

CURRENT MAGAZINES

The Pact of Security:—The Right Hon. H. A. L. Fisher in the *Contemporary*.

Russia, Without Prejudice:—Sir Martin Conway in the *Atlantic*.

Turkish Facts and Fantasies:—"E" in *Foreign Affairs*.

Seven Months of Conservative Policy:—"Curio" in the *Fortnightly*.

THE withdrawal of Mr. Fisher from politics to the Wardenship of New College, Oxford, has fortunately not meant any slackening of his interest in international affairs, and his article on "The Pact of Security" is written in the style of no doctrinaire theorist, but of one who has himself had a hand in high administration.

On the whole, he strongly favours the Pact, while doubting whether it is really obtainable. Under the proposed arrangement, Germany would enter into the League of Nations, definitely consenting of her own free will to the loss of Alsace-Lorraine. This would mean a defeat for those pan-Germans who have been stirring so uneasily, and who seemed to have won a triumph so short a time ago in the election of von Hindenburg as President of the German republic. But Hindenburg has curiously disappointed the expectations of those who placed him where he is. He goes about in mufti, honours the republican flag, and clearly intends to undertake no machinations against the Constitution of Weimar. Mr. Fisher thinks that in the first flush of their apparent victory at the polls the German Nationalists might have been disposed to some concessions, but that since they have found out how little they had secured, there has been a certain hardening of their temper. And to enter the League of Nations is the last thing they desire for their country.

For the League offended them deeply by deciding against German claims in the matter of Silesia. They think of it as an instrument of French and Polish policies. And they see in Germany's adhesion to the League a final snapping of "the cord with Russia." Mr. Fisher has an interesting account of a play very popular in Berlin during the last few years, and entitled *Die Entlassung* ("The Dismissal"). It is a drama on the fall of Bismarck:

As the aged Prince is driven into exile, he warns his young and headstrong master that the abandonment of the Russian for the Austrian alliance will entail a war on two fronts. At that point the audience, convulsed with emotion, breaks into thunders of applause.

Though Russia has changed greatly since the time when its support was the basis of the Bismarckian success, yet "deep down in the hearts of the people is the feeling that the sun of Germany rises in the East."

So, though the Pact of Security was first broached by Dr. Luther, the German Chancellor, and though it has many attractive features for the Fatherland, it is encountering fierce German opposition. It would improve credit, and the Prussian financier would, of course, like to be able once again to borrow money at less than fifteen per cent. It promised to get the French out of the Ruhr and the British out of Cologne. But it involves also the establishment of a permanent local control body in the Rhineland. And it sacrifices, once and for all, the Teutonic aspirations to recover Alsace-Lorraine.

Moreover, the Pact provides for a defensive alliance of Great Britain with both France and Germany, pledging British support to either of these countries if aggressively invaded by the other. How is such an arrangement possible? To carry it out, military and naval "conversations" would be required between Great Britain on the one side and each of her possible allies on the other. How could the secrets of the War Office and the Admiralty be disclosed at the same time to each of two possible belligerents? There seems, at first sight, as Mr. Fisher says, "something grotesque and paradoxical in a Pact of Security signed by France, Germany and Great Britain."

Again, will the Pact with all its disagreeable commitments survive those attacks which are being directed upon it in the British press? Englishmen, proud of their insular independence, and very loath to be embroiled in continental wars, are quite likely to respond to that brisk artillery of leading articles now at work in some leading London papers. "Lord Beaverbrook and Lord Rothermere are wise in their generation." They discern in the Pact something that can be made sufficiently unpopular to wound, if not to kill, a government.

Why then, Mr. Fisher asks, was it received with so large a measure of parliamentary approval? For three reasons. In the first place, because it is felt that British isolation is no longer safe, that the "island home" is now more liable to attack than it has ever been for at least one hundred years, that the development of "the air arm" alone has introduced perils such as were unknown even twenty years ago. In the second place, some such scheme as the Pact looks like a natural outcome of the Covenant of the League of Nations to which Great Britain has set her seal. And in the

third place, since the failure of the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance and the subsequent "Protocol," this appears the best practicable guarantee of European appeasement that has been put forward. It has the merit of being less ambitious than either of its predecessors, for it severs the eastern and western problems, and involves no obligation in regard to such places as Poland, Roumania, Czecho-Slovakia, except such as were already adopted in the Covenant of the League. This new guarantee is limited to the eastern frontier of France and Belgium.

