

according, to their expectations depends on the question whether the new burden, which is quite enough to be felt, discourages traffic in any marked degree. If it does the roads will soon appear again before the Commission with demands for more. That is simpler than attacking the problem of the inefficiency of competitive operation.

They Hit the Trail

THERE is being played today in Europe a great and intricate game of diplomatic chess. The area of operations is enormous. On a map of the world it is bounded approximately by the meridian of Greenwich, the International line, the Equator and the Arctic circle. The chief players are the cabinets at London, Paris, Rome, Berlin, Moscow, and Tokio. The great stakes are the economic future of Germany, the political affiliations of Central Europe and the Russian borderlands, the extension of empire in what was Turkey, Transcaucasus, and Persia, the projection of empire from the Cape to Cairo and from Cairo to Calcutta, and the penetration of Middle Asia, of Eastern Siberia, of China. The central position and what strategists call the minor lines are held by Russia. It is impossible to reach a settlement without the consent of Russia. All agreements reached without her consent are temporary. Ever since the collapse of militarism in Central Europe this has been the master key to world politics.

In one sense agreement with Russia is not difficult. Soviet Russia differs from imperial Russia in that it is not inspired by the orthodox motives of imperialism. Its system of property relations is such that no class in Russia at present has political influence enough to secure government backing for the exploitation of a backward people. The natural resources of Russia so nearly approach self-sufficiency that there is not, as there is in Japan, for example, a strong popular motive to imperial expansion.

The difficulty in reaching an agreement with Russia is fundamentally of another kind. Soviet Russia is feared because of the Third International. There is some ground for this fear, of course, for an organization aiming at world-wide revolution is a much more poignant reality when the governing members of a great power belong to it, than if it is a collection of rebels and exiles. But there is a deeper fear than comes from the threats and boasts of the Third International. It is the fear of the influence of an example of a communist success. All sensible people know that the agitators of the Third International depend for their suc-

cess or their failure on how far labor in any particular country is convinced that the Russian experiment itself is a success. But success is a relative thing. And so really sensible people have argued from the first that Bolshevism would seem sufficiently successful to be worth imitating only if the existing order seemed hopeless and helpless. Plunge a population into utter misery, and any change will seem a change for the better. Raise a population to comfort, and it is immune to catastrophic revolution no matter how successful a violent change may have been in some other land. Revolutions are not imitated unless the causes of revolution are imitated. And finally, sensible people have known what all history teaches, that martyrdom obscures the faults of the martyr, that mystery is the mother of romance. The more Russia was attacked, the more Russia was lied about, the more inaccessible Russia became, the greater the glamor and the dream. The Russia of the western world has been largely a fiction, a horrible fiction to conservatives, a glorious fiction to revolutionists.

The people who have had influence with governments, the men who by and large have reported the news have lacked practical wisdom of history and of human nature. They have moreover been wildly misinformed. Consequently their policy has been a perfect failure in three vital respects. They tried to strike down by force of arms a government which was stronger than any army they could raise to fight it. They tried to paint that government as so terribly black, and have been caught in so many lies, that from believing nothing good of Russia there is a reaction towards believing nothing bad. And to cap the climax they have paralleled the intervention and the lie abroad with reaction at home.

If human beings were not so human, Lord Northcliffe and M. Pichon and Mr. Winston Churchill and Mr. Ochs and Mr. Colby would be standing up like men to confess their follies and ask forgiveness. "We meant well," they would say, "but we did not know how to go about it. We know that thousands of men have died, that children have perished, that disorder has been aggravated and peace delayed because we misjudged the facts and misled you in consequence. We confess that we are failures in the greatest test of our generation. You say that you are opposed to revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. We have fought revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat in the only way we knew how to fight them. We are duds. Show another way if there is one; you cannot do worse than we have done. See whether you can do better."

That would be a challenge worth accepting. The first step would be simple, if the powers that rule were in a humble state of mind. It would consist in the order to make a complete peace with Russia. This would involve demobilization of the Red Armies and the White Armies, the opening of trade, the abolition of censorship, and freedom of travel. It would be followed by the promotion to other occupations of all diplomats, all reporters, and all editors who are so deeply committed to the policy which has failed that they could not humanly support a new policy.

This would clear the ground for constructive action. But no constructive action would be possible until public opinion has been cleansed of fictions and bogies by therapeutic contact with honest and relevant fact. Therefore it would be necessary to retell the main history of the Revolution. So long as that history is a fable it will fester in the minds of men, and distort all their judgments. The mind of the western world, conservative and liberal, is neurotic about Russia, and needs a kind of psychoanalysis before it will be ready to deal with the new problems of Russia. Psychoanalysis for this purpose means a popular knowledge of the difference between what has been believed and what should have been believed. It does not involve a detailed knowledge of the great intrigue, nor an intimate acquaintance with soviet laws or communist theory, but it does mean a hard sense of how and why the bamboozlement took place, and of just how it failed, and of just how it violated the American tradition in its finest form.

Against that background the questioning of Russia can begin. We assume diplomats and reporters who have been thoroughly debamboozled. We assume men who have read history to some purpose, who have an eye for what counts, who are tolerably immune to social pressure, who can discriminate between the superficial boasts and threats and ideologues of politics and the forces which determine its larger ends. For it is only these that matter to Americans. We are far away from Russia, and are not concerned in the daily drama. The details must elude us, and our policy like our action touches only the enduring elements of the Russian problem.

For this reason the men who ought to go to Russia as the eyes and ears of the American people should preserve a real detachment from the gossip of capitols. For them an "understanding of the Russian situation" means investigation of the great controlling influence. Their instructions would read something like this:

You will find out what commodities are most needed in various parts of Russia.

You will find out what surpluses there are in various parts of Russia.

