

THE ORDEAL OF
A DIPLOMAT

CONSTANTIN NABOKOFF

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BY
C. NABOKOFF



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P R E F A C E

THE story of my four years' tenure of office at the Russian Embassy in London, first as Counsellor of the Embassy (December 15, 1915-January 12, 1917) and later as Chargé d'Affaires, is written in the shape of personal recollections. Some episodes are corroborated by documents. The Bolsheviks have published the entire correspondence of the Russian Diplomatic Representatives. This publication naturally provoked intense indignation abroad. Trotsky has paid me the compliment of issuing a collection of my reports from India in a special pamphlet. Personally, I have no reason to complain of this iniquity. My reports from India present but a remote historical interest, as they relate to a period which has passed for ever. They denote, however, my sincere admiration for the achievement of the British Raj in India and my conviction that Great Britain and Russia should work hand in hand in the East for their mutual benefit as well as in the interests of the peoples of Asia. As regards my tele-

grams from London, the secrets therein contained were only temporary secrets. The gist of all my reports was the unshaken faith in the future of Anglo-Russian friendship, which I still retain in spite of all that has happened.

I do not believe in the wisdom of writing several hundreds of pages of memoirs. Even great men, in my opinion, make a mistake in writing too much. Whatever interest attaches to these pages is due to the fact that unkind fate had placed me in a prominent position during the greatest crisis in history. The reader may accuse me of speaking too often in the first person. It is, however, the inherent feature of all personal recollections. Since the Bolsheviks have published the diplomatic correspondence of Russian representatives, I do not consider it an indiscretion to reproduce some of these documents. I have also quoted a few letters and telegrams sent to Omsk from the Embassy. They are likewise but temporary secrets, and it is my firm belief that to withhold their publication is to deprive the public of the best means of forming a judgment on the activities of a diplomat.

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CHAPTER I

AMONG the posts in the Foreign service open to a Russian diplomat, one of the most interesting and attractive (if not *the* most interesting, with the exception of the Ambassadorial offices with the Great Powers) is the post of Russian Consul-General in India. It would perhaps be more correct to say "was," as it seems doubtful that this post will retain the same importance when and if the new conditions of international intercourse, originated by the world war, will come into being. Whatever happens, it is abundantly clear that the post of Russian Consul-General in India will assume an entirely different character in the future. I am speaking of it and describing it such as it was before the Great War.

Under the old regime in Russia, the young men who entered the Foreign Office were required to present a diploma of an University

or of one of the privileged high colleges. In addition they had to possess elementary knowledge of the French language and of international law and treaties. The "diplomatic examination" which they had to pass in order to be qualified for service abroad was superficial to a degree. Thus the men who devoted their lives to the diplomatic career had but scant knowledge of the complex ethnographical, historical and geographical conditions which governed the relationship of the States of Europe, Asia, Africa and both Americas. I doubt that one out of a hundred Russian diplomats had even an approximate vague idea of the history of Hindustan and of the main features of the present British rule. During my stay in India, I had the opportunity of recording an amusing illustration of this ignorance. An Anglo-Chino-Tibetan Conference met in Simla in 1913. I telegraphed to the Far-Eastern section of the Russian Foreign Office, mentioning that one of the British Delegates was the British Agent in Sikkim. A copy of the Foreign Office reading of my telegram reached me some time later. It said: "One of the British delegates is Mr. Sikkimin." The Far-

Eastern section, obviously, was utterly unaware of the existence of Sikkim.

I confess that when the post of Consul-General in India was offered to me—I was then First Secretary of the Embassy in Washington—I felt like going to the planet Mars. In the course of the three months which elapsed between my departure from New York and my landing in Bombay, I proceeded with feverish haste and ever-growing interest to fill the gap in my education and to study the history and the present condition of India and of the British rule. The subject is, of course, overwhelmingly fascinating. I feel at present the more amazed at the inadequacy of statesmanship we are witnessing now that the history of British penetration into India and of the methods of British government in that country have filled me with sincere admiration. I have no hesitation in expressing the view that there is not in the whole history of mankind, a greater example of cultural achievement than that which Great Britain has attained in Hindustan. This chapter is but an introduction to the story of the severe ordeal I underwent in London. I must needs therefore refrain from

supplementing this statement with a detailed account of the present political situation in India. Also, I am not quite certain that the departure from the wise methods of the nineteenth century which the British Raj is now making deserves to be described as the height of insight and statesmanship.

Until 1911, as is well known to British readers, the Central Viceregal Government had its seat in Calcutta, the capital of Bengal, where it remained for about five months. The rest of the year, owing to the unendurable heat of Calcutta, was spent in the Himalayas, at Simla, the "Summer Capital." In December, 1911, a proclamation was issued at the Durbar in Delhi, announcing the transfer of the capital of India to Delhi, the ancient capital of the Moghul Empire. To the Russian reader this name "Delhi" is an empty word. The temptation to dwell upon the subject of this proclamation and of its significance, which can only be understood in connection with the history of India, is almost irresistible. But I must confine myself to the scope of this chapter. I refer the reader to the talented and brilliant book, *When Kings rode to Delhi*, by Miss Gabrielle Festing. It is

a book worth reading over and over again. One should have seen Delhi, one should have lived in solitude amid the ruins of the seven capitals situated in the neighbourhood of Delhi, one should be capable of reviving in one's imagination the "Fort" of Delhi with its marble colonnades and sandstone edifices in order to become imbued with the historical atmosphere. Only thus does one acquire full understanding of the fact that only such a Power as will establish its permanent seat in Delhi may be recognized as ruling over Hindustan. Agra, another wonder of Oriental architecture, with its fort, its Pearl Mosque, and its Taj Mahal—the greatest work of human genius—is even more picturesque than Delhi. It is to my mind the artistic capital of the whole world. The full beauty and poetry of Agra's monuments, and more especially of the Taj Mahal, cannot, however, be understood without knowledge of history and without penetration into the spirit of the period to which they belong.

According to the traditions established and jealously observed under instructions from Whitehall foreign Consuls are not allowed to reside officially in the interior of the country

and are confined to the ports—Bombay and Calcutta. As it is well-nigh impossible for an European to remain in these towns during the hot weather, an exception had to be made from this rule. For the summer months foreign Consuls were allowed to migrate to one of the hill stations in the Himalayas. Of these hill stations Simla serves as a summer resort for the Viceregal Government and for the Government of the Punjab (of which Lahore is the permanent capital). Darjeeling (of fabulous and grandiose beauty) is the summer resort of the Government of Bengal. The Governments of Bombay and Madras spend the summer at hill stations within the limits of their provinces.

During the last few years, prior to 1914, the Russian, French, German, Austrian, and Persian Consuls-General spent the summer in Simla. As long therefore as the Viceregal Government resided alternately at Calcutta and Simla, the foreign representatives remained in the capital all the year round and were in constant contact with the Viceregal Government.

The situation changed with the transfer of the capital to Delhi and the foreign Consuls were cut off from direct intercourse with

the Viceregal Government during the cold weather.

The Germans had consular representatives in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. I was told by my colleague, Prince Henry XXXI of Reuss, that his staff at Calcutta numbered nineteen. The French had a Consulate-General in Calcutta and a Consulate in Bombay. The seat of the only Russian Consulate was at Bombay. My predecessor, Mr. Arseniev, was appointed Consul-General in Calcutta, and a bill was introduced in the Duma for the sanctioning of the new status of the Russian representation in India. The argument was put forward that the Russian Consul-General, like his colleagues, ought to have the opportunity of remaining in constant contact with the Government of India. The transfer of the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi was announced in December, 1911. When I came to India in May, 1912, I received an official notification from the Russian Foreign Office to the effect that the Russian Consulate-General was transferred from Bombay to Calcutta, "in order to maintain constant intercourse with the Government of India"!! The farce of this game of

hide-and-seek was, of course, due to the gross ignorance of the Russian Foreign Office, who must have imagined that Delhi was a suburb of Calcutta. I was thus compelled during the first three years of my stay in India to sever active connection with the Government of India during the short months of the cold weather. In order to adhere strictly to the principle that the Russian Consul-General in India could only deal with the Government of India, I carefully refrained from any official communications with the Government of Bengal. I was assisted in this attitude by the Governor of Bengal, who never took the slightest notice of my presence in Calcutta. I must, however, confess that I did not waste much time in compulsory idleness in the paradise of the Bengali Babu. I took advantage of the cold weather for travelling all over India.

At the end of October, 1914, I left Simla as usual for Calcutta. A few days after my arrival, I received instructions from the Russian Foreign Office which made it imperative for me to remain in touch with the Foreign Department in the Government of India. To carry out these instructions by correspondence would

have meant loss of time and possible misunderstandings. I therefore hastened to come up to Delhi. The Viceroy, Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, who had shown me during my stay in India great kindness, and whose attitude was most friendly, agreed to my remaining in Delhi. He was, however, careful to make it clear that the exception from the rigid rule laid down from London was strictly *personal*, was due to the necessities of war-time, and should in no case be regarded as a precedent. In order that the Russian Consul's presence in Delhi should not induce the Consuls-General of other Allied Governments to claim the same privilege, the private character of my prolonged visit to Delhi had to be emphasized. A simple and satisfactory solution soon presented itself when the K.E.O. XI Lancers (Probyn's Horse) invited me to share one of the bungalows in the regimental compound and to become a member of the regimental mess. Needless to say, I gladly accepted the invitation. When anybody asked the question in Calcutta: "Why is the Russian Consul-General staying in Delhi?" the answer was: "He is a guest of the XIth Lancers."

These details, which may appear superfluous, illustrate the somewhat abnormal position of the Russian representative in India. Formally, he was only a "trade agent." In fact, of course, he had the opportunity of doing political work of the highest importance . . . according to his personal ability, and of keeping his Government informed on all questions of the middle East affecting the interests of Russia, in particular in Persia and Afghanistan. As regards Tibet, the interests of Russia in that part of the world are practically nil, and it is only due to the ignorance of the Russian Foreign Office that at the moment when the Anglo-Russian rapprochement was being promoted, the Russians produced illusory arguments against British "penetration" into Tibet, arguments which the Russian diplomats themselves did not clearly understand. An amusing illustration of this ignorance is afforded by the story told by Sir Francis Younghusband in his book on the Tibetan Expedition.

Count Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador in London, received instructions to protest against the British expedition to Tibet led by Colonel Younghusband. In the course

of the conversation which took place between Lord Lansdowne, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and the Ambassador, the former drew out a map of Asia. It transpired that Count Benckendorff did not know exactly where Lhasa was, and expressed intense surprise at the enormous distance which separated the capital of Tibet from Russian territory. All our subsequent meddling with the peregrinations of the Dalai Lama and our conversations with the dubious envoys from Tibet had no *real* political significance, while they created feelings of suspicion in Whitehall, which in this case were perfectly justified. I happened to be in the Crimea with the Russian Foreign Minister, Count Lamsdorff, when the Tibetan envoy, Dorjiev, arrived in Yalta. Count Lamsdorff and his chief adviser, Mr. Hartwig, had but vague notions regarding Tibet, and their inability to form a true idea of the qualifications and importance of this self-seeking intriguer were in reality more comical than dangerous.

Upon my arrival in India, I found that the legend of Russia's "Drang nach Osten" was still in existence. The Russian Consul-General was regarded as the "Russian spy."

Many amusing incidents occurred, which it would be outside the scope of this chapter to recount, showing that the British in India, and particularly the civil and military authorities, viewed the Russian representative with great suspicion. The task which I therefore undertook was twofold. In the first place, the Russian Government had to be persuaded that political questions affecting both countries can only be satisfactorily settled if they are approached in a spirit of sincere friendship and frank discussion, that our interests are in every way identical with those of Great Britain, and that in fact the strengthening of British influence in the countries bordering on Hindustan not only does not endanger the interests of Russia, but affords the best possible guarantee of peaceful progress and neighbourly intercourse. On the other hand, the British had to be convinced that Russian policy in the East had been, as often as not, the result of groundless forebodings of men who had no direct knowledge of the realities, and that the fullest possible explanation of these realities by the Russian representatives was the best means of dispelling misunderstandings to the mutual

benefit of both parties. Russian representatives, of course, could only be in a position to give these explanations provided the British authorities treated them with confidence and frankness. I am no judge of the degree to which I have succeeded in bringing down the double walls of Jericho, the official Russian ignorance and the official British distrust. The facts that during the war the Viceroy of India transmitted several messages to the Russian Foreign Office through the direct medium of the Russian representative in India and that I enjoyed the confidence of the Foreign Secretary to such an extent that he kept me informed as to the negotiations with the Amir of Afghanistan, would appear to indicate that one of the walls had partially been destroyed. In a very cordial farewell speech addressed to me, the Viceroy mentioned that circumstances had changed since I came to India and that the Russian spy legend had exploded.

I had the great good fortune of finding myself in India at the fateful time of the beginning of the war. When the news reached us of Great Britain's declaration of war, the question in everyone's mind was : what will

be the attitude of India? Will the native troops be induced to take part in the struggle the full meaning of which they did not understand and which began on the territory of Belgium, a land entirely strange to them? In fact, it was the entire future of the British Raj, the fundamental issue of Indian loyalty, that was being put to the test.

I do not know who took the initiative in adopting a measure which brought about amazingly beneficent results, namely, the despatch of the great majority of Indian troops to Europe, Egypt, Mesopotamia and Africa, and the arrival of territorial troops from England. The Viceroy told me about three weeks after war was declared that he intended to send out about 200,000 native troops to be replaced by territorials from home. What happened was this: there was not a single regiment in India, British or native, that was not eager to go to the front.

It is no exaggeration to say that there was a regular scramble between these regiments to "get there" first.

I have often heard it said in India, even by those who did not fully agree with Lord Hardinge's methods of administration, that

never before had a Viceroy enjoyed the esteem and affection of the native Princes to the same degree as Lord Hardinge. It is a fact that *all* these Princes—from the Nizam of Hyderabad, whose dominions are equal to the territory of France, to the petty chiefs of Central India—gave an enthusiastic response to the Viceroy's appeal for assistance to the Empire in its struggle against the German coalition. Contributions in men and money flowed as from the horn of plenty from these vassals of the British Crown into the Viceroy's chest. The attitude of the native population and of the troops was undoubtedly influenced to a considerable degree by the example of the native Princes. No tribute could be too high for this achievement on the part of the Viceroy whose personal influence resulted in uniting the Princes and the peoples of India in one patriotic impulse. It *was* a critical moment, and what was taken for granted at home was in reality a great triumph of wise statesmanship.

The spirit manifested by the Indian troops is the more noteworthy that in order to take part in the war these troops had to forgo many traditions dear to their hearts and to forget

their caste distinctions which seemingly formed the mainstay of their outlook. But the miracle did take place, and Great Britain is justified in taking pride in this miracle and in the prowess of the native troops.

In the circles in which I moved, in "society" and in bureaucratic centres, the war was accepted calmly, one might almost say with indifference. I recall the disaster of Tannenberg, the news of which reached us in Simla with a long delay and in so abridged a version that no one realised its importance and its tragedy. Lady Hardinge died at home a few weeks before the war. Several months later, the Viceroy lost his eldest son, who died of wounds. The Viceregal court was in mourning, and social life in Simla and Delhi was therefore very quiet.

In September, 1915, I learnt from the Viceroy that my name had been mentioned in connection with the Counsellorship of the Embassy in London, and that, knowing it to be my greatest wish to get that appointment, he had expressed the opinion that I was best suited for the post. A few weeks later the appointment was made. Pleasant and interesting as my time in India had been,

I was more than glad to be sent to London, where my activities would bring me into closer contact with the actualities which in India seemed so remote. I sailed from Bombay on November 28, 1915.

