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THE rejection by the Soviet government of Lloyd George's proposal for a ten day truce decidedly increased the danger that world war, shot through with civil revolutions, might again be set loose. Those terms were, on their face, fair. Yet they said nothing about General Wrangel and his army in the Crimea, built up under Allied auspices, armed and munitioned by the Allies, and still regarded by the interventionists as a new hope. That army was regarded by the Allies as the right wing of the Polish army until the cavalry of Budenny eliminated all chance of a junction. The Soviet government makes the withdrawal of Wrangel's army a condition of removing their lines beyond the boundary drawn by the Supreme Council in 1918. It professes its willingness to make peace with Poland, granting to the Poles the territories to which they have an ethnographical claim. But they insist on following Allied precedent in requiring their enemies to make themselves helpless before fighting shall cease.

The Week

DELAY in settling the armistice conditions between Russia and Poland is so grave a danger that nobody wants to take the responsibility for it. Nobody is really responsible for it, according to a special dispatch from London to the World, which asserts that it is now officially admitted that "the breakdown of the first Russo-Polish conference was not due to bad faith on either side, but was the result of an unfortunate misunderstanding, the Poles at that time thinking they had not the permission of the Allies to discuss peace." Accordingly the Poles could only offer conditions that no warring power with victory within its grasp could consider. All the agonies of the drive toward Warsaw had to be endured by the unfortunate Polish population because of the ambiguities of Allied policy and the predisposition of the Polish government to interpret them in such a way as to gain time for a miracle to happen.

NO doubt Soviet insistence upon the rights of victors would promptly be followed by an Allied declaration of war, if the resources for war making were available. But it would be extremely difficult to find the two or three million men and the ten or twenty billion dollars of real money necessary to run down the Russian forces over the limitless plains of Eastern Europe. The French, with the fatuity of their exploded cordon sanitaire theory, are talking of drawing upon Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia and Rumania for men. Hungary is said to be eager for the service; Rumania will go if every other Allied country does; Czecho-Slovakia adheres to her native honesty and says she will fight only if her own territories are menaced. England has all she can do maintaining forces sufficient to control Ireland and to be ready against eventualities in the East. France needs all her men to watch Germany. But could not Germany be baptized as a lily white Ally and set to the task? Per-

haps; but after it was over, where would military preponderance on the continent lie?

AN exchange of letters between Lord Robert Cecil and Lord Curzon last May, reprinted by the *Bulletin of the League of Free Nations Association*, throws light upon the responsibility of British militarists for the present plight of Poland. In his first letter Lord Robert Cecil pointed out that for months Poland had been notoriously preparing to attack Russia, and so far as he could judge, the Soviet government had made repeated and genuine offers of peace which had been set aside on seemingly flimsy pretexts. "The result must be either a Polish success which will only lead to reprisals later on—or a Polish failure, which may probably produce the disruption of Poland, or its conquest by Russia." Lord Robert Cecil urged that an immediate meeting of the Council of the League be summoned to deal with the situation.

IN his reply Lord Curzon began with avowing ignorance of any notorious preparation by the Poles for an attack on Russia and asserted his belief that the Poles had sincerely sought peace with Russia. But "in any case this episode does not constitute an outbreak of war: it is merely a phase of a war which has been going on for some time and has not yet terminated." Hence the affair was outside of the scope of the League. Moreover, the British government had left it to the Poles to choose peace or war on their own responsibility. The Poles had chosen war: to interfere with their desire "would certainly be regarded as intervention in favor of the Bolsheviks and against our Allies." There you have the perfect militarist mind rattling around in a nutshell. Professed ignorance of what all the world knows; sophistic legalism; hypocritical impartiality; blind over-confidence in the ability of your own friends to win their will by force.

LORD ROBERT CECIL then offered the evidence on which he had based his statement that the Poles had been making preparations for an ambitious military adventure. We can not summarize it here, but it was as conclusive as the later course of events. With a foresight that proves his capacity for statecraft, he asks, "Is it possible that to intervene now would be regarded by Poland as an unfriendly act, though events may show that intervention would be for her the truest kindness?" In any event, further fighting in that quarter could only be regarded as a disaster. If the League

could do nothing in the circumstances, its critics could not unreasonably argue that its usefulness in the future was not likely to be great. Lord Curzon seized upon a statement that the letters would be given to the press as an excuse for breaking off the correspondence. The League of Nations did nothing. Poland retained the inestimable privilege of a free hand—with which to cut her own throat.

