

Why should German Bohemians or Tzechs have defended the Ridge of the Vosges?"

There must have been some serious interests that made these people fight these—to them, at any rate—non-national fights; and these serious interests can be relied upon to weld the different nationalities into one super-national whole.

"Central Europe—says Naumann—is at the present time a geographical expression which has so far acquired no political or constitutional character. But Austria, too, was once merely a geographical expression, and Prussia was a provincial term denoting only the most easterly portion of the Kingdom. *It is not so very long since it was said that Germany was only a geographical concept, and what a content this word has acquired in the interval!*"

Austria has become a solidified state and Germany a magnificently powerful Empire because of the force of historical circumstances, and so shall it be with Central Europe. The historic factors are already there doing their work. And, primarily, the economic factor.

"The German economic creed must become in future more and more the characteristic of Mid-Europe. The military defensive alliance will thus grow into a genuine partnership. A united *economic people* will develop, cutting across all constitutional boundaries. This could not succeed were it the freshly conceived scheme of individuals. But we are only putting into words what has for long been taking shape of itself; *we express it in order to further a process that is already going on.* The Austrians and Hungarians have already had a share in our life, *for economically they are of our race, even those who speak a different language.*"

It does an old-fashioned Marxist's heart good to hear a man like Naumann speak of an "economic race" which transcends the boundaries of "nation" and language and which is the real force in determining "the life" of peoples, including their most fundamental political institutions such as the state itself. For Nau-

mann is no adept of the Materialistic Conception of History. The world, Naumann reminds us, does not move by economics alone. Says he:

"If an historical entity is to be made of Mid-Europe, a fresh historical consciousness must grow up, for economic considerations, however serious they may be, will not of themselves suffice to arouse the necessary enthusiasm. Of course, a scheme of this nature cannot be carried out without numerous calculations as to material advantages and disadvantages, but it is a false rendering of history to believe or wish to believe that great political transformations can be accomplished by the spirit of calculation alone. Each new social creation has its birthplace in the human soul, and this soul is never merely economic; from time immemorial, and still today, it is compounded of impulses and desires, material and ideal, definite and vague, variously mingled but yet pressing forward."

All of which is very true, in a sense, but need not worry us much nor detain us long, any more than it does Naumann himself. For when the basic, definite and calculable economic facts are there, the vague impulses and ideals will be there, too. When the super-national "economic race" has put in an appearance, the life of the soul will throb in response to the appeals of internationalism instead of nationalism. Witness Naumann himself, and the successful propaganda for Mid-Europe, notwithstanding the fact that Central Europe is the worst hotbed of historical discords on the face of the globe. When the economic conditions are ripe for a new social or political order, the soul will yearn for it, and the soul's yearning will express itself in the usual ways: the preachers will preach it, the poets will sing it, the fighters will fight for it, and the martyrs will die for it.

But more important even is the fact that as time wears on and the economic conditions grow in ripeness, their import will sink into the consciousness of humanity to such an extent that they will be taken for granted as a matter of course, and there will be no further need for preachment, poetry or martyrdom.