Is not Great Britain, then, ready to take some risk for European peace? If she is not, Mr. Fisher declares another continental war to be inevitable. The Pact would bring France and Germany together, and would procure the admission of Germany to membership in the League, with all that this implies,—including her "free acceptance of her new western frontier." It would surely be a great thing for the peace-loving French peasants, however disagreeable to the French chauvinists, to know that the ceaseless source of trouble in Alsace-Lorraine had been stilled by mutual consent. A defeat so decisive for both French imperialists and pan-Germans would be worth much sacrifice and much risk to secure. But can it be secured, in the present temper of mind? Mr. Fisher has his doubts.

SIR Martin Conway went to Russia a few months ago, at the invitation of the Soviet government, and for a single definite purpose. He was asked to examine and report upon the condition of works of art, to judge for himself whether at the rude hands of revolutionaries these had suffered in Russia as they suffered more than a century ago in France, whether it was really true that the crown jewels of the Romanoffs had been scattered and the treasures of old ecclesiastical foundations had been melted down for sale. But Sir Martin pledged himself to keep aloof from politics, making no enquiry into "the political situation," and even repelling any such "confidences" as might be thrust upon him. At the same time, he could not be expected to refrain from keeping his eyes open as he travelled, and drawing some inferences from what he actually saw of the state of the country.

He observed that in one important museum, the "Treasury of the Metropolitan" at Moscow, serious damage had been done by the mob. The Treasury had contained a great deal of valuable plate, jewelled icons, books in golden bindings, wonderful embroideries. Somebody had melted down the half of one golden book-

binding before the other half was rescued. There had been looting, which government troops in some cases had not been in time to stop. But there was one most important guarantee against the wide prevalence of such an orgy. Private ownership having been abolished, what was the use of seizing an object of value? The looter could no more keep this than could its original owner, for all such objects were confiscated and carried by officials to a common treasury.

Thus, with the exception of this single Moscow museum, no collection of works of art—so far as Sir Martin Conway could see—had been wantonly raided. There was no sign of violence upon the royal palaces or the houses of the aristocracy. Such majestic buildings had been converted into public museums, and even the Kremlin showed no trace of the bombardment it had suffered. Much of it was inaccessible to this visitor, as it was used for government offices and as a residence for officials.

But travelling was full of inconvenience. Tourist-agency offices could give no precise information about the hour or even the day when trains would run to Moscow. The Poles had told Sir Martin about the devastation he would find across the border, but he saw no real difference when he passed from the scenes of Polish to those of Russian agriculture. Those tales of abandoned farms, farm-buildings in disrepair, fields unploughed, turned out to be mythical. There was much lying, on all sides, and the English visitor soon made up his mind to believe nobody. But he was under the serious handicap of never having seen Russia before the war, so that he could make no comparisons with the old régime in its splendour.

The streets of Moscow presented some curious features. Sir Martin observed that everyone was dressed after the fashion of workpeople. It was clearly the desire of the government to "lower the standard of living, and depress all alike to the working-class level." Very noticeable, both in Moscow and in Lenigrad, was the absence of any kind of taste in the dress of the women:

I do not think I saw out of doors above half-a-dozen women who were nicely, though simply, dressed; in their case it was evident that they had been the architects of their own clothes, and were displaying their own taste.

Plainly there was no field here for the wares of the Parisian *modiste*. Tram cars were crowded, and there were a few—very few—automobiles, that seemed to be used by officials. A considerable number of one-horse carriages were plying for hire, and "the drivers were mostly thieves."

Railway trains were not bad, though unpleasantly thronged by people standing, but the occupants were conspicuously clean. A German custom-house official had warned Sir Martin to take packages of "Keating's and other insecticides," but he found no need for this precaution. In short, Moscow and Leningrad were well-swept and hygienically respectable, though they looked rather like dilapidated stage scenery in an empty theatre. "There was all the setting for a distinguished society, but the setting was out of repair and the distinction was gone." It reminded the visitor of the streets of Pompeii, and he could only hope that there is a coming resurgence of taste, as in France after the desolating wave of revolution. But he was unable to see as yet the vital germ of this. Particularly in Leningrad, grass is growing in some of the streets:

What at first looked like the façades of stately houses, is discovered on closer approach to be nothing but walls behind which are interiors gutted by fire or destroyed by pillage.

