

# The Lloyd George Policy in Russia

AS we look at it in England, Mr. Lloyd George's Russian policy is at last on the high road to success. That policy, to put it briefly, is the complete cessation of the war in and with Russia and the resumption of normal human relations, beginning with those of trade. It is quite true that sometimes during the past year this policy has been as hard to discover in the actions of the British government as the waters of a river that disappear into desert-sands. It is quite true also that Mr. Lloyd George still declares stoutly and even violently that he would not for a moment think of recognizing the Bolshevik government. But we all understand how little this really means. It is only one more, and perhaps the last, concession to the groups which actively support the idea of some sort of a war, whether it be waged by the Allies or the White Russians or the Border States, against the Bolsheviks. It is the last sop to the Churchills and Pichons and Sazonoffs, whose fortunes, alike on the battlefields of Russia and in British public opinion, have sunk almost to extinction.

When the Supreme Council in Paris gave their consent to the resumption of trading relations with Russia through the cooperative societies, the game of the warlike groups was finally and irretrievably done. That is to say, of course, if the members of the Council really meant business. Equally, of course, some of them did not. They calculated that by declaring that the resumption of trade should involve no relations with the Bolshevik government they would spite the whole project. For, obviously, trading with the cooperators can only be carried on with the sanction and assistance of the Moscow government; Lenin, indeed, is reported recently to have described the cooperative societies as "institutions" of the Soviet government.

At the same time the action of the states on Russia's western frontier is both promoted by Mr. George's policy and is itself playing into his hands. Esthonia has made a definite peace with Moscow on favorable terms. The Letts have made an armistice from which a peace will speedily follow. The Lithuanians are doing the same. The Poles, who constitute the citadel of French hopes, are slowly but steadily treading the same road. According to the telegrams the Bolsheviks are offering them "every conceivable bribe" to make peace, and as the offers are backed by growing military force it is not unnatural that the Poles should be drawing up, as they are doing, a set of peace terms of their own. There is no reason to doubt that

Mr. George has told the Poles quite firmly that England will not send military forces to assist them and that therefore they would be well advised to take what the diplomatists call "appropriate action."

M. Clemenceau's "barbed wire ring" has broken down before it was set up. Warsaw telegrams, probably of French origin, announce from time to time that a military mission headed by Marshal Foch is going to Poland to command the Polish armies. But time passes and the mission does not go and the question remains whether, even if it did, the French government would or could send any substantial force to make another war in Poland. We are told continually that the Allies will assist Poland if the Bolsheviks attack her, but the Bolsheviks do not attack and do not mean to attack if they can get peace by any other method. Krassin, one of their negotiators at the Dorpat Conference, said so quite plainly. "We Bolsheviks," he announced, "have now such forces available that we could clear the western front as we have cleared the eastern and the southern, but we desire peace and peaceful relations and are willing to give good terms to obtain them." The Poles are well aware of this, and if they can pluck up courage to resist French pressure, they are likely before long to follow the example of Esthonia. Rumania has made no overt movement, but there is reason to believe that she, too, has quietly been putting out feelers towards the Bolsheviks.

Public opinion in England is now much more disposed towards peace in Russia and it is this that enables Mr. George to speak with a new firmness. His own opinion has not varied for the last fifteen months. In the discussions about Prinkipo he affirmed, what he repeated only the other day in the House of Commons, that Bolshevism cannot be put down by force. He was unquestionably in general agreement with the scheme of the Bullitt memorandum and it will be surprising if he is not some day found claiming credit for the greater part of the Bullitt enterprise. He was a vigorous supporter of the Nansen plan for feeding Russia. Months ago he told Mr. Churchill that the feeding of the White Russians with war supplies must be brought to an end. In his heart he probably at no time believed in intervention.