The future destinies of Hindustan and of the British Raj are shrouded in mystery. It is a mystery the clearing of which can never cease to fascinate the mind of anyone who has been in contact, however superficial, with this "other world." The war has brought about great changes in the mutual relations between the British and the natives in India, more especially in the Army. The idea of self-determination so blindly professed by obstinate doctrinaires like President Wilson and supported by politicians without any practical knowledge of the world outside Whitehall, immediately threatens the very existence of the British Empire. Ireland, Egypt, India are already clamouring for "self-determination" and will soon be clamouring more loudly. If race and nationality are accepted as sufficient grounds for separate and independent statehood, there can be no reasonable excuse for the presence in India of the British ruling caste and of British guardian-

ship of the Indian Principalities. If Esthonia, why not Hyderabad? As I have already said, Great Britain has accomplished in Hindustan the greatest miracle of pacification and civilisation. The question is how long the conscious intelligent classes and the apathetic ignorant masses of India will continue to prefer the continuation and consummation of this miracle to political independence and self-determination. British statesmen now-a-days never miss the opportunity of alluding to "dismembered" Russia and to the "late Empire." May the British Raj survive the dangers which owing to war and the policy of Russia's former friends have overwhelmed, for the time being, my unhappy country..

Of my four years' stay in India I have kept many pleasant and grateful memories. I recall with warm gratitude the kindness, hospitality and friendliness of many of my British acquaintance in India. Acquaintances, some of whom have become lifelong friends. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Regimental messes—the 1st K.D.G.'s, the K.E.O. XI Lancers, the II Lancers, the R.F.A. at Agra, and others whose reception was exceptionally gracious and friendly.

Travelling in India is possible only during the cold weather. In the three cold seasons I spent in India I was, of course, unable to see even one-tenth of all the glorious sights and marvels of Hindustan. Marvels not only of nature but of art and architecture, of which there are so many. Also, the lot of a lonely tourist unacquainted with the native language is not an enviable one. Lastly, distances are very great and travelling in some regions very slow. Being unable to lose touch with my office for any considerable length of time, I was necessarily confined to the beaten tracks. But even along these beaten tracks I have seen sights I shall never forget.

The one journey that had a certain political significance was my visit to Peshawar, the capital of the "North-West Frontier Province." At a distance from the town of about seven miles begins the Khyber Pass leading into Afghanistan. The Khyber is, of course, *terra prohibita* to foreigners. The Chief Commissioner, Sir George Roos Keppel, and his entourage, however, did not consider me as "the Russian spy." I stayed at Government House and was treated as a friend and a

representative of a friendly Power (that was *before* the war). So Sir George saw no harm in my motoring with a small party of his British guests from Peshawar to Landi-Kotal, the small British fort at the Afghan end of the Pass. *Horribile dictu*, I lunched in the mess at Landi-Kotal and went out for a walk which brought us to the actual territory of Afghanistan. We were escorted by two sepoy with loaded rifles.

This, of course, is an insignificant fact. It is worth mentioning because I was the first, and in all probability the last Russian diplomat in India who walked on Afghan territory under the protection of the authorities of the North-West Frontier Province, and saw with his own eyes the British fortifications on the frontier.

I shall not describe Peshawar. One could write a volume on Peshawar, but none can attempt to describe this wonderful city in a few pages.

The small native State in the very heart of Rajputana-Udaipur is truly a paradise on earth. Again I must refer the reader to a book by Miss Gabrielle Festing, *Rajputana, the Land of Princes*. It gives the spirit, the legend, the

history of Rajputana, of which Udaipur is perhaps the most "romantic" spot. When you reach this wonderful white city on the lake of Udaipur, with two white marble islands, you feel as though you were in the middle ages. There, flocks of small green parrots fly across the lake, wild boars roam in the surrounding fields, tigers and panthers swarm in the jungle. Monkeys jump from tree to tree and from roof to roof. At night, jackals assert themselves in the loudest and most uncanny manner imaginable. Amid this bacchanale of the animal world, the poise and dignity of the native of Udaipur are the more impressive. White garments are favoured most by men and women alike. Everyone seems happy in Udaipur under the benevolent rule of the Maharana (such is the title of the ruling Prince). I shall never forget the impression left upon me by the interview I had with the Maharana, whose guest I was, together with a British officer. I was received on the open white marble terrace of his summer palace. The Maharana, an old man with a snow-white beard, wonderful features, kindly, deep eyes and an extraordinarily dignified bearing, was dressed in

white, with a white turban. He was leaning on a sword in a red scabbard which afforded the only touch of colour. Truly a vision from the Arabian Nights.

From Udaipur I went to Agra. The unforgettable impression of my first visit grew deeper every time I returned to that city of unrivalled charm and beauty. No poetry, no painting can convey the fascination of the city of Akbar and Shah Jehan. Music alone might perhaps render the atmosphere of the Taj and of Fatehpur Sikri, the derelict temporary city near Agra, where Akbar tried to be happy for five years.

Benares produces an entirely different impression. It is only the panorama of the city that can be called beautiful. But it is the beauty of nature, of light and colour that impresses stronger than the work of man. Benares is, of course, infinitely interesting to the student of the religious beliefs, superstitions and traditions of Hinduism. The "ghats" are undoubtedly an interesting sight, but far from being picturesque their sight is rather gruesome, especially if seen at a short distance.

Of all the marvels of nature Darjeeling is

certainly one of the greatest. I mean, of course, the marvels of nature that are accessible to the average tourist. Those who devote their energies and their time to Himalayan exploration have undoubtedly seen sights which may be even more grandiose than those one enjoys at Darjeeling. But a visit to Darjeeling is nevertheless a pilgrimage to one of the greatest temples of Divine architecture, surpassing everything human hands may attempt.

I left Calcutta on a hot November afternoon. Until the next morning, the train ran through the rich plain of Bengal. At about 6.30 a.m. we boarded the narrow gauge train which crawls up to Darjeeling. The railway is one of the greatest engineering feats ever performed. It twists and turns, it "loops the loop." You see below the tropical plain: close by, orchids, palm trees, tropical vegetation of untold beauty, tea plantations. At about 2.30 p.m. the train reached Darjeeling. It was raining hard. In another hour or so, darkness came. The hotel was dreary, empty and cold. Terribly cold. Almost immediately after an early dinner I was compelled to go to bed as it was the only means of

keeping warm. Not only my blankets and rug, but all my clothes had to be used in order to make me feel comfortable. At five o'clock in the morning, I got out of bed and opened the blinds. The view that appeared before me was so overwhelmingly majestic and beautiful that I nearly burst into tears. I dressed hurriedly and went to "Observatory Hill," the centre of Darjeeling, where I remained till about 11 a.m. in rapture before the ever-changing grandeur of the Himalayas and the surrounding valleys and forests. It is a sight which I cannot venture to describe. Upon my return to the hotel I was told that I had been exceptionally lucky, and would probably have to wait for a fortnight or so before the skies would be clear enough to enable me to see the whole range and the summit of Kinchinjunga once more. Without the slightest hesitation, I packed my trunk and returned to Calcutta, so as to preserve the wonderful impression of my short visit which would undoubtedly have been marred by a fortnight's boredom and expectation. Darjeeling in fog and rain is no place for a lonely tourist.

During the last three days of my stay in India I enjoyed the hospitality of Lord and

Lady Willingdon at Government House, Bombay. Of all the bright impressions I have of my three and a half years in India, none is brighter than that of the generous, cordial and genial reception I had the honour to receive in Bombay. It was the end of November, and yet fans were a necessity. One could not venture to go out into the sunshine before four o'clock.

The same bright and warm weather followed us, on our way home, from Bombay to Port Said. However anxious I was to come to London, already then the centre of world politics, I could not help regretting to leave India. Apart from indelible impressions of art and nature, I carried with me grateful memories of the warm and friendly kindness of the many friends I was obliged to part with. It is a commonplace saying that one should never return to places where one has been happy. Nevertheless, I shall never cease to cherish the hope of seeing again the snow-clad heights of the Himalayas, the dreamland of Udaipur, and of spending long hours in the gardens of the Taj, this marvellous symbol of the devotion of Shah Jehan the Magnificent to the faithful Mumtaz Mahall.

CHAPTER II

I REACHED London on December 15, 1915, after a dismal journey across France and a still more dismal crossing. As nature, in India, was radiant and the people friendly and affable, so was London cold, dreary and strange. There is nothing one cannot get used to—but it takes some time to get acclimatized in London after three years in the glorious sunshine of Hindustan.

When I took up my duties as Counsellor of the Russian Embassy, Count Alexander Benckendorff was the Russian Ambassador. Among the Russian diplomatists of the old school Count Benckendorff occupied an exceptional position. He had thorough knowledge of the French, Italian, and German languages, and spoke English fluently. He could thus find a common language with the British Ministers as well as with his colleagues. Unfortunately, he did not know Russian quite so well,¹ and occasionally im-

¹He was educated in France.

pressed his compatriots as being a stranger to his own country. This impression was, of course, entirely superficial and unfounded, as Count Benckendorff was a fervent and broad-minded patriot. He was devoted not merely to the Russian *Empire*, but to the Russian people, whose interests he served to the best of his ability and guided by absolute faith in the great destinies of Russia. By birth and by education, as well as by the ties of friendship and relationship he had in Russia, he belonged to the narrow circle of the Court and to the high aristocracy. In spite of these intimate connections with the circles where every manifestation of progressive political thought was anathema, where even the moderate party of "peaceful regeneration" was considered "dangerous"—our Ambassador differed widely from his relatives and friends in Russia in regard to the internal policy of Russia. There can be no doubt that the thirteen years he spent in this country, where the monarchical principle is so wisely and admirably coupled with the widest possible political freedom, had a strong influence upon Count Benckendorff's outlook and inspired him with such ideas on

the Russian autocracy as would have appeared criminal heresy to most of his friends in Russia. Count Benckendorff enjoyed the esteem and respect of all those who knew him in Britain. Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, Lord Hardinge, Lord Carnock, Monsieur Cambon were Count Benckendorff's personal friends. The Ambassador had one peculiarity. In conversation, he expressed his thoughts with extraordinary lucidity, and these thoughts were, as a rule, so penetrating, showed such deep knowledge and understanding of the actual forces which governed the realm of international politics during the last decade, that he impressed even the most prejudiced listener as a man of exceptional wisdom and foresight. As soon, however, as he picked up the pen (he always wrote in French)—almost invariably this depth of knowledge and breadth of vision forsook him. His despatches and letters were written either in long and confused sentences, or else in short and unintelligible lines, so that one could not always understand what he actually meant to convey. This, the only failing of one of Russia's wisest and noblest representatives and actors in the great drama of the past

years, was in reality a great misfortune. During the last years of the old regime, he had more than once expressed the opinion that the continuation of the regime of oppression in Russia would inevitably result in a catastrophe to the Monarchy, and that public opinion in Great Britain could not view with equanimity such manifestations of reactionary absolutism, as, for example, the appointment of Sturmer to the post of Prime Minister. But his warnings were given in a language that deprived them of the power of conviction. I feel certain that in reading them, the late Emperor remained unmoved.

Count Benckendorff's favourite son was killed in the war in 1915, and he never recovered from this blow. During the war, there also occurred a marked change in the hitherto cordial relations between Count Benckendorff and the Russian Foreign Minister Sazonov, who had been Counsellor of the Embassy in London under Count Benckendorff.

With reference to Count Benckendorff's account of certain negotiations in London in 1915, Sazonov wrote a letter to the Ambassador containing very strong criticism of his action. Sazonov's manner had never been

particularly courteous, neither did he shrink from using curt language in his letters and telegrams. On this occasion he distinctly exceeded the limits of discourtesy. Count Benckendorff shrugged his shoulders and affected indifference, but in reality was deeply aggrieved and never forgot the slight.

At the beginning of 1916, when I first began to study the conditions in Great Britain arising from the war, the situation was as follows. The British troops, after performing a series of heroic deeds and suffering cruel losses, had evacuated Gallipoli. This evacuation was a hard blow to the pride of Britain. At the same time General Townshend's forces were besieged at Kut, in Mesopotamia, and General Aylmer's relief force failed to rescue him. At home, there had been disturbances on the Clyde. Ireland was excluded from the Conscription bill. In the meantime the British Army continued to grow in numbers and efficiency, and the output of munitions was increasing with amazing rapidity owing to the prodigious energy of Mr. Lloyd George. General Sir Douglas Haig succeeded General Sir John French as Commander-in-Chief. The period of "trench war" continued on the

Western front, and no spectacular results were being achieved. In February, the epic of the defence of Verdun began. The only important and striking event favourable to the Allies was the capture of Erzeroum by the Russian troops.

It seemed to be already dimly realised that victory could only be attained if *all* the Allies put *all* their strength and *all* their resources into the struggle. The relations between the Allied Powers depended to a certain extent upon that idea, and they were extremely sensitive to any indication of relaxation of one another's energy in the conduct of the war.

Russia's popularity was at that moment at its zenith. Finding themselves our "brothers-in-arms" for the first time in a century, the British people seemed anxious to obliterate from our memory and their own all the bygone misunderstandings and animosity, the Crimea, the Congress of Berlin, the sympathetic attitude towards Japan at the time of the Russo-Japanese war, the protracted rivalries in Persia. Official circles, in particular the War Office and the Admiralty, were giving Russia generous support in munitions and other war material and magnanim-

ously helping us in every way. Among the British Ministers Lord Kitchener was Russia's staunchest and most powerful friend. As is well known, Lord Kitchener was the only statesman who predicted in August, 1914, that the war was going to last three years at least. His prophecy would have been fulfilled to the letter had it not been for the collapse of the Russian Army, which, as has now been recognised by some at least of the British statesmen, was on the verge of a decisive victory. Lord Kitchener could not foresee this collapse, because he was unaware of the disastrous effect of the simultaneous mobilisation of eighteen million men, the gravest and fatal mistake of the Imperial Russian Government. No Government could have succeeded in clothing, equipping, feeding and training such a huge army. Much less our bureaucratic Government, especially since it had turned a deaf ear to the enthusiastic offers of support and assistance of all Russian social and local organisations.

Cases have come to my personal knowledge in which Lord Kitchener gave us more than we had asked for. He attributed a very great importance to the Russian front and was

prepared to make every sacrifice in order to strengthen that front. There can be no doubt that Lord Kitchener's tragic end was a great calamity to Russia. It is, of course, idle to speculate on the *political* effect his visit to Russia might have had. Personally, I am convinced that even Lord Kitchener would have failed to influence the Emperor Nicholas in regard to internal politics. But he would doubtless have seen the grave defects of the purely military activities of the old regime and in this direction would have been capable of exercising a beneficent influence.

Sympathy with Russia was manifested in every direction, in all classes of society. A long series of books appeared which to a certain degree filled the gap in the British knowledge of Russia's history, art, literature and political structure. Anglo-Russian Societies were founded all over the country with the object of promoting a cultural rapprochement. In several Universities chairs of the Russian language were established. It has been my privilege to address meetings organised with the view to obtaining funds for such "Russian chairs." The audience invariably proved sympathetic and friendly.

The argument that appealed more strongly than any other was that in Russia English literature was very popular, that Shakespeare, Dickens, Byron, Shelley and other British geniuses had for the last century inspired Russian poets and writers, and that there hardly was a town or village library that did not contain the works of the great British writers.

Broad circles of British educated society were beginning to realise that Russian literature was not limited to the works of Tolstoi, Dostoyevski and Tourgenev. The task of promoting the interest of the British public in Russian art and literature appealed to me immensely, and the sympathetic response with which these efforts invariably met on the part of various meetings, societies and individuals was a veritable inspiration. It would not be an exaggeration to say that in the first two years of the war the cultural rapprochement between Russia and Great Britain went much further than the same process in regard to France during the twenty-five years of our "friendship and alliance" with the Republic. Was this not due to the fact that our alliance with France was purely utilitarian, was made

with a definite purpose? The French never took the slightest interest in the Russian people, in the creative genius, the history or literature of Russia. The liberty-loving British people instinctively detested the old Russian regime because they believed it to be an odious tyranny. The patriotic enthusiasm which the war provoked in Russia, the heroism of her soldiers who faced the German heavy guns and machine-guns with sticks instead of rifles and who died by the thousand *because they were weaponless*—disclosed to the British the "true face" of Russia . . . and they felt ashamed of their ignorance and prejudice against the Russian people.

In the spring of 1916 two Russian deputations visited Great Britain. The first was a deputation of journalists, the second of the Duma and the Council of the Empire.

The deputation of journalists consisted of six members. They were: V. I. Nemirovitch-Dantchenko, Count Alexis Tolstoi, K. I. Tchoukovski, A. A. Bashmakov, E. T. Yegorov and V. D. Nabokoff. The veteran war correspondent, Nemirovitch-Dantchenko, did not understand a word of English. Mr. Robert Wilton, the *Times* correspondent in Petrograd,

acted as interpreter, friend, guide and *alter ego* to the Russian journalist. No tribute could be too high for the patience and good humour with which Mr. Wilton performed the very arduous task of piloting the old and ill-tempered Russian Xenophon.

