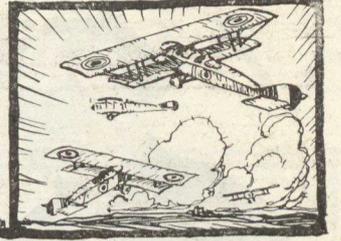


PLAYING BOTH ENDS AGAINST *the* MIDDLE



A PEACE with Russia on an honest basis of no annexations and no indemnities will in no way accomplish the plans of the German representatives, and any other sort of peace will in no way satisfy the plans of the Bolsheviki. Germany has very little to gain by the attainment of such a peace. She may be said to have had it ever since the collapse of the Russian armies. Russia ceased to be a fighting force at the moment when Kerensky began to preach democracy and the millennium to the Russian forces in the field. Germany has had nothing to fear from the military power of Russia since the revolution. Her interest in a peace treaty that is no more than a peace treaty must necessarily be of a very tepid kind.

There is no reason to speculate as to what Germany actually does want, since she avowed it with an almost incredible cynicism at the first of the peace parleys. She wants Poland and Lithuania and Courland, and it was this, and nothing but this, that brought her to the peace meeting. Being the victor she demands the spoils. She cares little for a peace treaty that would in very truth be a mere scrap of paper, since she has a virtual peace already, and she cares still less for a peace treaty based upon her own renunciation of her territorial ambitions and implying no particular renunciation on the part of Russia. Certainly she did not go to Brest-Litovsk in order to discuss international pieties and democratic sentiments with the Bolsheviki, and Von Kuhlmann lost no time in making this clear to the conference. He was doubtless surprised to find that the Bolsheviki were wholly unmoved by his hectorings. They replied with a hot defiance, and went back to Petrograd. At the next meeting of the conference the Bolsheviki were not present, and the German delegates returned to Berlin, there to encounter the reproaches of the now united Socialists, and the dangerous disappointment of the public, who believed that a peace with Russia would be a prelude to a general and speedy victory.

The conference with the Bolsheviki has now been resumed, but at the request of the Germans and not of the Russians—a fact of some significance. Trotsky has withdrawn his demand for a change of venue to Stockholm, but he seems not to have weakened in his determination to surrender no Russian territory. We have also an utterance by Lenin threatening to reopen the war unless Germany shall honestly abide by the basic understanding of no annexations, and this, of course, is the one thing that Germany can not do.

IF Germany were able to bully the Bolsheviki into the surrender of Poland and Lithuania it would place her in the most favorable position to make peace with the western allies and also to satisfy her own people that they had not fought their war in vain. She would then be able to say to her remaining enemies: "Gentlemen, I feared that it would be necessary to present you with a heavy bill of costs and to collect payment in the shape of annexations. But the course of events is such that the whole of the bill has now been paid by Russia, and there is therefore no reason why we should not reach an understanding on

GERMANY understands this game perfectly. But the game has been played too often. Russia's debacle has given the Allies a case of nerves. When we get over it we shall discover that on a basis of men, materials and war purpose, the bogey of the German "miracle" is exploded. The Boche is in a desperately bad way—on both ends as well as in the middle.

By SIDNEY CORYN

conditions unexpectedly favorable to yourselves, and reflecting so creditably on my generosity." To her own people she would be able to display an enormous extension of eastern territory as ample compensation not only for the cost of the war, but also for her concessions in the west. There would be some kind of plausibility for her claim of victory. With Poland and Lithuania in the bank, so to speak, she would hasten to accede to the demands of the western allies in all of their main essentials, and she would do it with the magnanimity appropriate from the victors to the vanquished. She would argue that there could be no reason why the western allies should protect Russia from the results of her own treason or veto a territorial cession to which Russia herself had agreed, and that could easily be justified by some sort of bogus plebiscite.

AT the moment this scheme seems to have been thwarted by the sturdy attitude of the Bolsheviki, who are doubtless aware that a surrender of Russian territory would be their own death warrant. Whether the Bolsheviki will be able to maintain their attitude remains to be seen. Germany is actually in possession of the territory that she claims, and there is no possible way by which the Russians can eject her. All that they can do is nominally to continue the war, and to harass the invader by guerilla operations. But there can be no doubt that if the Bolsheviki had proved themselves to be acquiescent, Germany would have snatched eagerly at the bird in the hand, and would have hastened to renounce all the birds that are still in the bush. She would have hastened to receipt the

bill, and to declare that all her claims were satisfied. It was in the hope of doing this that she went to Brest-Litovsk. It is in the hope of doing so that she remains there.

WE can form our own opinion as to the volume of troops that Germany has transferred to her western lines. Russia is in chaos. The Bolsheviki are acting as though it were they that held the whip hand, and not Germany, and it may be admitted that there are few such formidable forces as a reckless desperation. Over a third part of the Russian people have repudiated the Bolsheviki, and have established independent republics. The Russian volcano may break forth into eruption at any moment. Even if Poland and Lithuania were ceded it would be even more necessary than now to hold them with a strong force. Under such circumstances it seems incredible that Germany should meditate any formidable transfer of troops, and indeed the consensus of expert opinion seems to be that she has not done so. Trotsky—a by no means infallible guide, it is true—says that Germany can do no more than move her men "one by one," and that they jump from the train windows in order to escape the horrors of the western field. Trotsky also confirms the story, originating elsewhere, that twenty thousand German troops are in revolt in the east and are still holding out against the half-hearted efforts of their fellows to reduce them. The Manchester Guardian, a particularly well-informed newspaper, first believed that Germany would be able to transfer 3,000,000 men, but quickly reduced this estimate to a doubtful 1,500,000. Colonel Repington, the military expert of the London Times, gives the maximum number transferable in the event of an actual peace as 750,000, but he believes that only 120,000 have actually been sent—no more than a corporal's guard under modern war conditions. French authorities place the number actually sent as only about 75,000. And, finally, we have the opinion of Mr. Venizelos, who was recently in London, to the effect that Germany will probably strike at the left flank of the Saloniki army, if she strikes at all, and so clear the Italians out of Valona and drive through Albania to the Adriatic. As has been said before, Germany will strike at any point that seems to be vulnerable on the western lines.

That goes without saying. It is a commonplace of war. But she is not likely to bring any real offensive on the western front. Just now she is thinking more of peace than of war. Her supreme hope is to snatch something from Russia that shall enable her to blow victorious trumpets, and to declare that her aims have been achieved.

IT is evident that the Russian fiasco has induced an attack of nerves in a good many of us, and this has been intensified by reckless and uninformed estimates of the present size of the German army. Indeed, our credulities in this respect sometimes approach the verge of superstition. This is partly due to the well-meant efforts of authorities to combat a certain apathy that is always displayed by a nation that is at war but that is so far without a casualty list. It is partly due to the German myth, which is (Concluded on page 34.)

BULLDOGS THAT HOLD — AND BITE



WHEN it is said that German soldiers transported from east to west front jump from train windows because they know the Gehenna that awaits them, the writer indirectly refers to several British Generals who are making it warmer yet for all Boches on that front. Excellent color portraits of these Generals, by Francis Dodd, are printed in *Generals of the British Force*, published from the offices of Country Life, Ltd. Three of them are reproduced. Left to right: Sir Herbert Gough, commanding the Fifth Army at Cambrai; Sir Herbert Plumer, Second Army; and Sir Edmund Allenby in Palestine.