Why then, it may be said, did he not put his foot down? The answer is that that is not Mr. George's temperament. He is tenacious, scheming and persistent, often yielding ground, often pur-

suing devious and roundabout courses but seldom giving up the aim which he has at the back of his mind. When it was known that he was contemplating action on the lines of the Bullitt memorandum a great outcry arose in the Paris and London press and Mr. George ostensibly gave way. Some months ago he suggested that during the winter a peace meeting might take place in Russia. Another outcry, and it was explained on his behalf that he was not thinking of any action by the Allies but only of a meeting between the White and the Red Russians. Now comes the trading project, and yet another outcry in the press. To allay the opposition he explains that there will be trading but no recognition of the only people who can make the trading possible. It is really all make-believe and fudge. (The best parallel, perhaps, to Mr. George's treatment of the Russian problem is the line which he adopted during the later stages of the war towards Sir William Robertson, then Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Mr. George was in disagreement with Sir William Robertson long before Sir William resigned his post and there are those who believe, with some reason, that Mr. George had the intention but not the courage to secure his resignation for a considerable time before the gradual development of the machinery of the Versailles Military Council brought about the desired end.)

Presently, when the border states are again at peace with Russia, the British government will be found recognizing the Bolsheviks. There is, in fact, too much at stake politically and commercially for any other course. Is it likely that with Russia and her resources thrown open along the whole of the western frontier and waiting for an outlet through the Baltic and Black Seas, England will stand aloof and leave the work of commercial development to Germany and her trade rivals? Is it to be supposed that the country which ever since the armistice has taken the closest interest in the Baltic ports and the Black Sea and the Caspian, in the oil resources of Baku and Batoum, will ignore Soviet Russia for the sake of a formality and sit down calmly to watch the goods, both commercial and political, delivered into other hands? There is nothing in the world less likely.

The growing change in public opinion has been made much more easy and rapid by the stream of evidence which has recently poured into this country from the Kolchak and Denikin fronts. There has been a most striking similarity between the evidence from both quarters. The admissions made in captured documents which were sent last year from Denikin's headquarters to those of Kolchak are paralleled even in small detail by the

messages which the Times correspondent in Siberia has been sending about the conditions in and behind Kolchak's army. On every side we read of inefficient, intriguing and corrupt commanders, of the sale of supplies furnished by the Allies, of chaotic and incompetent administration in the rear and—what sounds worst of all to those who have been taught to believe in the democratic character of the White regime—the persistence of the old, oppressive Tsarist characteristics among the supporters and administrators of the White generals. Of the hundred million pounds worth of supplies which have gone from England to Kolchak and Denikin the greater part has fallen into the hands of the Bolsheviks. The final touch came only a few days ago when we were informed that the Russian Kolchak officers training at Vladivostok had revolted and gone over to the Revolutionaries and that, as they marched through the town, they looked spick-and-span in their British uniforms and took with them a battery of British field guns from which they had not troubled even to remove the Union Jack. There has never been any enthusiasm here for the White Russian cause since it became clear that it had no deep root in native Russian soil, but even had there been enthusiasm it could not long survive a succession of such episodes as these.

Besides, an impartial observer must come to the conclusion that it suits British world policy now to make peace with Russia. For if one thing is certain, it is that the triumph of the Whites would have meant the revival of an Imperialist Russia such as was for many years the bugbear of British foreign policy in the East. One cannot but admire the White Russians for the stubborn sincerity with which they have held fast to the idea of a great and undivided Russia. One of the many puzzles of British policy has been to understand how the India Office came to assent to a policy which, had it succeeded, would have revived an ambitious and threatening Russia on the borders of Persia and of Afghanistan. If we had to seek for the ultimate root of the recent British convention with Persia, we should probably find it in the fears of the Foreign and India Offices that the White Russians would succeed in overthrowing the Bolsheviks and, thereafter, in reestablishing an Imperialist Russia which would resume its southward pressure into Persia and the hinterlands of India. It was one of Mr. Lloyd George's recent indiscretions that he blurted out bluntly but quite truly in the House of Commons that a revived Imperialist Russia was by no means well calculated to serve British interests. We may assume with certainty that among the influences in his government which supported

him against Mr. Churchill were men of a cautious and far-seeing mind who took precisely this view.