My brother was the only member of the delegation who could speak fluent English, and was therefore in a position to derive the greatest benefit from the hospitality and courtesy of his British hosts. As a rule, he also was the spokesman of the delegation at various functions, and acquitted himself tactfully and at times eloquently of his duties.

Upon the arrival of this deputation in London, a banquet was held at Lancaster House, Sir Edward Grey presiding. The deputation made an extensive tour, visited the Fleet, munition factories, etc. They were everywhere accorded a most friendly reception. On the whole, this visit was useful. Deaf and dumb as some of the members of the deputation were in Britain, they had eyes to see, and recorded their impressions upon their return to Russia in a manner which undoubtedly appealed to the general public in Russia and helped to make them

understand and admire the magnitude of Great Britain's share in the war.

Soon after the return to Russia of this deputation, the Russian Embassy in London suggested to the Russian Government that a deputation of British journalists should be invited to visit Russia. The Foreign Office at Petrograd deliberately caused these negotiations to be protracted. At first they suggested that a mixed deputation of British and French journalists should be invited. Their excuse was that our party of newspaper-men had visited France as well as Great Britain. We pointed out that such a "mixed" deputation would be unpractical, that some of the British journalists were not conversant with the French language, that difficulties and friction would inevitably ensue. After much hesitation and long delays, consent was given to the arrival of a British delegation. I had the privilege of conducting *pourparlers* with Lord Burnham, who had given his consent to place himself at the head of the delegation. The task of forming a delegation of British newspaper correspondents representing different political views and desirous of visiting Russia was not an easy one. When the

matter was settled as far as the membership of the delegation was concerned, the question came up of the time most suitable for the visit. The Russian Foreign Office again raised objections and difficulties. Finally, Sir George Buchanan telegraphed to Sir Edward Grey that for political reasons the visit of the delegation appeared to him inopportune. The matter was then dropped. This fact, however insignificant, could not fail to serve as an indication—to the Government and to the Press—that things were not going well in Petrograd, at the front and in the rear. For such was the obvious construction which the Government as well as the Press correspondents whose visit had been indefinitely postponed could not fail to place upon Sir George Buchanan's cautious veto. Rumours had been afloat for some time of disturbances in the rear of the armies, of Rasputin's evil orgies and of the loss of prestige which the Monarchy was suffering owing to the disastrous influence of this hysterical and vicious scoundrel whom the Imperial Family sincerely and blindly believed to be a saint and a miracle-maker. After the visit of the representatives of the British Press had been found

"inopportune," these rumours naturally gained further credence and caused graver misgivings.

To return, however, to the spring of 1916, and the visit of the second delegation.

The Duma and the Council of the Empire had selected this Delegation from different political parties. It comprised the critics of the Government, leaders of the opposition such as Miliukov, Shingarev and others. The object of the Deputation was to reaffirm to the Governments and to public opinion in the Allied countries that in the matter of pursuing the war to a successful issue all parties were at one in Russia. In those days nobody could foresee the rapid collapse of the Moderate Liberal parties in Russia which followed so closely upon the downfall of the Monarchy. Everybody believed that the victory of these moderate elements over the ultra-reactionary forces which dominated the Emperor would be the solution of the impending crisis. And such a solution was already then ardently desired by the great majority of Russian patriots who realised that the old regime was doomed. The British Government and public opinion were fully aware of this feature of the situation. They

therefore greeted with sincere satisfaction the arrival of a Delegation which was in its very composition a symbol of Russian national unity. Gourko and Miliukov, Prince Lobanov and Shingarev—members of the same deputation. . . . It was indeed an extraordinary gathering, inasmuch as intolerance had hitherto been the characteristic feature of Russian political life. From that point of view, the Delegation undoubtedly served the useful purpose of fostering the faith of Great Britain in Russia's will to win. Several painful incidents of an "internal" order took place when the Delegation came to London. To begin with, the staff of the Embassy did not meet the delegation at the railway station. The delegation reached King's Cross at five o'clock in the morning. At about seven, some of the members alighted on the platform from their sleeping-cars only to find the platform empty. The Secretary of the Embassy who rushed in at that moment only added oil to the fire of these "statesmen's" indignation. It must be admitted that the members of the delegation showed on this occasion a touchiness which was not quite in keeping with their "high" position. As a matter of fact,

the Russian Embassy in London had always been unlucky as far as meetings were concerned. We either went to the wrong railway station, or else the telegram announcing the arrival of the "personage" reached us half an hour after the guests had arrived. After a while we became reconciled to this ill fate, and our *faux pas* in that direction were the source of constant jokes among the staff.

Immediately upon the arrival of the delegation another and more serious incident occurred. In drafting the programme of the reception of the Russian delegates, the British Foreign Office first of all asked us whom they should consider as their senior member? In other words, who should be given at the banquet, presided over by the Prime Minister, the seat of honour, and who would reply to the speech of welcome? In view of the fact that Baron Rosen in his capacity of late Russian Ambassador in Washington was undoubtedly the senior member of the Council of the Empire Delegation, the Embassy put forward his name. Baron Rosen lost no time in calling on his colleague, Count Benckendorff. They agreed that Baron Rosen should receive the draft of Mr. Asquith's speech of

welcome as soon as Count Benckendorff should get it from the Prime Minister. Baron Rosen was to draft his reply in consultation with the Ambassador. Returning to the hotel from the Embassy, Baron Rosen invited his colleagues of the Council of the Empire to his room and informed them of the steps which had already been taken. Here the storm burst. One of the members of the Delegation, a loud, resolute and trenchant person, bluntly declared that Baron Rosen had no right and had not been instructed to settle for himself the question of seniority. Some very offensive remarks were made in reference to Baron Rosen's alien origin and German proclivities. This to the veteran diplomatist was a terrible blow. Count Benckendorff had, of course, full authority and every reason to settle the incident by pointing out to Baron Rosen's recalcitrant opponent that the decisive voice in such matters belonged to the Ambassador. Baron Rosen, however, felt the insult so keenly that he immediately and firmly decided to separate himself from the Delegation.

He attended the first banquet, but afterwards declined to join in the wanderings of his colleagues. He did not follow them to Scot-

land and to the Midlands. Neither did he go to the Continent. He remained in London in a private capacity.

Of all the former colleagues and subordinates of Baron Rosen, Prince Koudacheff, now Russian Minister in Peking, and myself were those with whom he had preserved a friendly and cordial relation. I differed considerably from Baron Rosen in the estimation of the Treaty of Portsmouth, which he had signed as the second Russian plenipotentiary and in the drafting of which I had played a modest part. I likewise disagreed with the reactionary views he held in regard to Russian internal politics during the period of 1905-1911. I had, however, a very great admiration for his keen intellect, his wide experience and the sincerity of his convictions. What he believed he believed sincerely and earnestly. Our dissensions at the time of his last visit to London became, however, so acute that our personal relations underwent a considerable change. After relinquishing the post of Russian Ambassador in Washington, Baron Rosen settled down in Petrograd. Personal contact with Russian realities induced him to alter his reactionary views. Every Russian remembers

the eloquent warnings which he addressed to the Government from his seat in the Council of the Empire. One might have thought that Baron Rosen would be a convinced supporter of "a fight to the finish," against German absolutism. Whether he was so strongly influenced by the circumstances in which he left the Delegation that his political horizon was obscured, or whether he had originally held a pro-German view I cannot tell. The fact, however, remains that he unfolded to me his intimate views, and tried to prove, with all the fervour of strong conviction, that Germany was invincible, that all our dreams of Constantinople were a mirage and that our alliance with Great Britain and France was a fatal error. Baron Rosen said, "*America is right in refraining from participation in the senseless slaughter which can lead to nothing else than to the collapse of Europe.*" At that moment, however, to defend the position of the United States under President Wilson's leadership appeared to be a heresy, as the powers of the Entente, fully convinced of the righteousness of their cause and suffering from the brutalities of the enemy, regarded that position with indignant dismay.

Russia, as I have already mentioned, was at the zenith of her popularity in Britain. The Delegation, therefore, was accorded a very warm welcome. It fell to my lot to accompany the Delegation in its journeys in Great Britain, and to witness the exceptional kindness with which it was surrounded and the interest it evoked. I particularly remember the banquet at Glasgow. Toasts for Russia and the speeches of the Russian guests were greeted with an enthusiasm which one could hardly have expected to see in Scotland. The characteristic feature of that particular banquet was that the great majority of the five hundred guests were middle-aged or old men. The spokesman of the Russian Delegation on this occasion was Mr. Protopopoff.

The impression produced at the Embassy by this gentleman, who was destined to play such a disastrous part in the political life of Russia six months later, was a very strange one. From behind the mask of Liberal patriotism we caught glimpses of a buffoon's grimace. Count Benckendorff described him briefly: "C'est un imbecile." Protopopoff adopted with us a tone of benevolent intimacy and told us most amazing stories about the

Court, the Metropolitan . . . and Rasputin. Once or twice, however, his tongue slipped and he referred to the Duma in terms of ironical contempt which left us wondering. A prominent British statesman is said to have described Protopopoff as having "something Persian about him."

Some of the members of the Delegation had shortcomings which made it difficult for the British officials attached to it to have patience with them. The incidents which caused a certain amount of friction were, however, trivial. On the other hand, such men as Miliukov, Shingarev and other prominent leaders of the Duma gave the Delegation the necessary weight and dignity. On the whole, the impression produced by the Delegation appeared to be favourable and served for the time being to enhance the faith of public opinion in Russia's determination to stand by the Allies. That impression counteracted to a certain degree the forebodings which reports on the decline of Russia's military effort were already causing.

The effects of this visit upon public opinion in Great Britain were, however, soon obliterated by the events which followed almost

immediately upon their departure : the Battle of Jutland and Lord Kitchener's death. For the next three months there was a period of comparative inactivity on the Western Front. Many battles were fought, fortunes varied, but no decisive results were achieved. General Brussilov's successful advance once again relieved the anxieties for the fate of the Russian Army.

The autumn months went by and the winter of 1916-1917 began, which was to prove fateful for the Russian monarchy. Although Count Benckendorff by no means considered Mr. Sazonov as an impeccable oracle in foreign politics, the latter's resignation and Mr. Sturmer's appointment caused the Ambassador to feel deeply discouraged. When the telegram announcing this change at the Ministry arrived from Petrograd, Count Benckendorff said : "C'est de la démente." (This is madness.) Occasionally rumours or true news reached the Ambassador of various efforts (by Samarin, Rodzianko, Princess Wasiltchikoff, Sir George Buchanan) to influence the Imperial Couple and to open their eyes to the actual state of affairs. On these occasions the Ambassador's hopes were revived

that Nicholas II would listen to the dictates of reason and call a responsible Liberal Ministry. The Ambassador's spirits rose when Miliukov made his famous speech in the Duma which resulted in Sturmer's resignation. How often since that speech was made could the famous sentence it contained, "This is either stupidity or treason" be applied in the realm of world politics.

After this brief respite things went from bad to worse, and it became apparent that a crisis was unavoidable. Count Benckendorff lost heart. The last event which raised dim hopes was the appointment of Mr. Pokrovsky to the Foreign Office in Petrograd. "Celui là, au moins, c'est un honnête homme," said Benckendorff. At that moment, however, Count Benckendorff seemed to have abandoned all hope of such a reconstruction of the Russian Government as would allow it to regain the confidence of the Allied Powers. Count Benckendorff, during the whole time of my service at the Embassy under his guidance, very seldom imparted to me the tenor of his confidential talks with Sir Edward Grey, or later, with Mr. Balfour. One could, however, easily discern from his confidential messages

to the Russian Foreign Minister, that the British statesmen were watching with grave concern and anxiety the trend of events in Russia.

At the end of 1916, a Government crisis took place in Britain, and Mr. Lloyd George became Prime Minister. In the new Coalition Sir Edward Grey was replaced by Mr. Balfour. Mr. Asquith's resignation was no misfortune to Russia, as his sympathies in international politics were not exactly towards Russia. The country believed that Mr. Lloyd George was the man capable of inspiring the bureaucratic machine with the maximum of energy and the masses with patriotic enthusiasm sufficient for further voluntary efforts in the common cause.

In the beginning of January, 1917, Count Benckendorff contracted pneumonia, and died after an illness of five days on January 12. Until the last minute he was unaware of his approaching end, and continued to take a lively interest in his work. His death at his post was the culmination of the brilliant career of an enlightened patriot, and it is a matter of deep satisfaction to all those who held him in high esteem that he should not

have lived to see this day. Count Benckendorff certainly could never have imagined all the humiliations which hapless Russia has suffered for the last three years. Had he been a witness of these tragic events he would have died broken-hearted. The Almighty has generously spared him this ordeal.

On the day after Count Benckendorff's death I received several letters of condolence. Lord Hardinge and Monsieur Cambon wrote in terms of exceptional warmth, and expressed genuine sorrow at the loss, not only of a personal friend, but of a man whose contribution to the maintenance of cordial relations between Russia and her Allies of the day, Great Britain and France, had been immeasurably great. Monsieur Cambon said: "I was, perhaps, a better judge than anyone else of Count Benckendorff's great and charming qualities. His death is a loss, not only to Russia, but to France as well. He was educated in France. France knew how much experience, wisdom and sagacity he displayed in the most difficult negotiations which were conducted in London." The same expressions of regret were repeated to me by Lord Hardinge and Mr. Balfour.

CHAPTER III

ALMOST immediately after Count Benckendorff's death, Lord Milner's special mission went to Petrograd. Not having to this day access to the archives of the Russian Foreign Ministry, i.e., to the documents published by the Bolsheviks, I do not know whether the records of the Anglo-Russian Conferences of January and February, 1917, have been made public. The chief object of that Conference, which was, I believe, attended by representatives of other Allied Powers, was to determine the amount of armaments, equipments, war material and credits which the Russian Government expected to receive from Great Britain. The historical meaning of Lord Milner's visit and of his negotiations with the Russian Government lies, not so much in the practical result of the deliberations, as in the mutual relationship between Great Britain and Russia, which that Conference established. *Russia became entirely dependent on Great Britain for the prosecution of the war.* Russia was unable

to repay by *material* means for the sacrifices in war material, tonnage and capital which Great Britain made in order to supply our armies. Russia paid *only* with the rivers of blood of her sons who died in battle. Russia was always *asking*. Britain was *giving*. This condition of affairs undoubtedly had an overwhelming influence upon the psychology of British public opinion and of the Government. During the whole time of my tenure of office in London I cannot recall a case of Great Britain requesting us to do her a *reciprocal* service of a *material* order. As to our sacrifices in blood, . . . was anybody capable of counting them in pounds sterling? The same relationship, of course, existed to a considerable degree between Great Britain and her other Allies—France, Italy and Belgium. The aid that was being given to Italy and Belgium at that time, and perhaps even till the end of the War, was *comparatively* insignificant. As regards France, there can be no doubt that in Great Britain it was taken for granted that the interests of both countries were identical. In other words, everyone understood that, should France be overpowered, it would mean defeat for Britain. In the beginning of the war a few short-sighted

journalists had fostered the idea of the Russian "steam-roller." It was believed that Russia would overwhelm Germany by the sheer weight of her numbers. When the Russo-Japanese War started the old Russian saying: "Shapkami Zakidaiem" (we shall cover them with our caps) was prevalent. The Russian defeat in that war was still remembered in 1914, and the bombastic boast of the above-quoted saying was no longer made when Russia faced her traditional enemy—Germany. The fundamental error which was, in my opinion, the primary cause of the disruption of the Russian Army, namely the simultaneous mobilisation of eighteen million men, was thus accepted by our Allies as the surest guarantee of success. Disillusionment and irritation consequently increased as it became apparent that the "steam-roller," upon reaching Tannenberg and the Carpathian mountains, was rolling back, destroying everything in its train.

The British psychology was this: "We are the creditors and the benefactors. Russia is the debtor and the petitioner." As I have already said, the British Government were very generous in meeting our demands. However, even in the course of the first two years of war,

certain misgivings were expressed in regard to the manner in which Russia made use of the British treasure.

