalist-growing Ger-

many—can not remain immune to the breath of economic development. Capitalism is no respecter of feudal traditions, customs, or habits of thought. The “white parasols and elephants mad with pride,” that once symbolized the landlord, and before which the tenant prostrated himself in reverent admiration, Capitalism pokes fun at, derides irreverently, and finally appropriates for its museums, there to be set up in monumental mockery. But the transition is not sudden. Sometimes the transition proceeds with aggravating slowness. In the transition period “mix-ups” are apt to occur. The hoof of the “elephant” may trample upon a faded “white parasol.” Thus a “Herr” may happen to get the “boots” from his feudal lord, and a broken steel rib of the “white parasol” may revenge itself by sticking into the “elephant’s” hoof, wounding the beast in the shape of a stiff resolution signed by a “Count.”

Something of the sort is happening in West Prussia, and harmonizes by explaining the conflict at Cadinen.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded December 2014

slpns@slp.org