Among the White Russians there are those who believe that some of the Allies, in giving a half-hearted support to Denikin and Kolchak, were actuated by a desire not to reestablish the White Russians in power but merely to keep the war in Russia going so as to render Russia weak, divided and helpless. In truth, that is the actual result of the policy which has been followed. But now a new portent has arisen. The Whites, if not yet entirely removed from the map, are no longer in any sense a potential menace to the British Empire in the East. On the other hand, the Bolshevik armies, strengthened by foreign intervention and well led by officers of the old regime, are for the first time becoming really formidable as a military weapon. There is a slight danger, strange as it may seem, of the Bolsheviks developing a revolutionary army of an Imperialist kind. The danger may not be great, but it is a possibility and coupled with it is the chance that Bolshevik propaganda, working with the Moslems and Young Turks, will stimulate the ferment, already sufficiently grave, in the Moslem portions of the British Empire. It is time, therefore, to make peace; and peace, if it be made, will leave Russia in many material respects at her very weakest. It will not be surprising if the Russians say, as some of them are already saying, that the desperate state in which Russia emerges from the prolonged civil and foreign war is the latest proof of the cold and cynical policy of the Allies. The Russians would be wrong, for Allied policy has been more the product of vacillation and divided counsel than of far-seeing plans, but there is little question about its result.

W. P. CROZIER.

## I Come Singing

I come singing the keen sweet smell of grass  
Cut after rain,  
And the cool ripple of drops that pass  
Over the grain,  
And the drenched light drifting across the plain.

I come chanting the mad bloom of the fall.  
And the swallows  
Rallying in clans to the rapid call  
From the hollows,  
And the wet west wind swooping down on the swallows.

I come shrilling the sharp white of December,  
The night like quick steel  
Swung by a gust in its plunge through the pallid ember  
Of dusk, and the heel  
Of the fierce green dark grinding the stars like steel.

JACOB AUSLANDER.

## Next To Reading Matter

I, FOR one, have had enough of the bards who minnesing their ballads, songs, and snatches into the air; letting them, if they are heavy enough, fall to earth, they know not where; and, which is worse, I not knowing where either. Give me, say I—bowing to none in my carmine, 212 per cent Americanism—Poetry that Gets Somewhere, poetry that gets from point to point directly, and poetry that is supposed to rhyme.

In practically those words—for in spite of Mr. James Joyce, Miss Dorothy Richardson, and Miss May Sinclair, I think in coherent, decent, well-balanced sentences—I breathed my simple orison. And, as if in answer, there came America's Great Northwest, by Beatrice B. Bernheim (National Book Publishers, 200 Fifth Avenue, New York).

Mrs. Bernheim has gone far since her Impressions of three or four years ago. Poetically, I mean. Geographically she has gone no mean distance either, having traveled for her material from coast to coast and vice versa. She has left no boulder, no peak, no range unturned; tower'd cities and mirroring lakes are, as you might say, clay to her lyre.

Take the opening poem, St. Paul-Minneapolis:

Twin brother and sister—both well grown and fair  
Connected by a soft strip of sand.  
St. Paul gives his bridal wreaths for sister to wear,  
She flings him soft waters to make fertile the land.

Their parks they share commonly; also their homes  
Many large public buildings, with wonderful domes.  
Capitol, Library, Ft. Smedley, Cathedral,  
Take hold of our hearts—for a home 'tis ideal.

There, I insist, is a happy marriage of fact and imagery. Nowhere—and I have been reading poetry thirty years, man and boy—do I recall a better lyric about either St. Paul or Minneapolis, let alone St. Paul and Minneapolis. And Minnehaha Falls:

Minnehaha (laughing water)  
Falling gracefully and swift,  
Pure white tresses, soft and wavy.  
Mother's wringlets to be kissed.

Like her face so gentle ever,  
Never changing with the years  
Always calm, serene, and lovely.  
Smiling sweetly through her tears.

Reminiscent perhaps of Wordsworth, especially of his noble couplet,

I measured it from side to side,  
It was three feet long and four feet wide,

yet with a rugged—or as the reviewers are saying