Lord Milner's mission had naturally another, a more complicated political task to perform. It had to ascertain how much truth there was in the rumours already current in London of an impending revolution in Russia.

Testimonies on that score of those concerned differ widely. Some assert that Lord Milner and the British military and civil officials who accompanied him received definite information from responsible leaders to the effect that a revolution was inevitable. They said that the Imperial Government had lost its authority and that Protopopoff's regime could no longer be tolerated as it threatened the army and the rear with complete disruption. The Government, on the other hand, is stated to have assured the British mission that every revolutionary attempt would be promptly suppressed. Neither Lord Milner nor any of his immediate associates had sufficient knowledge of the history of Russia's internal politics for the last fifteen years and of the events which prepared the ground for the revolution. It is therefore only too natural that, so far as one may judge

from subsequent events, Lord Milner believed what he had heard from Government officials. In the course of my first interview with the Prime Minister after the revolution, Mr. Lloyd George stated emphatically: "Lord Milner assured the British Cabinet that there would be no revolution in Russia during the war."

Sir George Buchanan, however, took another view and continued to send earnest warnings to his Government and to report that the situation in Petrograd was daily growing more acute. The Ambassador was exceptionally well informed as he had personal relations, not merely in the Court and bureaucratic circles, but in the circles of the Duma as well. The leaders of the Opposition expressed themselves with great frankness in conversation with the British Ambassador. Moreover, the headlong rush towards the abyss was obvious to everyone and even the highest aristocratic circles of Petrograd society felt the approach of the catastrophe. Of all the memoirs written by members of that society regarding the weeks preceding the Revolution, the most interesting are the memoirs of Princess Julia Cantacuzene. A granddaughter of President Grant, she married a Russian Guards officer

and lived for many years in Petrograd, where she moved in the highest circles of society. The first chapters of this lively and brilliant book, *Revolutionary Days, Recollections of Romanoffs and Bolsheviki*, deal with the period extending from the Autumn of 1916 to March, 1917. The perusal of these chapters makes it quite clear that everyone, including even the intimate circle of the Imperial family, realised that: "This cannot go on." At this moment, according to Princess Cantacuzene, the British Ambassador approached Emperor Nicholas II and endeavoured to persuade him to cast off the shackles of Protopoff and to call a responsible ministry. The Ambassador did this at his own risk. He was apparently given to understand that, should the Russian Government demand his recall, such a request would be complied with. So anxious, however, was the Ambassador to do *everything* in his power in order to remove the conditions which in his own opinion imperilled the Russian army and the Russian State, that he took the risk. It is, of course, the diplomatic tradition that a representative of a foreign country does not interfere with the internal affairs of the country to which he

is accredited (provided that country does not happen to be situated in the Balkans or in Asia). Presumably, Sir George Buchanan on this occasion disregarded the stern tradition. The result, however, was pitiful. Nicholas II listened attentively and quite courteously. He thanked the Ambassador and changed the conversation.

Towards the middle of February, I began to notice the growing anxiety of British statesmen. It was quite obvious that the Russian Government, whose most influential minister was a political turncoat and a crazy deserter from the Liberal ranks of the Duma, could command neither credit nor respect. Stories were circulated in British society of the isolation of the Imperial family, of the revolutionary spirit which had penetrated even into the circles of the Guards' officers. Reports from Petrograd published in the London Press painted the situation in the darkest possible colours. Even the Conservative papers in London were sounding the alarm. Leading articles appeared severely condemning the Russian Government and uttering grave warnings. I remember telegraphing to the Russian Foreign Office *in extenso* a leading article from

The Morning Post which was exceptionally brilliant and showed a remarkable insight into the actual condition of Russia. In the course of one of my conversations with Mr. Balfour, he expressed very grave misgivings and told me that the Government was very much alarmed at Sir George Buchanan's reports. I telegraphed to the Russian Foreign Minister, adding that I had deemed it necessary to assure Mr. Balfour that "the Emperor was firmly determined to continue the War till the end in spite of all the waverings of internal politics." On the margin of this telegram the above-quoted words were marked by the Emperor, who wrote, "Of course."

Meanwhile the position of the Russian Representative in London was becoming embarrassing. Lord Hardinge,¹ who knew me personally better than did Mr. Balfour, was more outspoken. Remaining within the limits of "diplomatic tradition," he more than once deplored the course of events in Russia, and notes of bitterness and irritation sounded more and more frequently in his discourse. The necessity of openly and resolutely informing the Russian Government of the atti-

¹ The Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

tude of British Government circles and of public opinion was daily becoming more imperative.

On the Western Front there was no change in the situation. The French and British troops were courageously bearing the discomforts and trials of the frozen trenches. What was generally expected to be the "agony" of Verdun ended in a victory for the French. In Mesopotamia matters were improving; Kut was recaptured and a rapid advance was started on Bagdad. At the same time Germany announced her intention to conduct a merciless submarine war. The lists of merchant ships sunk by submarines were lengthening daily. America was still "too proud to fight." The consciousness deepened in Great Britain of the fact that this war was a question of life and death. The population of Great Britain was as yet suffering no privation, but the control of foodstuffs was growing stricter every day. Men over forty years of age were already being conscripted. The atmosphere was, so to speak, "calm but clouded." In the communiqués from the Western Front there was nothing to attract the attention of public opinion in Britain.

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Reports of internal trouble in Russia were therefore taken with equanimity and the anxiety was limited to Government circles. The first newspaper telegrams regarding disturbances in Petrograd gave, however, the signal for a sudden revival of intense interest in Russian affairs. In Government circles as well as in the Press great nervousness prevailed.

CHAPTER IV

IN the course of two and a half years of the great World War European nations had grown accustomed to extra editions of evening papers and to sensational news which spread over capitals and continents in a few minutes. Of all the sensations I witnessed in London, none was more vivid, none caught the breath of the public to such an extent as the news of the sinking of the cruiser carrying Lord Kitchener to Russia and of the tragic death of the British national hero. There can be no doubt that in those days no other man in Great Britain enjoyed a prestige so high and universal as the late Field-Marshal. On the one hand, the sensation was intensified by the fact that very few people were aware of Lord Kitchener's departure. His visit to Russia was for obvious reasons shrouded in secrecy. On the other hand, the news reached London at mid-day, when the pulse of life in the Capital beats at its quickest. The impression was overwhelming ; as one walked along the

streets one felt that the name of Lord Kitchener was on everybody's lips and in everybody's mind and that there was not a single person who took an indifferent view of the calamity.

Not so with the news of the abdication of Nicholas II. It came to London in the late hours of the evening and was announced in the papers on the next morning. It may be confidently asserted that neither the writers of the leading articles nor the public realised on that morning that a new era had opened in the history, not of Russia alone, but of mankind. The Russian Revolution is not yet ended. The process of destruction, unequalled in history in its cruelty and in its dimensions, still continues. All sensitive Russians are at present suffering moral torture which is twofold: shame and sorrow on account of the systematic destruction of Russian culture and of the trampling of elementary rights of manhood and citizenship. Perhaps still more painful is the feeling of the uncertainty of the immediate future and the doubt that the liberators of Russia from the Bolshevik-German yoke will be endowed with sufficient wisdom to reconstruct Russia on the new foundations of true liberty, equality, respect of the law and

education. On the day of the Emperor Nicholas II's abdication I doubt if anyone in Russia understood the inevitability of the abyss into which Russia has now fallen. Much less, of course, could the London Press and public opinion foresee this abyss.

The news of the abdication produced a stunning effect upon the Russian colony in London. It was divided into two distinctly separate groups. The first consisted of Russian Government officials who found themselves in London for the performance of duties connected with Russia's participation in the War as Britain's ally. That group counted about five hundred, including the personnel of the Embassy and the representatives of permanent Russian Government offices in London, viz., military, naval, financial, etc. In these circles monarchists, of course, were in an overwhelming majority. Blind adherents of the dynasty were, however, comparatively few and were limited to the military, some of whom preserved during the whole troubled period feelings of ill-concealed hatred for the Provisional Government and secret dreams of a return to the old regime. The Provisional Government, obeying a noble

impulse, did not effect a cleansing and did not remove such people as might still prove technically useful. On the whole, they showed great tolerance, perhaps even excessive tolerance. In some cases men who had sworn allegiance to the Provisional Government had done so with obvious insincerity. Their true inclinations were, of course, no secret to the British officials. This feature of the situation naturally made intercourse between the two Governments somewhat more complicated.

The other group of the Russian colony, more numerous, consisted of *émigrés*, political refugees who had sought refuge in Britain from the persecution of the Russian Secret Service. In these circles the news of the collapse of autocracy was naturally greeted with enthusiasm. The composition of the first Provisional Government was such as to inspire full confidence that real liberty had dawned in Russia and that new methods of statesmanship had come into being which would mean the realisation of all the longings and ideals of these exiles. "The bloodless character of the Revolution" intensified these feelings of joy. Again I repeat that in those days none could imagine how speedily this

first Provisional Government would meet with an inglorious end. In those days nobody took care to scrutinise the meaning of the existence, alongside with the Provisional Government, of the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies. Nobody understood that from the first day of the Revolution in Russia *actual* power was in the hands of the Soviet and that the Soviet was the institution from the ranks of which men would emerge who would destroy the entire structure of the Russian State.

In the days of the Imperial regime the Russian Embassy in London, as in all other capitals, had in fact no connection whatsoever with the colony and was completely isolated. Whenever the bureaucracy, military and civil officials, casual travellers and the like needed the assistance of the Embassy, they applied for it. It must, however, be admitted that the Embassy was anything but a unifying centre or a native island in foreign seas. The attitude of the *émigrés* towards the Embassy was one of suspicion, hatred and aloofness. The Revolution caused an immediate and fundamental change in the position of the Embassy, whose functions were greatly

enlarged. By the force of events the activities of the Russian representative in London assumed an entirely different character. On the one hand, he had to establish, consolidate and develop relations between the new Russian regime and the British Government, the Press and public opinion. On the other hand, it fell to his lot to endeavour to unite, reconcile and, if possible, to direct Russian circles in Britain. I will try to describe my efforts in both directions.

It can hardly be gainsaid that the Russian Revolution of March, 1917, was greeted unanimously in Great Britain. The attitude of the Radical and Liberal circles calls for no comment. As regards the Government, the preceding narrative appears to me to indicate sufficiently that Government circles were greatly alarmed at the trend of events in Russia. The Government was so afraid of the weakening of Russia's military strength under a Government which had lost its prestige and support in the country that the first news of the formation of the Provisional Government was accepted with relief. An outward sign of sympathy was given by the immediate recognition of the new regime.

The French text of the first declaration of the Provisional Government addressed to the Powers of the Entente was received at the Embassy in London on a Sunday, when the Foreign Office is closed to the Foreign Representatives. Nevertheless, by reason of the exceptional importance of this document I made an attempt at seeing Mr. Balfour. My luck on this occasion was equal to that which I described in Chapter I, when during my few hours' stay in Darjeeling Kinchinjunga emerged from the clouds and showed to my wondering eyes its sunlit summit. Mr. Balfour "dropped in" at about 6 p.m. I read to him the declaration of the Provisional Government. He took note of it without, however, giving any indication as to the reply which his Majesty's Government intended to make. In the course of the conversation, I expressed the view that it might be opportune to read the declaration of the Russian Government in the House of Commons on the next afternoon. I felt that the attitude of the British Parliament towards that act might prove a strong moral asset to Russia. Mr. Balfour appeared to favour the idea. Deep, therefore, was my disappointment when upon

reaching the Embassy I found the full text of the Russian declaration in a Sunday evening paper. This occurred because Mr. Miliukov, during the first days of his tenure of office as Foreign Minister, was unable to control the workings of the Ministry, and allowed the declaration to be communicated to Reuter's Agency. A document of such importance should naturally have been communicated to the Allied Governments officially before its publication. The contemplated reading of the document in the House of Commons had thus to be cancelled.

At this point of my narrative I venture to make a few short remarks, "*pro domo mea.*" My first conversation with Mr. Balfour gave the key as it were to my subsequent attitude towards the Russian Revolution and to the comments I made upon that event in public. I gave him definitely to understand that I personally rejoiced at the change of regime. My sympathies with the Russian Revolution gave rise to extremely unfavourable comment on the part of certain statesmen and even more so in certain social circles. Indignation was expressed at the fact that a former servant of the Emperor should openly rejoice at the

downfall of the old regime. I considered that the men who were devoted to the old regime would have acted in accordance with logic and honour had they refused to serve the new regime. Those, however, who like myself held Liberal views before the Revolution and made no secret of their hope for a change in the autocratic methods of the Russian Government were fully entitled to be in sympathy with the new regime under which they continued to serve Russia. However, from that moment the attitude of some of my former friends in London underwent a rapid change. I noticed the same change in the attitude of certain very high officials. An interesting parallel to my position in London can be found in the reports of the French Chargé d'Affaires in Petersburg at the Court of Catherine II during the French Revolution. He likewise represented first Louis XVI and then the Revolutionary Government. On him, as on me in London, many backs were turned. The reports of this French diplomat, written into a connected story, form a most interesting pamphlet by a former Russian diplomat, Mr. Slavine. From this moment I became also an object of intense hatred on the part of

all Russian reactionary and monarchist circles.

A few days after the first news of the Russian Revolution I met the British Prime Minister for the first time. Curiously enough, the hint that the Prime Minister might be interested to make the acquaintance of the representative of Russia, "the great Ally," came from a private social source. It was all arranged on the telephone. The Prime Minister's reception was somewhat chilly; he obviously was rather at a loss to find a suitable opening for the conversation. The meeting took place in the Conference Chamber at Downing Street where other Russian representatives have since been greeted by three Cabinet Ministers at a time. We sat down and a pause ensued. "Great events," said the Prime Minister, "are taking place in Russia." "With reference to these events, Prime Minister, do you recollect all the platitudes which were exchanged between the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and the successive Prime Ministers in Russia by telegraph for the last few years? Now is a chance for you to send to the first Prime Minister in the Russian Provisional Government, Prince Lvov, a message which will have

an historical value and importance." The Prime Minister agreed and asked me to call again the next morning. At our next interview, before showing me the draft of a telegram to Prince Lvov he wished to know whether I had any remarks to make. I told the Prime Minister that the only request I intended to make was that the telegram should emanate not only from the United Kingdom, but from the Empire. An Imperial Conference was sitting in London, attended by representatives of India, the Colonies and the Dominions. I then saw from the text of the Prime Minister's telegram that my request had been forestalled. It only remained for me, therefore, to thank the Prime Minister for the moral support he was giving to Russia in the present difficult moment. Mr. Lloyd George's telegram read as follows :—

"It is with sentiments of the most profound satisfaction that the peoples of Great Britain and of the British Dominions across the seas, have learned that their great Ally Russia now stands with the nations which base their institutions on responsible government.

"Much as we appreciate the loyal and steadfast co-operation which we have received from the late Emperor and the armies of Russia

during the past two and a half years, yet I believe that the Revolution whereby the Russian people have based their destinies on the sure foundation of freedom is the greatest service they have yet made to the cause for which the Allied peoples have been fighting since August, 1914.

“ It reveals the fundamental truth, that this war is at bottom a struggle for popular government, as well as for liberty. It shows that through the war, the principle of liberty, which is the only sure safeguard of Peace in the world, has already won resounding victory. It is the sure promise that the Prussian military autocracy which began the war, and which is still the only barrier of peace, will itself, before long, be overthrown.

“ Freedom is the condition of Peace, and I do not doubt that, as the result of the establishment of a stable constitutional Government within their borders, the Russian people will be strengthened in their resolve to prosecute this war, until the last stronghold of tyranny on the Continent of Europe is destroyed, and the free peoples of all lands can unite to secure for themselves and their children the blessings of Fraternity and Peace.”

On the next day, or soon afterwards, this telegram appeared in the London Press. Although I had cabled to Miliukov a detailed account of my interviews with the Prime Minister and had asked him to telegraph to me the text of the reply of the Provisional Government, no such reply ever reached me or was communicated to the Press. I therefore do not know whether Prince Lvov ever responded to the greeting he had received from Mr. Lloyd George. The Provisional Government committed many more such blunders, and some of them were even more important. This, of course, irritated the British Government, and more particularly those who were anxious to see diplomatic etiquette preserved.

