

Russia's frontiers a ring of middle-class states. I shall lose the chance of exploiting German discontent, and the movement which is now turning, albeit very slowly, in a revolutionary direction in Germany itself, will be arrested. A general peace will follow; a middle-class peace, and then within a few months, the whole force of capitalist Europe will be used to overthrow the Russian revolution. If, on the other hand, I stand out for the maximum, reject any compromise, and refuse what the average man would consider, in all the circumstances, an honorable peace, can I count on the continued support of the German masses? Will men who are merely war-weary continue to struggle for an ideal end? Will even the Russian masses who have got the land and now want peace to till it, endure the privations which a revolutionary strategy requires? If the masses have to choose between peace today and a world revolution on the day after tomorrow, will they not certainly vote for peace?"

It is probable that the dilemma will never present itself so sharply as this. On the one hand, the German government will probably equivocate to the end, and will not offer the Russians a peace which honorable men could accept. On the other hand, Trotzky and Lenine may be bluffing much more than I believe is the case. Their apparent madness is perfectly methodical. For the moment they feel fairly safe. A German offensive into Russia must wait for the good weather of April, and meanwhile strikes may be repeated. The Bolsheviki are playing not merely for power, still less for peace, but for the social revolution, and their premise that a revolutionary Russia surrounded by hostile bourgeois states would never be safe, has shrewd insight behind it. Is there a way out of the difficulty? I doubt whether there is. The belief of the true doctrinaire, that the capitalist world will always, in one way or another, scheme to destroy the first state which adopts Socialism, is probably ineradicable. For my part, I think it well founded. One seems to be on the verge of one of those really inevitable disasters which make the tragedy of history. If Pitt and Grenville had treated Chauvelin politely in 1792, the war might not have broken out in the first months of 1793, but for how long could it have been delayed? If the Allied military authority had not interned Trotzky in Halifax, our relations with Bolshevik Russia might be somewhat easier.

It is easy to say that we need only promise not to interfere with Russia, but what is to happen if she, on her side, proceeds to carry the revolutionary war into Rumania, as Dumouriez carried it into Holland? None the less, it is a hopeless statesman who sits down to contemplate the inevitable.

There are two mutually dependent policies to follow. One of them is that policy of active helpfulness to Russia, which President Wilson indicated in that last great message which has made him more than ever the leader and inspirer of all who dare to hope for the world. If help is given without conditions and without patronage, it may break down in some degree the fatalistic Bolshevik belief that socialist Russia, unless she can first revolutionize Europe, is doomed to be the victim of Europe. But help is not enough, and help may be rebuffed. Unless the Bolsheviki see the socialist parties of Europe strong enough, and united enough, to stop any future movement to crush the Russian revolution, they will not feel secure, and they will not desist from their aggressive policy. So long as they think that the destinies of Europe are in the uncontrolled hands of liberal-conservative statesmen who are capable of uniting against them, they will continue to make unrest and will thwart any stable international organization. Talk to them of a League of Nations (which means for them a league of hostile governments) and they will ask, why was it that the delegates of the masses were forbidden to meet at Stockholm? It may be impossible to reconcile the liberal ideal of peace with this new portent of a revolutionary peace. The delays, the insincerities, the contradictory aims have unleashed forces which may now be beyond control. There is one expedient which even now it may not be too late to apply. Let all the socialist parties meet in international conference; let them dissipate the detestable Machiavellian idea that the west should buy safety by throwing Russia to the Junker wolves; let them work out the bases of a democratic peace of reconciliation; let them offer it to Russia as a gift which comes from those whom she can trust.

H. N. BRAILSFORD.

London.

## God, The Invisible King

This is the Age of Water. Toll sad bells,  
The fiery faiths are dead without regret.  
Jesus and Pan are slain by H. G. Wells;  
Well-thought-out Faith is here (\$1.50 net).  
Forget the fierce, the epic, bitter-sweet  
Things that we loved though they were false or true;  
Shatter the white gods with the winged feet,  
Contemn those who in Hebron wore the rue.  
Henceforth by casuistry must we live,  
(Each system dying with each casuist)  
Our instincts to the Social Thinkers give,  
Our passions to the psycho-analyst.  
By "earnest-minded men" shall we be led,  
Who show elaborately The Host is bread!