ADMINISTRATION of backward peoples under the mandate principle, with the interests of the peoples and of civilization the sole objects of the mandatories' policies, was a magnificent idea. Followed out in good faith it would have offered the best hope that the peace of the world should not again be destroyed by competitive imperialism. But apparently none of the powers that formally accepted the idea had the least intention of following it out in good faith. Whether in Africa or in the Indian Ocean or in Asia Minor the "mandate" has from the beginning been made into an equivalent for "protectorate" in its time a hypocritical euphemism for "possession." What new, highly moral and disinterested term will next be prostituted to the sanctification of aggression and greed?

TOGOLAND and New Guinea and Yap may be content with the mandate scheme. They have never asserted the right to wishes that ought to be respected. That is not true of the Turkish territories now claimed by the Allies. The Mesopotamians do not want British rule, nor the Syrians, French. But the British and French proceed as blithely as their military resources permit to subjugate the populations entrusted to their guardianship. General Gouraud kicked our late ally the Emir Feisal out of Damascus without the least concern over the wishes of the Arabs. Neither did they exhibit the least care for the interests of even their friends the Armenians when they concluded an armistice with the Turks that did not cover the Armenians who had fought by their side. Recently it appears that the French have successfully cut their way out of Adana, again leaving their Armenian allies to shift for themselves. The French will, perhaps, be able to fight again another day, but the Armenians will not.

FULL legal authority to do what they will with the Irish has been conferred upon the British government by a Parliamentary vote of 208 to 18—more than half of the membership being absent or abstaining from voting. The Defense of the Realm act may be applied to all of Ireland or to such parts as the government chooses, and under

it persons accused of committing crimes, either before or after the enactment of this law, may be tried by court martial and if found guilty shall be punishable with the punishment prescribed by statute or common law. When the charge is capital the court martial shall include as a member a person certified to by the Lord-Lieutenant as of legal knowledge and experience; when nothing more is at stake than a man's liberty apparently nobody thus qualified need be at hand. Convicts under the act may be incarcerated in any jail in the United Kingdom. The act also enables the government to punish local authorities remiss in their duties by the retention of sums payable to them from local taxation or from any Parliamentary grant or government fund.

COERCION is the logical consequence of the failure of the Lloyd George government to find a working basis for relations with Ireland. It is, indeed, the logical consequence of the character of the Lloyd George government itself. Possibly a labor government could reconcile the conflicting claims of Imperial security and of Irish nationalism. A government like the present, resting upon a reactionary and unrepresentative Parliament, simply can not win back the confidence of the Irish people. It has to make a show of restoring order in a country in which the constituted machinery for enforcing the law has generally broken down. But its dispositions rest on nothing but naked force, and force is no final solution of a political problem. The Romans, in their government of a similar race, the British, learned from experience, as Tacitus puts it, *parum profici armis, si injuriæ sequerentur*. Arms accomplish nothing if followed by insult and injury. No progress whatever is made toward the solution of the problem of governing Ireland when no progress is made toward winning the consent of the Irish. And the Coercion act is a measure calculated to remove Irish consent as far as possible from realization.

INSIGHT into the incidence of taxation is not one of Cox's strong points. He has swallowed whole the argument of the excess profiteers that the only reason why they take all the profits they can get is the necessity of paying out a part of those profits in taxation. He suggests as a substitute for the excess profits tax "a small tax, probably one to one and a half per cent, on the total business of every going concern." Now, that is a tax that will actually have to be shifted. The struggling business concern, making profits of one per cent net on the turnover and eight per cent on

its capital can forget about the excess profits tax. It would have to increase its profits one hundred to one hundred and fifty per cent, under Cox's plan, if it is to keep for itself the minimum of survival. The typical business concern making perhaps two to three per cent on turnover and twenty per cent or less on capital pays a maximum of one and one fifth per cent on its capital under the excess profits tax. It would pay between seven and ten per cent on Cox's minimum figure. The whole volume of business conducted on the plan of small profits and quick returns would be penalized in order that the business conducted on the plan of big profits and slow returns might prosper. Cox could profitably do some thinking about the elements of the taxation problem before he commits himself too deeply.

WHATEVER we may think of Cox's taxation plans, Harding's are worse, to judge from the outgivings of Representative Slep "fresh from a conference with the candidate." An extra session will be called to revise and possibly entirely repeal the excess profits tax; to increase the tariff schedules "and thereby not only decrease the tax burden now falling on this country by about two hundred millions (the foreigner will pay the tax!) but protect industries and American labor, which needs protection from low paid foreign competition." (His own words, no doubt.) There will also be a considerable reduction in the income tax schedules. That two hundred million to be extracted from the foreigner and low paid foreign competition will not go far toward stopping the hole in the revenues made by the abolition of the excess profits tax and any reduction in the income tax. Shall we borrow the money to finance our government through the next four years?