The Prime Minister was undoubtedly sincere when he welcomed the advent of the new order in Russia. I am inclined to think that the subsequent antipathy for Russia, which is apparent from many of his public utterances, such, for example, as the "Mansion House" speech on the eve of the Armistice, is partly due to his disappointment in the capacity of those who took the power out of the hands of the Emperor, to eradicate the errors of the old regime and to hasten the victory

of Western democracies over the German coalition. From the very beginning, however, differences of opinion within Mr. Lloyd George's Ministry became noticeable. These differences of opinion grew more acute as the months went by, and unnecessarily complicated the relations between Great Britain and Russia. The responsible heads of the British Foreign Office adopted at the outset of the new order in Russia a sceptical attitude. They seemed convinced that internal convulsions would inevitably result in the weakening of Russia as a military power. The criterion they applied to the Provisional Government was therefore reduced to the question: "To what extent would it prove capable of continuing the war?" Only to that extent did they seem prepared to forgive the destruction of those foundations of the Russian State with which British bureaucracy sympathised. This attitude was intensified as the Provisional Government gradually proved incapable of resisting the pressure of the Soviet and of the extreme parties.

The British Foreign Office disapproved of my personal attitude towards the Russian Revolution. The British Ambassador in Petrograd

was therefore almost immediately informed that His Majesty's Government expected a new Russian Ambassador to be appointed to London. Mr. Sazonov was appointed by the first Provisional Government, and this appointment was effusively welcomed by the Foreign Office. A few weeks went by; Mr. Sazonov did not arrive. Having been appointed Minister to Switzerland, I naturally was personally interested in the matter of Sazonov's arrival. I sent several enquiries to the Russian Foreign Office, but received evasive replies. I once asked Lord Hardinge whether he knew anything about the approximate date of the new Ambassador's departure. Lord Hardinge replied that Sazonov was coming as soon as a cruiser would be available for carrying him across the North Sea, as he was fearful of the crossing. Upon leaving Lord Hardinge's room I met, in the corridor of the Foreign Office, the foreign editor of a leading London newspaper. "Well," he said, "is Sazonov coming?" "Apparently very soon." "Tell me," was the next question, "how can a diplomat of the old regime and of the old school, a typical representative of the late Russian Imperialism, who owes his reputa-

tion to the Constantinople Agreement, represent in London the Russian Revolutionary democracy?" "If the Russian Revolutionary democracy and its leaders have seen fit to appoint Sazonov as their representative in London, I presume that they trust him and that he is therefore in a position to undertake the task of representing a Revolutionary democracy. Whatever you or I may think of this topsy-turvydom is a matter of our private opinion." As is now known, Sazonov was stopped at the railway station in Petrograd, as his departure coincided with Miliukov's resignation. The Kerensky Government evidently were of the opinion that the appointment was unsuitable. Personally, I doubted from the very beginning if Sazonov would ever come to London. As is evident from the above-quoted remarks of the foreign editor of one of the London papers, it was realised that Sazonov was the spokesman of Russian Imperialism.

Meanwhile, very soon after the first Revolution, Kerensky made a statement, which was widely commented on, to the effect that Russia would not claim Constantinople, and a tendency began to manifest itself in Russia towards the renunciation of "Imperialistic

acquisition." The cancellation of Sazonov's appointment was therefore by no means surprising.

Approximately at this time, Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., then member of the War Cabinet, went to Petrograd. The Labour Leader has since publicly given an account of his journey to Russia and of his resignation from the Cabinet in connection with the Stockholm incident. I will endeavour to show in the chapter devoted to the Stockholm Conference that in so far as Mr. Henderson's resignation was concerned, there is documentary evidence that it was not quite as voluntary as Mr. Henderson asserted. With regard, however, to his journey to Russia, Mr. Henderson is undoubtedly correct. He says that the Prime Minister gave him to understand that he might supersede Sir George Buchanan as British Ambassador in Petrograd, if upon his arrival he came to the conclusion that such a change would be desirable.

In time to come a truthful Russian politician or statesman, having been in close contact with the Provisional Government in the Spring of 1917, will undoubtedly impart to the world the true story of Mr. Henderson's

activities in Russia, of his relations with the Provisional Government and the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies. The Russian Embassy in London took but a purely formal part in this unsuccessful and useless mission. Upon Mr. Henderson's return to London, I was instructed to transmit to the British Foreign Office a telegram conveying, in purely conventional terms, the gratitude of the Provisional Government for "the valuable assistance" rendered by Mr. Henderson in the cause of promoting friendship and understanding between the democracies of Great Britain and Russia. In reality, Mr. Henderson, having no knowledge of the Russian language, of the history, the customs, the political and social structure of Russia, found himself a deaf and dumb witness of a Revolutionary movement which he failed to understand, and his impressions were as erroneous as they were superficial. Mr. Henderson, however, had the wisdom to realise, and the courage to admit that he would have been utterly incapable of replacing Sir George Buchanan. Although the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and his immediate assistants appear to have been unaware—at the time—of the instructions which Mr. Henderson

carried to Petrograd, their attitude towards Mr. Henderson's mission was not one of whole-hearted approval. This mission helped Government departments to realise that owing to the Revolution a certain departure must be made, in the relations with Russia, from the accepted routine of international traditions. Any such departure from traditions was, of course, abhorrent. Practical results of Mr. Henderson's visit were nil. In expressing the view that this visit was inopportune, I do not wish to imply that the Prime Minister's fundamental idea was wrong. Alongside with the official representative, the Ambassador who dealt with the Ministers in the Provisional Government, Mr. Lloyd George's idea was that personal contact should be established with the leaders of the Russian Revolutionary movement who stood outside the Government. Such contact would give an opportunity of gaining a better understanding of the actual moods and wishes of the popular masses, and of their leaders. The idea was good, but the choice was not the best that could have been made.

As I have already remarked, the Provisional Government in the first few weeks was loth to effect drastic changes in the personnel of the

Russian representation abroad. It seems to me that if, instead of making the queer appointment of Mr. Sazonov, the Provisional Government had sent to the Allied capitals such "special" Ambassadors as in Henderson and Albert Thomas were sent to Russia, selecting such prominent representatives of the Russian Revolutionary movement as Plehanov, Tchaikovsky or Savinkov the task of promoting a general understanding between Russia, Britain and France would have been rendered considerably easier. The Press and public opinion would certainly have treated the activities and the declarations of such leaders with greater respect, and their public utterances would have carried greater weight than the efforts in the same direction which were made by diplomats who had preserved their posts after the fall of the old regime.

Unfortunately, the Russian Government did not avail itself of this opportunity of influencing public opinion in the Allied countries. During the first months after the Revolution, the only person who visited Europe with a special mandate from the Provisional Government, was the Commissary Svatikov. His journey had no political significance. The pen

of Gogol would alone be capable of adequately describing the adventures in London of this modern Khlestakov.¹ I will therefore devote but a few lines to this buffoonery.

Mr. Svatikov had apparently received instructions to investigate the activities of the foreign sections of the Old Russian "Okhrana," (Secret Service) and more particularly of the Paris branch; also the mutual relationship between these secret police stations in foreign lands and the Russian Diplomatic and Consular institutions. During the thirteen years of Count Benckendorff's Ambassadorship, the Embassy had had nothing whatsoever to do with the "Okhrana." When I succeeded the Ambassador I was unaware even of the presence in London of agents of that subterranean institution. Naturally, I took it for granted that the "Revisor from Petrograd" would not remain in London for any length of time and that conversations with him would not drag. Alas! I was wrong. Mr. Svatikov had already succeeded in reducing the Russian Diplomatic institutions in Scandinavia to a state of abject panic. He had assumed the tone of a "Super-

¹ A character in Gogol's famous comedy, "Revisor" (Government Inspector).

Revisor," before whom all Russian officials, big and small, were to tremble. The dignitary was met at the station in London by one of the Secretaries of the Embassy. He called at the Embassy at about 2 p.m., at lunch time. Finding only an English servant and no one else, the great man was very angry. At 6 o'clock I visited him in a boarding-house somewhere in the neighbourhood of Russell Square. He was polite but majestic. His outward appearance was exceedingly comical, and the fun was enhanced by the airs he was trying to put on. He told me that he had come to make an investigation of the Embassy and of other institutions. He expressed the desire to have interviews with Cabinet ministers, and with the Prime Minister himself. Subsequent discussions, however, elicited that his main purpose was to establish the fact which to him seemed beyond doubt, of the former connection between the Embassy and the "Okhrana." After I had categorically stated to him that there was not a word of truth in these suggestions, he directed all his arrows against the Consul-general, Baron Heyking. Baron Heyking was dismissed from the Service by the Provisional Government on the strength of this

super-spy's report in a manner which certainly was not to their credit.

Mr. Svatikov left us alone. Of course, he had no interviews with any Cabinet Ministers. Owing to the desire on the part of one or two Russian Government officials in London to gain the sympathies of the "Revisor," he was invited to attend the inauguration meeting of the Anglo-Russian Society "Bratstvo." This meeting took place at Westminster and was presided over by Lord Robert Cecil. Before I had time to intervene, it was arranged that Mr. Svatikov should address the gathering. It was something terrible. With a most appalling accent, he delivered in what he believed to be the English language a speech about Russian "liberty" which was the height of triviality. Our British friends smiled sarcastically, whilst all Russians, with a sense of the grotesque, wished they could have sunk through the floor.

After a comparatively short stay in London, during which he received van loads of reports and denunciations from zealous informants on the activities of the Russian Embassy and Consulate-General, Mr. Svatikov left for Paris. There, he was apparently taken very seriously, exactly like Ivan Alexandrovitch Khlestakov.

Upon his arrival in Rome he seems to have put on even greater airs and went so far as to endeavour to dismiss officials. Meanwhile, the tale of his eccentricities reached Petrograd. It apparently dawned upon the Government that all this farce was affecting the prestige of the Provisional Government. Kerensky sent telegrams to London and Paris, instructing the Embassies to declare to Svatikov that his plenary powers were cancelled and that he should return to Russia forthwith. Our representative in Paris failed to convey this message to the gentleman, with whom, as he put it, "friendly relations had been established." The pill was therefore offered to Mr. Svatikov by one of the Secretaries of the Russian Embassy in London. Mr. Svatikov was very subdued. At the moment of his departure he requested the secretary of the Embassy who was seeing him off, to transmit to me his entreaty that I should intervene in favour of Comrade Chicherin,¹ who had already at that time become an inmate of Brixton Prison. The Russian Provisional Government cannot be severely blamed for sending abroad this grotesque individual. The Ministers could not

¹ The now famous Foreign Secretary in the Soviet Government.

estimate the results of such a special mission. Subordinates, on the other hand, including, of course, the personnel of the Russian Foreign Office, did not dare to "hold any views." As I have already said, Svatikov's mission had no political importance. Nevertheless, it undoubtedly caused great harm. It gave rise to a series of mendacious denunciations and brought to light in other capitals to a greater extent than in London the servile terror of the Russian bureaucracy. Certain people literally crawled before the crow whom they had themselves invested with peacock's feathers.

CHAPTER V

ONE of the first measures which engaged the attention of the Provisional Government was the repatriation of all Russian citizens who had sought refuge abroad from the persecutions of the old regime. These *émigrés*' circles, as I have already mentioned, held aloof from the Embassy. Following upon official communications regarding the formation of the Provisional Government and the events which had led to its coming into power, as well as declarations to the Foreign Powers, the first *instructions* I received from the Minister of Foreign Affairs dealt with the subject of repatriation. The Russian Chargé d'Affaires was requested to "take all necessary steps in order to secure the return to Russia of all Russians who desire to do so." To this end the Chargé d'Affaires was instructed to form an "*Émigrés*' Committee" whose function would be to assist the Embassy in the work of repatriation. Owing to the attitude of the *émigrés*, the task imposed upon the Embassy

by Mr. Miliukov's instructions was seemingly a difficult one. The primary difficulty, however, proved not quite as insuperable as might have been expected, as the *émigrés* took the initiative in approaching the Embassy. On the eve of the receipt of the above-mentioned telegram, two representatives of the *émigrés*, Chicherin and Krougliakov, visited me. As a result of our conversation it was decided to form the *Émigrés* Committee. Miliukov's idea had thus been forestalled.

It very soon became apparent that the task of repatriating Russian citizens was akin to the dragging not merely of a camel, but of whole caravans through a needle's eye. In the United Kingdom alone there were thousands of *émigrés*. London, moreover, became the centre to which Russians flocked from all continental countries cut off from Russia by enemy lands. At the same time, the spring of 1917 marked the beginning of the "spurlos versenkt" policy of Germany. In these circumstances it was quite obvious that the British Government was compelled to apply the strictest possible economy and circumspection in allotting passenger accommodation in the ships, escorted by destroyers,

which maintained communications between the Scandinavian countries and Great Britain. Technical difficulties were enhanced by the necessity of strictly controlling the passports of would-be travellers. Russian *émigrés* abroad, as often as not, were in possession of numerous documents from which it was more than difficult to derive definite knowledge of their identity. Thus a most distinguished Russian *émigré*, the afterwards illustrious Litvinov, went under some four or five names. That was the natural result of what was called in Russia in the pre-revolutionary days "illegal" existence. The solution of technical difficulties was rendered possible owing to the inexhaustible, prodigious kindness, forbearance and generosity of the British authorities directly concerned—the Admiralty and the Home Office. To the former, in particular, the Russian Embassy owes in this matter, as in many matters of greater importance, a debt of gratitude the extent of which cannot be measured. At that time the Government as a whole was trying to assist Russia. The Admiralty, as well as the War Office, continued to show courtesy and to render valuable support for many months after other less

sympathetic Departments had adopted a different attitude.

One of the difficulties was that the Admiralty quite naturally refused to allow women to cross the North Sea in British ships. Meanwhile, scores of Russian women, most of them from Whitechapel, noisily clamoured (God knows they *can* make a noise) for passages. Exceptions were made very reluctantly by the British authorities, and little by little the noisiest and most insistent female population was shipped across the North Sea.

At the same time, there soon arose a necessity of safeguarding Russia from the influx of the Bolshevik element. In those days they called themselves "defeatists." Of this element Chicherin was the arrogant and truculent spokesman.

The repatriation of political refugees to Russia may be, without exaggeration, considered one of the most difficult tasks the Embassy had to undertake after the Revolution.

Soon after the Revolution, I was given the opportunity of coming into personal contact with the leaders of the Russian revolutionary movement who afterwards played an im-

portant part in Russia. With a few exceptions, they all appealed to the Embassy for assistance. A notable exception was Prince Kropotkin, who was evidently unable to master the deep-rooted aversion for Russian officialdom which had been ingrained in him for decades.

Savinkov, Avxentiev and about fourteen other prominent men obtained special facilities. One of the members of that party, Deitch, came to see me and pleaded for his wife to be permitted to cross in the same ship. "Tell me," said Deitch, "are you the son of D. N. Nabokoff, who was Minister of Justice in 1877-1879?" I replied in the affirmative. "Well," he said, "your father—who, by the way, was one of the most broadminded men of that period—questioned me in person. I was exiled to Siberia. For over forty years I have been in the revolutionary movement. Four times I went to Russia 'illegally,' was arrested and escaped again. I am glad that in returning to Russia, for the first time after forty-two years' exile, as a free citizen, I am assisted by the son of the Nabokoff who saved me from the scaffold." I shall never forget that interview and the impression it produced upon me.

Savinkov and Avxentiev visited the Embassy for a few minutes, as they were in a desperate hurry. I thus missed the opportunity of having a long talk with them. The departure of that group of "notable" *émigrés* coincided with the presence in London of the notorious Victor Tchernov.¹ All accommodation in the first outgoing steamer had already been allotted. One day, as I was sitting in my office, a grey-haired, sulky, repulsive individual was introduced into the room. He started to protest in very violent terms against his retention in London and insisted upon having a seat in the next boat. "Unfortunately, all seats are taken," said I. "I don't care," said Tchernov. "For *me*, a seat must be found. My name is Tchernov." The contrast between the arrogance of this detestable "defeatist" and the unassuming, dignified attitude of Deitch was so striking that I could not fail to enjoy informing Tchernov that "in spite of his name being Tchernov, he would have to wait for the next boat." He was enraged to learn that Savinkov and others were leaving the next day. He waited a week.