Are there any signs of a coming counter-revolution? Sir Martin Conway could discern none. The imposing of western ideas upon Russia, attempted by Peter the Great, Catherine II and later Tsars, has been suddenly stopped, and the tide of western influence does not seem likely to flow again. It looks as if in future Russia may be more and more a country of peasant proprietors, using the towns as just market-places for the sale of their produce.

But if Peter the Great committed the blunder of trying to impose western European ways upon Russia, what was it that Lenin did, except to impose upon the same people the German-made theories of Karl Marx? Here again, Sir Martin Conway thinks, is a fruitless scheme for ruling the Russian people by methods which did not originate on their own soil and are not in accord with their racial character. It is predestined to the same sort of collapse as has attended the well-meant effort to endow Oriental peoples with some form of parliamentary government. In so far as doctrinaire Marxism is the policy of Russian rulers, it will be short-lived. But in so far as the Bolshevik ideal has the qualities of a sort of religion—Islamic rather than Christian—it will live and flourish on that congenial soil.

For in some respects Lenin was like Mohammed, and herein lay his strength. He was a man of enormous force, who surrounded himself with followers whose faith in him was unlimited. It was not by his theories, but by his personality, that he impressed himself upon Russia, and Sir Martin Conway suspects that a thousand years hence he may be remembered as Mohammed is remembered.

He has his apostles, and the party—consisting of perhaps three hundred thousand persons—holds its assemblages, like those of an early Church Council, to define a creed. It has its heretics, who are treated in the same summary fashion in which other Faiths have treated heresy. This propagandism, so ruthlessly carried forward by a group relatively small in number, has the same sort of success as a disease eating into the organs of the body. It cannot be overcome except by propagation of a counter-Faith. Appeals for “quiescence” are of no avail. And mere destructive argument is of no avail. One Faith cannot be resisted except by the dissemination of another.

IF the old name “Mesopotamia”—with its mellifluous and quasi-devotional sound—had not been changed into the disagreeable name “Iraq,” there would, no doubt, have been more general interest in news about the present boundary dispute with Turkey. “Is Mosul a part of Iraq or not?” Who cares to follow such a headline as that in the daily press? But “Is Great Britain right in championing the Parliament of Mesopotamia against the Turkish claim to a slice of Mesopotamian territory?”—there is more living interest about that. The average reader learns with a thrill that there is a Parliament of Mesopotamia at all.

This little area of Mosul was fiercely disputed at the Lausanne Conference. British representatives then took the view that it falls quite definitely within Iraq, the region for which Great Britain accepted a Mandate after the close of the war, and that the only possible point at issue is where the northern border of Mosul should be drawn. The Turkish contention, on the other hand, was that this district had belonged to the Ottoman Empire for some three hundred years, and that in the disputed zone Zurds still predominate numerically. Why not then have a plebiscite of the Kurds, to settle by “self-determination” under what rule they are to live? Turkish delegates even proposed this, feeling sure of their racial kinship. But the matter was referred for arbitration to the League of Nations. And before the League could decide it, the Kurds in Turkish territory gave spectacular proof of their racial feelings by their revolt of last spring against the kinsmen who were so certain of Kurdish allegiance!

This situation lends special interest to the survey of “Turkish Facts and Fantasies” published in a recent number of *Foreign Affairs*. What sort of republic is that which has its headquarters at Angora?

It is certainly very different from the old Empire of Sultan, Khalif, and foreign domination that we used to know so well. But it is also very unlike the Turkish republic that was predicted as among the international rearrangements of the Peace. What about the beaten Turk who was to be driven from Europe? What about the promised internationalizing of the Straits? Palestine and Syria, says the writer in *Foreign Affairs*, meant little to the Turkish people, and Allenby's campaign still less:

In the end, Turkey alone among the Central Powers avoided the consequences of her defeat, and the punishment she deserved. So when the Turk looks back on the war, the camouflage screen falls, the realities disappear, and he sees only his great victories of Gallipoli and Kut-el-Amara.