ONE of the clearest evidences of the strength and stability of the present Mexican government is the progress it is making toward reducing the army. More than 5,000 officers and men retired from the service in the first weeks of July, according to *El Herald*. It was Carranza's failure to reduce the army that kept his government from ever attaining to complete solvency. He did not keep the army undiminished out of love for militarism but out of a fear of disturbances if many men inured to arms and weaned of the habit of work were returned to civil life. In countries full of the spirit of factional strife only a strong government can afford to cut down army appointments. Apparently the present government is strong enough to undertake it.

How Will You Vote?

HARDLY a man is now alive who, contemplating his duties on election day, does not feel as Moody did when he strayed into the Menagerie.

"Upward along the aeons of old war

They sought him . . .

Man they desired, but mind you, Perfect Man,

The radiant and the loving, yet to be!

I hardly wonder, when they came to scan

The upshot of their strenuosity,

They gazed with mixed emotions upon *me*."

For the upshot of our strenuosity, the cynic might say, is perfect freedom to choose between six Penroses and half a dozen Murphys. In this generation certainly the voter has never had to make so poor a choice. Not for twenty years has the independent voter looked toward election with less conviction than he does today. He feels that he can accomplish nothing with his vote. If he cares for the League, he looks at Governor Cox's speech and knows instinctively that the issue is unreal to the candidate, and that nowhere in the vicinity of the Governor of Ohio is there the will or the understanding to make participation effective. If he is against the League, he looks at Harding and knows that the opposition is partisan and jingo and profoundly insincere. And so, many opponents of the League are planning to vote Democratic, and just as many sincere friends are planning to vote Republican. Mr. Taft who agrees with the President will vote against the President, and Mr. Reed who is wholly Republican remains wholly Democratic. This is government by paradox, not government by the people. The will of the nation is at sixes and sevens, and there is no will.

Much has been said lately about returning to fundamentals. It is worth trying because the unhappy fact is that the American system is not working today. For almost two years it has been hopelessly deadlocked. A bureaucracy continues to function, but the government of legislature and executive has been simply incapable of deciding anything. The American government has been incapable of deciding on a policy towards Europe, towards Asia, towards Latin-America, towards taxation, labor, prices, the army, the broken-down administrative services, aliens. The one concrete decision was the railroads, and there is probably no student of railroads in this country who would regard the Esch-Cummins law as more than transitional. Now theoretically this indecision and confusion should be cleared up by a fresh appeal to the voters. Theoretically the paralysis of government came because of the fact that the Administration outlived its mandate and the Congress never had

a mandate for dealing with the problems of peace. But both conventions continued the state of paralysis. In both party conventions the professionals exploited weariness and indecision to block the appearance of a fresh impulse and a fresh leadership. Both conventions, both platforms, and both candidates are like a banquet hall the next morning when the cigarette stubs have not been removed and the tables not cleared and the windows not opened, but the guests have gone and are asleep.

In every person's calculations about what he or she will do next November there enter a number of ideas. The regulars, of course, vote regular. They are of two classes. The politicians would no more consider irregularity than they would consider giving all they have to the poor. They have an intelligent, if meager reason, for their use of the vote. They exist, however, simply because there are millions of people who have political habits, but no political conscience. They make a cross under the party label, and that ends their suffering. They are the solid stuff out of which parties are built, and they live to refute the schoolbook theory that an election in a twentieth century republic consists in a decision by free men. For clearly a man who always votes one way does not really vote at all. He is just electoral fodder.

The only free men are those who reserve their freedom. If there were no people who had to be convinced, that is if there were no independents, the Republicans would stay in power until the birth-rate in Democratic families carried the day. Then the Republicans would have to offer bonuses for large families. The independent alone saves Democracy from such a reduction to absurdity.

But how independent is a person who may be willing to switch back and forth between two parties? Not very independent, surely, because, the margin of freedom which he takes is so small as practically to pocket him. The independent voter, let us say, becomes disgusted with the party in power. The opposition party, of course, encourages his disgust. By the time of the convention he has committed himself over and over again against the administration. "Turn out the Democrats," he has cried. "Good," says Mr. Penrose, "that is what I think. You will therefore vote to turn in me. And since there is no way you can turn them out and not turn us in, I don't feel under great obligation to consider your wishes. If you vote against them, you have to vote for us."

Being willing to rattle back and forth between two parties does not seem to produce much independence. How in fact does it differ from pure partisanship? It differs a little, of course, because it forces the parties to bid a little against each other. But it does not effect them much. The in-