By means of daily intercourse with the

¹ The President of the Constituent Assembly of 1918.

"*Émigrés* Committee" the Embassy succeeded in introducing a system of some sort into the task of repatriation. This intercourse was rendered quite friendly by the tactful and helpful demeanour of some of the members of the Committee, Mr. Krougliakov, Dr. Gavronsky and the veteran Mr. Zundelevitch. Occasionally friction was caused by Chicherin, who loathed the staff of the Embassy and was in the habit of flooding it with lengthy epistles apropos of nothing. The Embassy was also in constant touch with the *Émigrés* Committees in Paris, Rome and Berne. These Committees were endeavouring to disgorge as many people as possible by sending them to London, and to thrust upon the Embassy the burden of repatriating them as well as keeping them whilst in London. We argued that London was already filled to overflowing, that we had no adequate funds. The answer was that if Britain did not help, the *émigrés* would have no other alternative than to follow Lenin's example and return to Russia via Germany. In spite of the fact that the *Émigrés* Committee in London had assumed the rôle of intermediary between the *émigrés* and the Embassy, the appearance of parties of fifteen

to twenty angry and extremely noisy *émigrés* of the "southern" type was a frequent occurrence. Arguments were of no avail. These gentry took it for granted that the "revolutionary Government of Russia" was in honour bound to take care of them, feed and clothe them, and pay for their passage, and that the representative of the Revolutionary Government had no right to invoke difficulties of transport.

Technical difficulties, however, were not insoluble. The complications which soon arose and which made the dealings with the Committee a matter of constant concern and worry were purely political. It soon became apparent that the Bolshevik section in the *Émigrés* Committee was getting the upper hand, and that Chicherin, Litvinov and others were straining every nerve in order that as many "defeatists" as possible be given the opportunity of slipping in and getting to Russia. Also, the Embassy had every reason to believe that the extensive funds allotted by the Provisional Government to the *Émigrés* Committee and which we were not in a position to control were being recklessly squandered and unevenly distri-

buted . . . according to Chicherin's personal inclination.

As is well known, the Provisional Government was unable, at the very beginning, to withstand the pressure of the Soviet in the matter of repatriating *all* Russian refugees irrespective of political parties. Not that some of the Ministers did not understand the terrible blunder they committed in requesting the release of such men as Trotsky-Bronstein. They knew, but they could not help it. I am unaware of the exact circumstances in which Lenin was allowed to come to Petrograd from Germany. This much is certain, that although the British Government could not, at the time, foresee the part Lenin played and is still playing, the fact that the Provisional Government allowed him to cross the Russo-German border and to live in Petrograd unmolested contributed more to the loss of prestige in London of the Russian Government than any other of their errors.

Matters soon reached such a critical stage that I felt compelled to address the following warning to the Russian Government. "Something must be done to stop the influx of Bolsheviks into Russia. If you will continue to

allow this immigration without any discrimination whatsoever, you will cut the branch upon which you are sitting." Such was the trend of my argument. The Russian Foreign Office seemed to agree, but nothing happened. The Almighty Soviet was watching, and Chicherin, from London, was indulging in his graphomania and sending innumerable messages to Messrs. Tchkeidze, Tzeretelli, Skobelev, to Vera Figner, in a word, to the "influential" masters of the subdued Kerenski Ministry. At this moment, a split occurred in the Committee itself. Dr. Gavronsky saw the danger of this mass penetration of Bolsheviks into Russia and had the courage to raise his voice in the Committee against Chicherin. He was compelled to resign from the Committee, and shortly afterwards went to Russia in order to give full explanations to the Ministry. He returned several weeks later as Commissioner for Emigration, but did not have the opportunity of exercising these functions for any considerable length of time, as the Bolshevik revolution took place almost immediately upon his return.

Chicherin, in his innumerable letters and in conversation, adopted a very arrogant tone. He insisted upon the Embassy sending in

cypher his messages to the members of the Soviet regarding not only matters of repatriation, but also matters purely political. The struggle against this interference on the part of avowed enemies of the Entente and of Great Britain with political matters was indeed a hard one. The growing predominance of the Soviet over the Government in Petrograd was reflected in London in the ever-increasing arrogance of the extremists. At times, the position was truly intolerable.

The British Government was fully aware of this feature of the situation and of the activities of the Bolsheviks. As these tendencies, inimical to the Entente, became more apparent, the Government became correspondingly cautious in granting permission for the repatriation of Russian *émigrés*. This, naturally, aggravated the trouble the Embassy was already having with Chicherin and his friends. Finally, some time in August or in September (I do not remember the exact date) Chicherin was arrested and lodged in Brixton prison. When warning of the impending arrest was given, a deputation consisting of three members of the Committee (one of them, if I remember correctly, was Litvinov-Finkelstein) visited

the Embassy and asked me to demand that Chicherin be left in peace. I tried to explain that the British Government had reasons for Chicherin's arrest which I was neither capable nor desirous of contesting, and that the most I could promise was a postponement. The deputation then pleaded for a postponement of Chicherin's arrest in order that he might be given the time to hand over the funds and files of the Committee to his successor, Litvinov.

The Embassy held the view which was freely expressed both to the British Government and to the Committee that the best way out of the difficulty would be to send Chicherin to Russia where he would be less harmful than in London. Chicherin refused offers in that direction. He evidently enjoyed being a martyr of "Capitalism" and may have thought that the time had not yet come for him to assume the important rôle he has played since. Be that as it may, Chicherin was obdurate. Replying to a letter addressed to him while in Brixton prison by one of the Russian officials, he said among other things: "I see no difference between Alexandra Feodorovna and Alexander Feodorovitch." The

cynical *jeu de mots* is a reference to the old regime and to the Kerensky Government—which were equally unacceptable to Chicherin. It was quite obvious that Lenin was the only master Chicherin was prepared to serve.

Soon after Chicherin had been deported, his successor, Litvinov, was also deemed “undesirable.” The Embassy was notified that it was the intention of the Government to deport Litvinov as well.

The British Government had arrived at the decision to arrest, and later to deport, Chicherin only when undeniable proofs came to hand of his activities, which were detrimental to the interests of the country as well as of the Entente (in so far, of course, as that graphomaniac could be dangerous). The Russian Government instructed me to demand “explanations” from the British Government in this matter. I replied that I considered it absolutely impossible to utter a single word of protest against a measure which the Government had every reason to adopt, and that should I carry out the instruction, the rebuke would react upon the prestige of the Russian Government. Litvinov was, of course, of the same litter as Chicherin. I unwittingly transmitted to

the British Foreign Office (by leaving it on Sir Ronald Graham's desk) the letter by which the Embassy was officially notified by the Home Office of Litvinov's impending deportation as an undesirable. The document would have been an amusing addition to the archives of the Embassy. A berth had already been secured and a *visa* granted to Litvinov, when the Bolshevik Government appointed him "Ambassador" by wireless. The "undesirable" was allowed to remain.

There can be no doubt that the great majority of the leaders of the Bolshevik movement reached Russia owing to the weakness and folly of the Provisional Government in allowing them to do so. Whether the Government was in a position to resist this influx or not is another matter. Had it not been for the German submarines and the ensuing difficulty of getting to Russia from the continent across the North Sea, maybe the Bolshevik revolution would have taken place much sooner. On the other hand, the Germans must have been well aware of the nature of the passengers who crossed the North Sea under escort, and the boats were seldom attacked.

The Russian Government displayed great generosity towards the *émigrés*. I am not in possession of the accounts of the Embassy for 1917 and am therefore unable to state the exact amount expended on the repatriation of Russian *émigrés*. It certainly amounted to several million roubles. I recollect that a couple of weeks before the collapse of the Provisional Government I received the sum of £50,000 sterling "for the needs of the *émigrés*." This sum was afterwards confiscated by the British Government together with all other sums belonging to the Russian Government. It is to be noted that by the end of October the bulk of the Russian *émigrés* had already been repatriated. This shows how lavish the expenditure must have been.

[As a result of the Bolshevik invasion of Riga, about four hundred Russian refugees were brought to Great Britain in the spring of 1919 in a British ship. Owing to the kind assistance given by the French in the Crimea and in Odessa—also in the spring of 1919—hundreds of refugees were likewise brought to London from the South. It would perhaps be more correct to describe them as counter-refugees. They were all destitute, their

property having been destroyed or confiscated by the Bolsheviks. The Embassy approached the British Government with a request that the above-mentioned sum of £50,000 sterling be "released" in order to allow the Embassy to render assistance to these Russians, who were penniless and forlorn. It was suggested that the Embassy should give a detailed account to the British Government of the manner in which this sum was to be expended, and the argument was put forward that the above-mentioned sum had been transferred by the Government for the definite purpose of assisting Russian refugees. The request was refused.]

To return to my narrative.

The attitude of various Russian circles in London which were not strictly bureaucratic towards the members of the Embassy differed according to the degree of their prejudice against the representatives of the old regime. The staff of the Embassy made every effort to render assistance and to win the confidence of all those who came into contact with the Embassy. They were, however, unable to dissipate the mistrust and hatred of such individuals as Chicherin, whose innermost

feelings undoubtedly were: "Ote-toi pour que je m'y mette." Fortunately, the great majority of Russians were not as obdurate as this specimen of degenerate fanaticism. Cases in which one had to display extreme calmness and restraint in the face of insolence and *mania grandiosa* were isolated.

Many, on the other hand, were those whose attitude towards the Embassy during my tenure of office was such as to afford most valuable moral support, more especially during the times of trial and isolation which began on November 7, 1917.

CHAPTER VI

UNDER the old regime, the Russian Foreign Office never took the trouble to keep the Russian representatives abroad informed of the course of events and of the internal policy of the Russian Government. It was taken for granted that the Ambassadors, Ministers and their staff read the Russian papers and derived from them sufficient information to enable them to form a judgment of the internal condition of the country. In forming this judgment, they were supposed to rely chiefly upon the views expressed by the "Novoe Vremia," the servile sheet which liberals had long since nicknamed "As you like it." In the old days, of course, that was quite sufficient. What Ambassador was ever questioned on the internal condition of his country? Nobody ever dreamt of committing such a breach of diplomatic etiquette. Much less would it have occurred to anyone to question a secretary of an Embassy, for they were not supposed to hold any views whatsoever.

In the last months which preceded the

revolution, the Russian Foreign Office was more reticent than ever. Count Benckendorff occasionally received private letters from his relatives in Petrograd, but was seldom inclined to impart to his staff the information therein contained. We learnt the news of the happenings in Petrograd from casual visitors. I recollect that for several days we were unable to satisfy the curiosity of newspaper correspondents who wanted to know all about the new Premier, Prince Galitzine, in the autumn of 1916. We could not tell which of the numerous Princes Galitzine had suddenly risen to the unenviable position of Protopopoff's chief and abettor.

When Mr. Miliukov took charge of the Foreign Office, we confidently expected this feature of the activities of his Department—reliable official information concerning the condition of Russia—to assume a satisfactory complexion. On several occasions, the Embassy pointed out to Miliukov, and later with even greater emphasis to Tereschenko, that it was absolutely essential that we should be kept informed of the course of events in Russia and in particular in Petrograd. It never was realised with sufficient clearness in Petrograd

that the revolution brought about a complete change in the status of the Embassy. Newspaper correspondents, who had hitherto kept aloof from Russian officialdom, now became frequent callers. They expected us to enlighten them upon the progress of the Republican regime in Russia.

Alas, our hopes were disappointed. In spite of our persistent requests and reminders, we continued to derive our information from . . . the British Press. During Mr. Miliukov's term of office, he never wrote a single letter to the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in London. I have since learnt that such a correspondence was a physical impossibility, as the first Foreign Minister in the Provisional Government was so overwhelmed with work and worry that he could never have found time for letter-writing. All the same, the fact was deplorable.

It would have been quite easy, had it not been for the conditions in which Mr. Miliukov worked, to establish close contact, as we had known each other for many years, and intimate friendship existed between Miliukov and my brother, who was also a member of the first Provisional Government (a kind of "Chief Secretary"). I therefore felt, when

Miliukov resigned, that a splendid opportunity had been wasted.

When Tereschenko succeeded Miliukov at the Foreign Office, I again repeated my requests for information. By transmitting the telegrams containing these requests to Paris, I induced my colleague to add his voice to mine. The Russian Foreign Office made an attempt at organising regular information. Unfortunately, the telegrams they sent out regularly about once a week were not always in strict accordance with truth, and represented the situation in brighter colours than were justified by the reality. Also, information was invariably belated. As an illustration of this condition of affairs, I may quote the following fact. On the day after the London papers had published a full account of the memorable Kornilov episode, which had already culminated in Kerensky's dastardly declaration that Kornilov was a traitor, a telegram reached the Embassy which recounted the events of the preceding week. It contained the statement that "relations between the Government and the High Command are assuming an entirely satisfactory character." Kornilov was then under arrest. . . .

I must confess that after a while I ceased to read these telegrams, and the Embassy staff even left some of them undecoded, as their contents were to be found in the columns of Reuter's messages in every paper in London. These telegrams seldom served as material for official information to be conveyed to the Foreign Office, as Sir George Buchanan's telegrams were infinitely more accurate. Reports from the Petrograd correspondents of the leading London journals were likewise more truthful and more up to date.

Thus, in forming an opinion of the internal condition of Russia and of the degree of stability of the Provisional Government the Embassy had to be guided chiefly by newspaper comments and by official information emanating from British sources—as far, of course, as the British Government desired to impart this information to the Embassy. I need not enlarge upon the difficulty of carrying out the task of representing the Government in these circumstances. In fact, it was no easier than in the days of Sturmer.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE RUSSIAN PROVISIONAL,

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GOVERNMENT DURING THE EIGHT MONTHS OF THE LATTER'S EXISTENCE MAY BE, ROUGHLY SPEAKING, DIVIDED INTO THREE PHASES.

THE FIRST WAS ONE OF BENEVOLENT EXPECTATION.

THE SECOND WAS ONE OF DIFFIDENCE, MINGLED WITH IRRITATION.

THE THIRD WAS ONE OF DISILLUSIONMENT AND RESENTMENT.

In the following pages I will deal chiefly with the attitude of the British Foreign Office. In those days, the Prime Minister did not direct the Foreign policy of Great Britain quite as personally as during the Peace Conference and after. His attitude towards Russia, in those days, did not exercise the decisive influence it has assumed since 1918.

During March and April, 1917, the Foreign Office was "watching" the new Russian regime. In the course of these months events took place on various fronts which tended to create an atmosphere of optimism. On the Western front, Hindenburg's "strategic retreat" was proceeding. The capture of Baghdad obliterated the painful memories of Kut. The most important event, however, was

the entry of the United States into the war. Personally, I am convinced—and this conviction is based upon the knowledge I have of American psychology—that the downfall of the autocratic regime in Russia provided, in the eyes of the Americans, the best proof of the fact that Europe was fighting for the ideals of liberty and democracy. The American people were adverse to an alliance with the Russian Monarchy, because they took the view that it was the symbol of militarism and oppression in the same degree as the German Monarchy.

The entry of the United States into the Entente Coalition naturally served to alleviate to a considerable extent the burden borne by Great Britain, and caused a corresponding revival of the spirit of that country in Government circles as well as with the general public. Incidentally, the Russian Provisional Government displayed lamentable shortsightedness in failing to take advantage of this magnificent opportunity of establishing the closest possible contact with the United States. Possibilities in this direction were truly limitless. Had proper propaganda been started at that moment, we could have secured at once and

forever the support and sympathy of the people of the United States. The Russian Government did *nothing*. They only replaced George Bakhmetiev by Boris Bakhmetiev at Washington. The retired Ambassador, George Bakhmetiev, was a fervent Monarchist, a deadly enemy of every Russian liberal and in particular of Miliukov. He was an exceptionally clever cynic. Questioned as to his relationship with the new Ambassador, he is reported to have replied that the relationship was the same as between George Washington and Booker T. Washington.

The British Government was "watching." The Foreign Office was in sympathy with every measure which tended to show that the Russian Provisional Government did not intend to destroy such foundations of the Government structure as needed only to be adjusted to the new democratic regime. In other words, it was hoped that the moderate element, the Constitutional-democratic party, would remain in power. Every sign of the readiness of that party to make concessions to the Radical parties provoked apprehension. The resignation of Miliukov and the advent of Kerensky as Premier practically

terminated the first of the above-mentioned phases—that of BENEVOLENT EXPECTATION.