Mustapha Kemal knew how to take advantage of this mood of mind. At the Lausanne Conference table, representatives of The New Turkey cemented their alliance with those of Soviet Russia. Kemal, armed with the Lausanne Treaty that conceded so much to his desires, found himself the duly elected President of the Turkish Republic. But the election and the fictitious rule by an "Assembly" were all made subservient to his personal plans. A great deal had been made of the prestige of the Khalif,—that "spiritual link with the Mohammedans of all the world, the imponderable force which had so impressed Downing Street and the Quai d'Orsay." But having served his diplomatic turn, the Khalif was summarily kicked out of the way by Kemal, and a new camouflage was found more suited to the purpose in the shadowy "Assembly." The ancient dignitary of Islam, with his family and some personal belongings, was taken by the police from his palace and driven by automobile some thirty miles outside Constantinople. Put on a train there, the group was despatched across the frontier. "The Moslem religion," said Kemal to a group of waiting journalists, "must be freed from its rôle as a political instrument which it has been made to play for centuries." This writer in *Foreign Affairs* thinks Mr. Lloyd George and M. Poincaré must have wondered why so simple a move had never occurred to themselves.

So the Turkish Republic came under lay control as thoroughly as the French. Religious courts and schools, together with much of the property of the Mohammedan Church, were taken over by the secular government. And of course a "constitution" was drawn up, adopted *en bloc* on a vote by raising of the hands. The Assembly then adjourned for six months. But a revolt of the Kurds quickly developed, for there were still those who were in earnest about the Koran and its authority. Kemal responded by

placed twelve provinces under martial law, and increasing by one-half the strength of the army. So the rebels were encircled and overwhelmed. The "People's Party,"—that is, Kemal himself—had triumphed.

What he is trying to construct, says this observer, is an ultra-western nation. Is there in Turkey the basis upon which this can be built? So far, there is but the fiction of a modern State. Among Turkey's eight millions of people the number of intelligent, progressive and capable men is very small, and it is quite a large undertaking to thrust laicism down the throats of an essentially anti-western and reactionary race. But Kemal, at least, "is no sham." He knows what he wants, and in a great measure he knows how to get it. Just as Abdul Hamid ruled by absolutism which was sanctified under ancient tradition, so Kemal rules behind the mask of an Assembly. He has inherited, too, the old plan of playing off European nations against one another, using especially the conflict between French and Italians for control in the Mediterranean. But he is trying to work with the machinery of western nationhood,—a thing quite alien to Turkish blood and traditions. How long will the camouflage serve? It is Lenin's problem, in other circumstances and with another race.

OUR versatile friend, "Curio" of *The Fortnightly Review*, is concerned chiefly just now to denounce Mr. Winston Churchill for his "abject surrender to the Bank of England and the Treasury officials" in the matter of return to the gold standard. Bonar Law, he reminds us, was wise enough and strong enough to resist them. But this rash step has now ruined all immediate hope of a revived industry, has wrecked the prospects of Conservative social reform, and has caused grave working-class unrest in the export trades. Every interest in Great Britain has been sacrificed for "the restoration of sterling to parity with the dollar." So since the Budget, all British exports have cost ten per cent more to foreign buyers, with results already apparent! Within two months the coal trade alone has lost nearly half a million pounds. And unemployment has increased by 118,000.

These are deep waters of financial discussion, and as "Curio" swims through them it is hard for the average reader to follow. It would involve much training in the economics of industry to argue the matter out. But the plain man can follow all too well the summary statement in this article about what Churchillian finance has so far effected. We hear that the estimates have

increased by seven million pounds, that within eight months deposits in joint stock banks have dropped by forty millions, that during the same period exports have gone down by ten millions, and that the balance of exports over imports is now "going or gone."

Did the return to the gold standard cause it all? At least the event was *post hoc*, and the suggestion is that it was also *propter hoc*. Nor does the present Premier please "Curio." There is an unkind passage in the article about speeches inchoate in grammar, slightly confused in ultimate conclusions, and dealing with the will rather than with the way. It is for the *way* that this critic longs, for good intentions do not justify blunders. And he welcomes the anti-government barrage by the press. "If," he says, "Conservative Downing Street has not made up its quarrel with Conservative Fleet Street, and if Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has got the mastery of his extremists, a Socialist government will be returned to power."

All of which is submitted,—whether respectfully or otherwise, it is not hard to conjecture.

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