DAVID GORDON.

## Petrograd

A CITY reared with curses and resting its foundations upon the bones of its nameless builders. A stately giant sunk knee-deep in the mire of a Finnish fen. The magnificent and fruitful whim of the most brutal of rulers, who nearly rode the Russian horse to death. A cross between a muddy dock-yard and an unassuming parody on Potsdam. A mongrel seaport promoted to the rank of a world capital.

Granite, stern and sumptuous. Cast-iron. Ever veiled, joyless skies. Spacious, gloomy vistas. Austere architectural forms, broken by airy spires and flame-like church domes. An air of snobbishness and cold reserve. Sickly gardens. Bridges. Red palaces haunted by time-scented memories of much gaiety and many crimes. Morose governmental offices, the hatching-place of the Byzantine-Pomeranian statehood whose strait-jacket Russia wore two hundred years.

A challenge to Russia and yet profoundly Russian: twin-souled, twin-tongued. The home of bureaucrats and regicides, of uniformed minds and souls naked of all inner restraint. The city on whose pavements the blood of the firstlings of Russian freedom, the Decembrists, is mixed with the blood of an Emperor of all the Russias. The brain of Russia, divided by the noiseless waves of the Neva into two hemispheres. The worshipper of clarity and reason. The city of Pushkin's serene muse. But also the City Phantasmal, the city of Dostoevsky. Its yellow mists and its white nights, sated with mystic light, are heavy with apocalyptic visionings.

The midwife and the grave-digger of a great and tragic revolution. The City of Revolt. The Quartier St. Antoine of Slavdom, feeding on resolutions and led by Don Quixotes, energumens, and demagogues. The storm centre of immemorial animosities and new loyalties. The cradle of an abortive gospel of active proletarianism and universalism, denying Old Russia and yet voicing some of its innermost yearnings and hopes. The work-shop of a new dogmatism. A confused symphony in which the outcries of the triumphant Caliban mingle with hosannas never heard before and the death-rattle of a nation. Half Babylon, half Nazareth.

Darkness is swooping down on the heart of the great city. The hour draws near. The enemy is at the gates. If fall he must, the blinded giant will not be the only one to die. The embers from his funeral pile will set the conqueror's dwellings on fire and kindle the standing corn of his fields.

ABRAHAM YARMOLINSKY.

## The Legal Status of War

SUPPOSE the world at peace. Abruptly Germany declares war upon France and invades her territories without even disguising the intention of annexation or even of reducing her neighbor to vassalage. What happens legally? What happens, that is as far as international law is concerned? Or, if this question seems to be framed on the basis of the present hatred of Germany, ask a similar question about an unjustified attack by the United States upon Mexico or Canada. The resulting legal situation is in no uncertainty. Immediately the war comes under the sanction of international law. It is henceforth a "legal war." Other nations are as much bound to neutrality and the observance of the rules laid down by international law as if the war were a benign enterprise.

Most discussions concerning war ignore this primary fact, namely, that the civilized world puts all wars, as soon as they are initiated, upon the same plane of legality, without any regard to their origin and objectives. The present legal situation is summed up in the definition given by Charles Sumner:

War is a contest between nations under the *sanction of international law* for the establishment of justice between them.

It is this fact which ties the hands of those who desire a permanent improvement in international relations. If it is lawful to do a thing, why make such a cry about its being done? If war is legal, why object to militarism, which is a necessary effect of the legality of war rather than, as is popularly assumed, the cause of war? If war is legitimate it inevitably follows that those extensive and chronic preparations for war which constitute militarism are as practically sensible as they are legally justified. As long as international law continues to legalize war all nations are moral accessories before the fact to "collective murder." Conversely, outlaw war and militarism is out of a job.

It may be contended that although these statements have applied in the past they will not hold good if the League to Enforce Peace comes into existence. But however radical the plan for the formation of such a League may have seemed before the war, a fundamental defect is now obvious. It does not propose to declare war illegal; it proposes simply to refine those regulations under which war is legal: To increase the preliminary ceremonies which must be gone through in order that the benediction of legality may descend upon a war. So far so good. But as long as nations are educated to think of war as a legalized institution the distinction made by the League between