I have reason to believe that Sir George Buchanan expressed, in his reports, a favourable opinion of Mr. Tereschenko. I could not, however, fail to notice that in the eyes of the British statesmen to whom I made representations on behalf of the young and brilliant Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, his authority and prestige were somewhat lower than that which Mr. Miliukov had enjoyed. The turn of events in Russia was beginning to appear to British public opinion as dangerous, and fears were being freely expressed that Russia would be unable to stand fast. The reports of British military representatives in Russia were permeated with deep pessimism. Kerensky's attitude towards the Russian Generals, whom he treated with contempt, constantly dismissing them or sending them from one command to another, the introduction of Army "Committees," the systematic undermining of discipline—gave to the Foreign Military representatives ample grounds for apprehending the disruption of the Army. General (then Colonel) Sir Alfred Knox was the British Military Attaché. This quiet,

energetic and exceptionally well-informed officer commanded the esteem and admiration of the best elements of the Russian Army. He never hesitated to tell the truth, however unpalatable to slackers and cowards. "Il n'y mettait pas de gants blancs." He was quick to detect and to stigmatize opportunism and inefficiency. He was deeply respected by the best and detested by the worst. Knox had no sentimental love for Russia. He had, however, a great admiration for the qualities of the Russian soldier and rendered just tribute to the Generals who deserved it. The detractors of General Knox have always pretended that he assumed towards the Russian officers an attitude of extreme haughtiness. I am convinced that the accusation is utterly devoid of real foundation. Most Russians were simply unable to see the sterling qualities of this gallant, straightforward and noble man behind the heavy screen of typically British impassivity and coldness. I shall never forget the speech General Knox delivered in London on February 20, 1920, at a small gathering in memory of Admiral Kolchak. I would venture to say that anyone who is praised by General Knox must feel a couple of inches taller for the compliment.

General Knox sent gloomy reports. Ever since May, 1917, his predictions were most pessimistic. Meanwhile, even to observers not half so keen as the British General who was better informed than the Russian General Staff themselves, it was becoming evident that the growth of the influence of the Soviet was proceeding at a rapid pace.

I have often heard it said not only by Russians who had been in close touch with the Provisional Government, but also by some British politicians, such, for instance, as Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, that the British Government failed to give the Russian Government adequate support. As I have already stated, there was no love lost between the British statesmen responsible for foreign policy and the leaders of the Russian revolution. Nevertheless, the insinuations made in certain quarters both in Great Britain and in Russia appear to me groundless.

As early as in the summer of 1916, Russian public opinion fell into the grave error of grossly over-estimating the measure of assistance which Great Britain was in a position to give to the other Powers of the Entente, and more especially to Russia. As a result of

this misconception, every time Great Britain declined to comply with a Russian request for further supplies of war material or of credit, such a refusal was invariably regarded as an expression of Britain's *unwillingness* to assist Russia. Yet in most cases, if not always, it was not unwillingness, but actual impossibility, or else the granting of the request was accompanied with such risks as made it appear a danger to the interests of Great Britain. In spite of all difficulties, Great Britain continued steadily to pour munitions and other war material into Russia. Every one knows to what enormous proportions the amount of Russian war material had risen towards the summer of 1917. As regards political support, the position was somewhat different. The authority of the Provisional Government was waning. Not to speak of the admission of Lenin to Russia, Kerensky's demagogic ways contributed to undermine the prestige of the Government in the eyes of British statesmen. What means had they at their disposal for "supporting" that prestige and the power which the Soviet was steadily and skilfully snatching from the feeble hands of Kerensky and his Ministers? What influence

could have been exercised from without? Sir George Buchanan adopted an attitude of sincere sympathy towards the Russian Ministry. The Ambassador certainly did point out to these Ministers, in terms of friendly solicitude, certain facts which tended to indicate the loss of authority which was noticeable to everybody. The Ministers, however, continued to reply with self-assurance that things were going as well as could be expected. Thus the discrepancy between the Russian Foreign Minister's official optimism and the actual state of affairs became more and more obvious, and no illusions were entertained in London on that score.

Relations between Governments enjoying more or less the same degree of cultural development and civilisation are governed by rules and customs sanctioned by history. All that is artificial and perhaps even pernicious in these rules and customs was ingrained to such an extent in the minds of responsible statesmen, that no departure from sacred tradition was deemed possible. It is said that Britain did not support the Provisional Government. Great Britain and Russia were Allies in a life and death struggle against

Germany and her associates. The Provisional Government issued a series of orders which ruined the discipline of the Russian Army. The Provisional Government admitted to Russia Lenin, Trotsky and scores, if not hundreds of avowed "defeatists" and traitors to the Allied cause—admitted them deliberately. Great Britain was fully entitled—even more than any other Ally, on account of the assistance she was giving—to say to Russia: "We cannot help you to create with one hand that which you are destroying with the other hand. As long as you allow agitators to preach treason to the Army, we cannot supply that Army with material which it may leave to the enemy." In my opinion, such an ultimatum would have served the interests of both countries concerned better than silent disillusion and shoulder-shrugging. But it would have been against all accepted standards of "non-interference," and none of the Allies therefore ventured to use such language. As will be seen from the subsequent narrative, the British Prime Minister vaguely understood that something of that kind should be done. But it was done too late and in a fashion which invalidated the otherwise legitimate step.

In the beginning of June, a second attempt was made at appointing an Ambassador to London. A telegram reached the Embassy instructing me to request that Baron Alexander Meyendorff, the late Vice-President of the Duma, be accepted in that capacity. At the Foreign Office I was informed that Sir George Buchanan had telegraphed a few days before, and that His Majesty's consent had already been given. I am unaware of the reasons which prevented Baron Meyendorff from coming to London. Evidence is again conflicting. I have been assured by those who ought to know that he never intended to accept the appointment. Be that as it may, whether the Soviet had intervened, or Baron Meyendorff had refused to move, or maybe never had actually been appointed—this incident did not serve to enhance the prestige of the Russian Ministry. On the other hand, it did not make my personal task any easier, as it showed that my tenure of office was a *pis-aller* which both the British and the Russian Government were anxious to remove. A *pis-aller* it undoubtedly was, as I had ceased to be *persona grata* (if I ever had been). Yet none in Russia was so re-

solute as to take the burden off unsuitable shoulders.

The second phase in the attitude of the British Government towards Russia, that of Diffidence Mingled with Irritation, was approaching. On the Russian front, troops were already beginning to fraternise with the enemy. Reports from British military experts were growing daily more alarmist. The change in the attitude of Great Britain is illustrated by the following incident.

At the end of July, 1917, an Inter-Allied Conference was to be called in London. These Conferences took place at regular intervals, about once in a month, when questions cropped up which made it necessary to reaffirm and to foster complete solidarity by means of personal consultations between the Prime Ministers and Commanders-in-Chief of the Allied Powers. Two days before the appointed date, the French Chargé d'Affaires (Monsieur Cambon was away on a short leave) informed me of Monsieur Ribot's arrival, and expressed surprise at my not having been invited to take part in the Conference. He added that he would not fail to inform the French Prime Minister. On the morning of the day when

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the first meeting had been fixed for noon, I received instructions from Petrograd which required that I should have a personal interview with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. I rang up the Foreign Office at about 11.15 and received the reply (it was a Monday) that Mr. Balfour would be unable to see me before Thursday, as he was very busy attending the Inter-Allied Conference. I thanked my informant for the very interesting news that an Inter-Allied Conference was sitting in London. "The Russian Representative naturally finds this information particularly interesting, as Russia is one of the Powers of the Entente." A few minutes later I was requested to attend the Conference at 10, Downing Street. Time was short so that I was unable to conform with the etiquette and don a morning coat. I just managed to get there in time by jumping into a taxicab. Everybody had already arrived, when I reached Downing Street.

The entire British Cabinet was present, as well as Lord Bertie, the British Ambassador in Paris. The French Cabinet was represented by the Premier, Monsieur Ribot, Mr. Painlevé, Monsieur Albert Thomas, Marshal

Foch and others. Baron Sonnino, Marquis Imperiali and an Italian General were also present.

Mr. Lloyd George presided. Before starting the discussion on the matters which formed the object of the gathering, the Prime Minister suggested that "a stern protest" be sent to the Russian Government "against the continuation in Russia of disruption and anarchy." After the French Prime Minister and the Italian Foreign Minister had spoken, Mr. Lloyd George addressed to me the remark: "I should like to hear the views of the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in this matter." I must confess that at this moment the thought flashed through my brain: no wonder no Russian Ambassador has had the courage of "tackling this job." To ask the representative of an Allied country what he thought of a collective protest being addressed to his country by her Allies was indeed an unprecedented predicament.

As a result of the deliberations that followed, Monsieur Thomas was requested to draft a message to the Kerensky Government, and the message was approved by the Conference and despatched in the following terms:

“ Les représentants des Gouvernements Alliés réunis à Londres le 7 Août, saluent de toute leur sympathie l'ardent effort de réorganisation que poursuivent dans la Russie libre le Gouvernement Provisoire et son chef.

“ Ils constatent avec satisfaction qu'en cette heure tragique toutes les forces russes se serrent autour du Gouvernement pour renforcer son pouvoir et que la volonté populaire, exprimée sous des formes de jour en jour plus sûres et par une représentation plus complète, proclame très haut la nécessité de la défense nationale.

“ Ils adressent leurs vœux les plus chaleureux à Monsieur Kerensky et à ses collaborateurs et expriment une ferme confiance dans leur autorité croissante et dans le rétablissement d'une stricte discipline, indispensable sans doute à toute armée, mais plus encore aux armées des peuples libres. C'est par la discipline que l'armée Russe assurera tout à la fois la liberté populaire, l'honneur de la nation, et la réalisation des buts de guerre communs à tous les Alliés.”

Such was the “ strong protest.”

The “ lesson ” given to Kerensky in this message is, of course, perfectly obvious, but it

is administered in terms which exclude the possibility of any feeling of slighted national honour.

The incident is illuminating. Also, it should be noted that the matters discussed at the subsequent meetings of the Conference were purely military. No Russian military representative, however, was invited to attend, and my opinion was asked merely as a matter of courtesy. General Dessino, who was then the representative of the Russian General Headquarters with the British High Command, was very angry with me for not having "insisted" upon his participation in these deliberations. It was by no means an easy task for me to persuade him, that by avoiding any mention of Russian military representatives at the Conference I had merely saved him the humiliation of hearing remarks about the Russian Army which would have not been to his liking.

CHAPTER VII

IN order fully to understand the circumstances in which the Governments of the Entente Powers refused to grant passports to the Delegates for the Stockholm Conference, thereby causing the Conference to be cancelled—it is necessary clearly to realise the general character of international relations at that moment, as well as to recall the military situation on various fronts. The United States had declared war on Germany. The Russian Armies, although their offensive operations had ceased since the autumn of 1916, still occupied the front. The Allies continued to supply these armies regularly with guns and munitions, and there was every reason to believe that by the end of 1917 they would be thoroughly equipped. In spite of the ravages wrought by the submarine warfare, there was therefore good ground for the hope that the German Coalition would ultimately be defeated. In these circumstances, the supporters, in the countries of the Entente,

of a "peace by compromise," redoubled their agitation, which was undoubtedly fostered from Berlin. Had not Germany realised at that moment that the entry of the United States into the war and the weakening, if not the complete paralysis, of Austria and Turkey had rendered the ultimate victory of the German Coalition impossible—she would not have agitated in favour of the Socialist Conference.

This conviction formed the basis of all my activities with regard to the Stockholm Conference. My motives were twofold. First and foremost, of course, was the interest of Russia herself. Also, the maintenance of Russia as a powerful and authoritative member of the anti-German Alliance. The removal of Germany's hold on Russia and the consolidation of an economic, cultural and political rapprochement between Russia and Great Britain have been and shall always form, in my mind, the two essential conditions for the peaceful development and prosperity of Russia. The Russian Embassy in London was *not* informed of the actual political and military condition of Russia. As has already been stated, the Russian Foreign Office telegrams

containing "information" were nothing else than naked bluff. Owing to the pressure of the Soviet, Ministers in the Provisional Government worked already under impossible conditions, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs did not dare to tell the truth officially to Russian Representatives abroad. On the other hand, these Ministers were too busy to allow themselves the luxury of private confidential letters to their colleagues abroad. I was thus under the impression that the Russian Army was still a formidable force. At the same time, I was convinced that Germany would make every effort to spread the news of the opening of a "peace Conference" at Stockholm in the ranks of the Russian army and would interpret this news as the beginning of peace negotiations. This, of course, could but exercise a demoralising influence.

The British Labour and Socialist leaders who favoured peace by compromise were endeavouring to persuade public opinion and the Labour circles that the Kerensky Government not only favoured the Conference at Stockholm, but considered such a Conference absolutely necessary. It was hinted that Russia was prepared to present the Allies

with an ultimatum in respect to the granting of passports and was threatening to make a separate peace with Germany in case the passports were refused. Radical and Liberal papers in London were misled by this agitation. There was every reason to believe that such an attitude of the *Russian Government* was causing grave anxiety to the Allies, and more especially to the British Government, that it undermined its faith in Russia and Russia's prestige.

Bearing these considerations in mind, and in view of the fact that a Labour Conference was due in London on August 10 (1917), I sent the following telegram to Mr. Tereschenko on August 3 :—

“ The question of the participation of representatives of the British Labour Party in the Stockholm Conference will be decided next Friday. There is a strong agitation within the party against this participation and the opposition to British participation will undoubtedly be strengthened by the reply of the American Federation of Labour to the French Federation. It is stated categorically in this reply that the Conference cannot, at the present moment, have useful results, and that

the American Federation does not intend to send Delegates to Stockholm. Mr. Bonar Law stated yesterday in the House of Commons that the Government would not send delegates, that the approval of the Conference depends not on the Government, but on the Labour Party, expressed the hope that this approval would not be given, and pointed out that the Government had not decided whether anybody would be allowed to take part in the Conference. The Leader of the House added that 'This permission will not be given without serious consideration and will probably be refused.' I consider it absolutely necessary, with a view to safeguarding the stability and closeness of our union with Great Britain, where the majority of public opinion is adverse from the Conference, that I should be in a position to declare most emphatically to Mr. Balfour that the Russian Government as well as His Majesty's Government regard this matter as a party concern and not a matter of state, and that the decisions of the Conference, should it be convened, would in no way be binding on the future course of Russian policy and of Russia's relations with her Allies. I shall be questioned by Mr. Balfour on the subject

and therefore expect you to give me definite instructions."

It must be noted that a few days before this telegram was sent, Mr. Henderson, who was then a member of the Cabinet, and Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, M.P., had been to Paris in order to confer with their French friends, promoters of the Conference. The fact that these gentlemen had been granted passports had caused a storm in the Press and in Parliament which the Prime Minister took great pains to calm. It was obvious that public opinion and Parliament were opposed to the Conference. These facts I also reported to the Russian Foreign Minister.

Meanwhile, four Russian delegates of the Soviet of Workmen and Soldiers' Delegates—Ehrlich, Goldenberg, Russanov and Smirnov—not one of them, of course, a workman or a soldier—arrived in London for the purpose of agitating in favour of the Conference. These men endeavoured to adopt a dictatorial tone towards the Embassy, demanding the right of using cipher for correspondence with Tcheidze, Tzereteli and Kerensky. They conferred with Messrs. Henderson and Macdonald. The demeanour of these Soviet delegates gave

me for the first time a true understanding of the measure in which the Provisional Government was already under the heel of the Soviet.

Only a very short time was left before the first meeting of the Labour Conference in London, and I therefore waited with feverish anxiety for an answer to my telegram. The answer came at 4 p.m. on August 9. It ran as follows :—

“ I entirely approve of the declaration to be made to His Majesty’s Government in the sense suggested by you, and you are hereby authorised to inform the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that although the Russian Government does not deem it possible to prevent Russian delegates from taking part in the Stockholm Conference, they regard this Conference as a party concern and its decisions in no wise binding upon the liberty of action of the Government.”