You will report the policy of Russia in respect to her undeveloped natural resources.

You will report how far and in what way the external trade and the larger internal trade of Russia, are centrally controlled from Moscow, how far there is economic life independent of the government, how far localities are autonomous.

You will report, not by guesswork, but by investigation in the field, how far centralization is producing political opposition, and you will note evidence showing a tendency towards the centralization of power or the opposite.

You will report the actual working out of land policy in different sections, and you will fix attention not on what ten peasants say, but on the obstruction or the assistance of the larger political organs to the prosperity of the peasants. A weekend outside of Moscow will not give you this information. Probably the facts are different in different parts of Russia. You will remember that Russia is larger than the United States.

You will report wages, hours and conditions in industry, and its productivity. You will watch the character of labor discipline and of workers' control, and you will follow carefully the attitude of labor unions.

You will report price levels, in cities and villages, for essentials.

You will remember that the traditions and habits of politicians have not been suspended in Russia. You will, therefore, not take the speeches of politicians at their face value. The habit of talking big and doing little is not confined to Washington, D. C.

You will remember that the social condition of a people in the end determines its politics. You will remember that Russia is vast and comparatively inert, and that theory does not control all life. Above all you will remember that the place you are going to is Russia, not "Bolshevism." You are to look at Russia, not the Russia of the emigrè, not the "true Russia" of Mr. Sack, not Romantic Russia, not Holy Russia, but Russian villages and Russian farms and Russian railroads and Russian factories.

You will, of course, report important government decrees and the decisions of the Third International. If these reports occupy ten per cent of your attention that will be enough. For nothing that you can report about them is intelligible until you have informed your-

self and us about the main conditions of daily life.

Finally, you are to pretend that you are reporting Russia to an adult people that does not need to be humored or protected. Therefore, you will not have to prove every day that you are not a Bolshevik. That will be taken for granted.

"Coxsure"

NOT so very many years ago, when the rural free delivery system was still young, travelers through the country districts used to consider curiously the mail-boxes which receptive farmers had set up before their doors. In those days the boxes were new, and the words were still fresh and legible which informed the passer-by that the design of the box he was inspecting, in derision or dismay, had been "approved by the Postmaster General." What, the traveller often wondered querulously, as he studied these useful and graceless receptacles, what upon earth could those mail-boxes have looked like which the Postmaster General had failed to approve?

A similar wonder troubled the bosoms of such students of style as were persevering and long-suffering enough to read Senator Harding's speech of acceptance all the way through. Out of his first draft he had cut, so the newspapers reported, some three thousand five hundred words. What could they have been like, those discarded sentences, if their unexacting author deemed them unworthy to associate with the cryptic frishfrash he elected to retain? The condemned words must indeed have been blood-curdling offenders against clearness or sense or grammar, since the most clement of blue-pencil could not bring itself to spare them.

Mr. George White, the new Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, is another provoker of the same brand of wonder. We quote from a Washington dispatch to the New York Times: "'Peace, progress and prosperity' will be the campaign slogan, Mr. White announced, while 'Coxsure' would appear as a cry in the campaign." Mr. White's first instalment of self-revelation is unfortunate. We had thought him, those of us who believe what we see in the papers, a man tempered and instructed by long exposure to Ohio politics, a man with a hard head. And now we are suddenly confronted, no warning being given and no danger signal displayed, with this cry of the moron, this near-beer pun, this insipid "Coxsure"! Did Mr. White deliberately choose it, after sitting up late and studying all the suggestions submitted? If so, the rejected suggestions ought to be publish-

ed, in order that those who think ill of human ability may have the satisfaction of thinking worse of it than ever. Or did Mr. White, impetuous and unassisted, coin this "Coxsure" out of his own brains? Perhaps the witticism had just occurred to him, and he couldn't resist the temptation to give it to the press? May be. He may think up something not so bad if you give him time. Perhaps his is *l'esprit d'escalier*, or cab-wit. If such be the case, Governor Cox had better lose not a moment in calling a cab for Mr. White, and having him driven to the top of the longest staircase in Ohio.

Time may conceivably do several things for Mr. George White. It may enable him to learn, by consulting any dictionary—e. g., the one we have just consulted—that his distinction between "cry" and "slogan" is unreal, since "slogan" means the gairm of the sluagh, the outcry of the host. Or herd, as the psychologists would say, or pack, or swarm. Time may even, barely conceivably, prove that Mr. White, when he invented or approved "Coxsure," knew his business after all. In some doubtful state, the electoral vote of which will decide the election, there may be a few thousand rather imbecile voters who would have voted for Mr. Harding if Mr. White's pun had not beguiled, entranced, captivated, seduced them, had not laid them under the spell of its fatuous beauty. What is the use of being dogmatic before the event? The prejudice against silly puns in politics may for aught we know be as baseless as the prejudice which once existed against puns in advertising, and which was attacked successfully, some twenty-five years ago, by the inventor of "Uneda Biscuit." Moron may once more call to moron as effectively as deep ever called unto deep.

A good campaign cry is uncommon. Unless we judge them by their results it is not easy when we turn back to the cries that sounded through old campaigns to distinguish the good from the bad.

For Tippecanoe and Tyler too—Tippecanoe and Tyler too;

And with them we'll beat little Van, Van,
Van is a used up man;

And with them we'll beat little Van.

In our ears it sounds fair to middling, yet our singing and marching ancestors were convinced that it helped them to elect the first Harrison. Few of us stand up and yell and smash our straw hats when we hear that Major McKinley was "the advance agent of prosperity." We merely repeat that if a good campaign cry is uncommon the ideal cry is almost non-existent. For to attain the ideal a cry must sound not only as if it were addressed to a crowd but also as if it had been born of a crowd. It must have a folk-sound.

And it must not appeal to our self-regarding