Immediately, the following note was addressed by me to Mr. Balfour :—

“ In a telegram I sent to the Russian Foreign Minister three or four days ago I gave him an account of the statements made in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister

and Mr. Henderson concerning the latter's visit to Paris, as well as of Mr. Bonar Law's statements regarding the Stockholm Conference and of the discussions which were taking place in the different labour organisations of Great Britain as to the desirability of sending delegates to Stockholm. I also drew the Russian Foreign Minister's attention to the reply given by the American Federation of Labour to the French Confédération Générale du Travail. In conclusion I said the following: 'I consider it absolutely necessary, with a view to safeguarding the stability and closeness of our union with Great Britain, where the majority of public opinion is adverse from the Conference, that I should be in a position to declare most emphatically to Mr. Balfour that the Russian Government as well as His Majesty's Government regard this matter as a party concern and not a matter of state, and that the decisions of the Conference, should it be convened, would in no way be binding on the future course of Russian policy and of Russia's relations with her Allies.'"

After quoting verbatim the reply I had received from Mr. Tereschenko, I concluded: 'I hasten to lay before you the above informa-

tion as I fear that the impression has hitherto prevailed that, in the words of one of the London newspapers, 'Russia ardently desires the Stockholm Conference,' and this argument has been put forward in order to influence British public opinion in favour of the Labour and Socialist Parties of Great Britain participating in the Conference."

A meeting of the War Cabinet was thereupon called, at which, presumably, Mr. Henderson was present. On the next day, the first sitting took place of the Labour Conference. Mr. Henderson advocated with the same persistence the idea of the conference and made a passing allusion with regard to Russia, to the effect that "a slight change had occurred in the attitude of the Russian Government towards the Conference at Stockholm." The impression that "Russia ardently desires the Conference," which it was my object to dispel, was thus maintained.

On the next morning I was invited to 10, Downing Street. I found the Prime Minister in a very angry mood. He showed me a telegram from Paris signed by Albert Thomas: "Kerensky ne veut pas de Conférence." A copy of my note to Mr. Balfour was in the

hands of the Prime Minister, who said to me : "This note is a document of the highest importance. It proves that the Russian Government is not 'stage-managing' Stockholm, and it gives us full liberty to lay our veto upon the Conference. The day before yesterday I gave Henderson definite instructions to reveal to the Conference the position as it now stands. Henderson has failed to carry out these instructions, and must resign immediately." The Prime Minister insisted upon the publication of the full text of my note to Mr. Balfour. After a lengthy discussion I agreed to the concluding passage of my note being made public. In the course of our conversation, Mr. Lloyd George mentioned other questions of the day. Returning to the Embassy, I sent a telegram to the Russian Foreign Minister, giving him a full account of the conversation I had with the Prime Minister. In conclusion, I added, "The Prime Minister also mentioned the subject which had been discussed at the last inter-allied conference, and said to me : 'Britain, France and Italy hold the Western Front, Russia—the Eastern. In order to gain victory, complete and constant co-ordination is essen-

tial. I may tell you frankly, that such a co-ordination is impossible, as long as the Russian High Command is represented by old Generals or by young ones who know less about the conditions of the Russian Front, the plans, intentions and possibilities of the Russian Government and of the High Command, than we ourselves know. Never at any one of the conferences on military matters, have we heard the voice of a well-informed and authoritative Russian General.' The Prime Minister insisted upon the arrival of such a General, to take part in the Conference in Paris on September 15. I had intended, some time before this conversation took place, to urge the Russian Government to send General Alexeiev to London and Paris. I feel certain that his presence would be of great value, not only on account of his knowledge, but because of the prestige he undoubtedly enjoys. Furthermore, it is imperative that you should give me fuller information. Only thus would I be able to interpret the intentions of Russia. I request an urgent reply, and a decision in regard to the arrival of General Alexeiev, or General Russki."

As usual, I received neither information nor an urgent reply, and no decision was taken in regard to General Alexeiev.

A few days later, the Foreign Office acknowledged receipt of my note to Mr. Balfour, and stated, that His Majesty's Government sincerely welcomed this further proof of the identity of view upon the Stockholm Conference, which existed between the two Governments.

The origin of Albert Thomas's telegram to Mr. Lloyd George, "Kerensky ne veut pas de Conférence" remains a mystery to me. Subsequent events have proved that Kerensky did not communicate directly with Mons. Thomas on the subject. Recently, I have learnt from a authoritative source, that Kerensky had, in confidential conversation, expressed himself against the Conference, and that his views had been communicated to one of the members of the Staff of the French Embassy in Petrograd, who corresponded direct with Mons. Thomas. That may be the explanation of the mysterious telegram. It would show that in this case Mr. Kerensky did not have the courage of his opinions, and did not hesitate to disown them, for fear of provoking the displeasure of the Soviet.

On the following day, the Press Bureau issued the correspondence between Mr. Henderson and the Prime Minister.

Offices of the War Cabinet,
2, Whitehall Gardens,
August 11, 1917.

DEAR PRIME MINISTER,

At our interview last night, I gathered you had reached the conclusion that my retention of the position of Secretary to the Labour Party was no longer compatible with my membership of the War Cabinet. Recent experiences have impressed me with the embarrassing complications arising from this duality of office. In these circumstances, therefore, I deem it advisable to ask you to release me from further membership of your Government.

I continue to share your desire that the war should be carried to a successful conclusion, and trust that in a non-Government capacity I may be able to render some little assistance to this end. I remain,

Yours sincerely,

ARTHUR HENDERSON.

August 11, 1917.

MY DEAR HENDERSON,

I am in receipt of your letter of this morning, tendering your resignation of your position as a member of the War Cabinet, and have received the permission of His Majesty, to whom I submitted your resignation, to accept it. My colleagues and I have received with satisfaction the assurance of your unabated desire to assist in the prosecution of the war to a successful conclusion, and they greatly regret that you can no longer be directly and officially associated with them in that enterprise. There are, however, certain facts with which it is essential that the public should be acquainted in order that they may form a correct appreciation of the events that have led to this regrettable conclusion.

The first is that your colleagues were taken completely by surprise by the attitude which you adopted at the Labour Conference yesterday afternoon. You know that they were in the present circumstances unanimously opposed to the Stockholm Conference, and you had yourself been prepared to agree to an announcement to that effect some days ago. At our suggestion, however, and that

of your Labour colleagues, it was decided to defer any such announcement until after the meeting yesterday.

I was under the impression after several talks with you that you meant to use your influence against meeting enemy representatives at Stockholm. What has happened in Russia during the last few weeks has materially affected the position in reference to that Conference. You admitted to me that the situation had completely changed even within the last fortnight, and that whatever ground you might have thought there was for delegates from Allied countries attending such a Conference a fortnight ago, the events of the last few days had shown you the unwisdom of such a course.

That was clearly what you led me to believe. It was also the impression left on the minds of your colleagues in the Cabinet and of your Labour colleagues in the Ministry. It was therefore with no small surprise that I received a letter from you yesterday afternoon stating that you "ought to inform me that after the most careful consideration you had come to the conclusion that you could take no other course than to stand by the advice you had

given the day after your return from Russia," and that your colleagues subsequently read the speech which you had delivered.

Surely this was a conclusion of which you ought to have informed the Cabinet before you went to the Conference. When you spoke at that Conference, you were not merely a member of the Labour Party, but a member of the Cabinet, responsible for the conduct of the war. Nevertheless, you did not deem it necessary to inform the Conference of the views of your colleagues, and the delegates accordingly were justified in assuming that the advice you gave was not inconsistent with their opinion.

The second point is this. Yesterday morning,¹ we received a most important communication from the Russian Government, in which we were informed that "Although the Russian Government did not deem it possible to prevent Russian delegates from taking part in the Stockholm Conference, they regarded it as a party concern, and its decision as in no wise binding on the liberty of action of the Government." And, further, the covering letter which accompanied this communica-

¹This is not correct. The communication was received on the previous afternoon.

tion contained these words : " I hasten to lay before you the above information because I fear that the impression has hitherto prevailed that in the words of one of the London papers, ' Russia ardently desires the Conference,' and this argument has been put forward in order to influence British public opinion in favour of the Labour and Socialist parties of Great Britain participating in the Conference."

Immediately on receipt of this intimation I sent it over to you with a request that you should communicate it to the Conference. You omitted to do so. It is true that in the course of your speech you made a very casual reference to " some modification " in the attitude of the Russian Government. But there is a manifest difference between the effect which would necessarily be produced upon any audience by an indifferent summary of that description and the communication to them of official information showing that the attitude of the Russian Government towards the Stockholm Conference was very different from what had been supposed.

In these circumstances your action does not appear to have been fair either to the Govern-

ment or to the delegates whom you were addressing. They were left in ignorance of a vital fact which must necessarily have affected their judgment. I am sending a copy of this correspondence to the Press.

Yours sincerely,

D. LLOYD GEORGE.

Mr. Henderson replied :—

DEAR PRIME MINISTER,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your favour, intimating that you are sending a copy of our correspondence to the Press.

I enclose a copy of the only statement I propose to make to the Press at this juncture.

Yours sincerely,

ARTHUR HENDERSON.

The Prime Minister's letter to Mr. Henderson was originally drafted before the first letter addressed to the Prime Minister by his colleague had reached its destination. This draft the Prime Minister read to me at 9 a.m. Upon the receipt of Mr. Henderson's letter, this original draft must, obviously, have been altered. Mr. Henderson stated in the autumn of 1919 that his resignation from the Cabinet was volun-

tary. It seems beyond doubt that this statement is incorrect, as the Prime Minister had decided that Mr. Henderson must go.

When the evening papers published the above quoted correspondence, a regular storm broke out in the Labour and Socialist circles. The Russian delegates—Ehrlich, Goldenberg and Russanov (Smirnov had been detained in France)—proceeded to send frantic telegrams to Petrograd demanding explanations. On Monday, the 13th, a telegram was published in the London Press, stating that “Kerensky is indignant at being misrepresented,” that “the Russian Chargé d’Affaires had exceeded his instructions,” etc. The impression was thus created that the Russian Ministers themselves did not know what they wanted and were going back on their word under pressure from the Soviet. On the same day, anticipating questions in the House of Commons, I asked for an interview with Mr. Balfour. Summoned to 10, Downing Street, I was received by the Prime Minister himself. I told him that it was quite clear from the Petrograd telegrams that the circumstances attending Mr. Henderson’s resignation had been misunderstood in Russia. I therefore

thought that in order to remove this misunderstanding it was most desirable that full explanations should be given in the House of Commons which I would be in a position to wire to Petrograd. The Prime Minister agreed.

In the course of this interview the Prime Minister appeared to be fully aware of the fact that the declaration of the Russian Government in regard to the Stockholm Conference, which had enabled him to take the action he considered as being in the best interest of the Allied cause, was due primarily to my personal initiative. He also realised that I had taken this step in the face of the bitter opposition of the Soviet. Mr. Lloyd George therefore expressed his appreciation of the service I had rendered in very warm and complimentary terms. The interview took place on August 13, 1917. It was the last occasion on which I had the honour of meeting the Prime Minister.

There can be no doubt that the "misunderstanding"—in other words, the mendacious telegrams sent from London to Petrograd by the Russian Soviet deputies—was partly due to the fact that the above-mentioned telegram from Albert Thomas was communicated to the Press and presented to the public

as the "Kerensky telegram." It was muddled up with my note to Mr. Balfour. Kerensky, never having sent it, and being unaware of its origin, repudiated it. He was compelled to disclaim all knowledge of it in order not to fall out with the much dreaded Soviet. A member of Kerensky's staff told me several months later that Kerensky had never read my correspondence with the Russian Foreign Office on the subject.

The next day, Mr. Bonar Law, replying to a question by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, gave the necessary explanations, and said that the initiative in disclosing the real attitude of the Russian Government towards Stockholm was *Russian*. In other words, that it was taken without pressure on the part of the British Government. These explanations closed the incident as far as the Allied Governments were concerned. My personal troubles, however, did not come to so quick an end. About three days later I received the following telegram from Mr. Tereschenko :—

"It appears from the published correspondence between Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Henderson that in transmitting to the British Government our viewpoint on the

Stockholm Conference, you have made certain comments in your covering letter. Please give me the text of your letter. I realise that you were guided by considerations of the British political situation. In view, however, of the 'touchiness' of our public opinion in respect of the war-aims and of the difficulty for the Foreign Office—owing to the long distance—in keeping our diplomatic Representatives in constant touch with all the currents of opinion regarding all these matters, it is desirable that you should confine yourself to transmitting to the Government to which you are accredited the exact text of our declarations on political questions of principle."

The reference to "long distance" is truly pathetic. It is, of course, a hint at the danger of sending outspoken and frank messages which might fall under the scrutinising eyes of the Soviet.

I replied as follows :—

"My telegram No. 2 gives you the text of a strictly confidential note I addressed to Mr. Balfour on the 9th instant. In addressing the Secretary of State in this confidential manner, I deemed it necessary to convey to him that the definite statement, which you entirely

approved, was requested by me in order to dispel the impression undoubtedly prevailing in the country and in the Government that the Conference was being stage-managed by the Russian Government. A series of newspaper articles here spread the idea that 'Kerensky implores that the Conference be held.' In thus exceeding, in a confidential document, the strict limits of officialdom, I was actuated by the desire to refute the reproach which was duly made by Ramsay Macdonald in the House of Commons, and duly denied by the Leader of the House, that Russia's declaration was forced upon her by the British Government. You will see from Mr. Bonar Law's statement that he has put matters right. The Government was convinced that Russia was not only in favour of the Conference, but was aiding it. This erroneous impression had to be dispelled. When I saw the Prime Minister last Saturday, he asked me to agree to the publication of my despatch, because he considered it necessary that public opinion should clearly understand that the Russian Government (which the British Government and myself identify with Russia) is not 'arranging' the Stockholm meeting. It was a difficult

moment, and I thought it necessary to give whatever assistance I could to the British Government. Had I refused to allow the last paragraph of my despatch to be made public, the country would have learnt your reply, but not my comment which on this occasion was necessary. The Government appreciated my action, and Mr. Lloyd George said to me: 'You have rendered Russia and Britain a service which it is difficult to estimate, and Henderson's unexpected conduct has been most detrimental to the cause.' I would ask you to appreciate the difficulty of my position. For the last eight days I have not had a line from you. Meanwhile, the papers here publish interviews with Kerensky and yourself in which the 'real official attitude of Russia' is described as conflicting with my declarations. The British Government take into consideration your declarations to the British Ambassador as well as the declarations I make on your behalf. You will see from Mr. Balfour's speech in the House of Commons that discussions between the Foreign Office and Foreign Representatives are possible only on condition that confidential matters are not made public. 'Diplomats,' said Mr. Balfour, 'often fail if

circumstances are stronger than individuals. But the whole purpose and efforts of diplomats consist in avoiding conflicts, not in creating them, and this is better attained with those responsible to their Governments by confidential conversations than by proclaiming your policy from Charing Cross.' I fully realised the responsibility I was assuming when I sent the note to Mr. Balfour and agreed to its partial publication. I knew that by transmitting your reply without any comment I would protect myself from any unpleasant consequence. But having weighed the whole situation, which was serious enough, I came to the conclusion that it would have been pusillanimous to be afraid of the malignant campaign against myself which would undoubtedly be conducted here and in Russia. I wish to repeat that in this case I was guided by the desire to uphold the prestige of the Russian Government. Once more I ask you to give me fuller information in matters which are not common property."

This telegram crossed two short messages from Mr. Tereschenko in which he stated that no "declarations against the Stockholm Conference or the policy of the Soviet could be

made by Kerensky," and confirmed the previous admission that the Provisional Government "regard the Conference as a party concern, but do not see their way to approve of it or to prevent it." "Our diplomatic Representatives," added the Foreign Minister, "should therefore exercise extreme moderation in this matter."

This exchange of telegrams closed the incident. The British, French and Italian Governments refused to grant passports to the delegates, and the Conference did not meet. Several months later, a friend from Petrograd sent me a copy of the Bolshevik paper, *Novaia Jisn* of December 16, in which my correspondence with Mr. Tereschenko was published, including the telegram quoted above recounting my interview with Mr. Lloyd George. There appeared in the same paper an article entitled: "Diplomats on the war." It contained a series of accusations against me "for being in sympathy with the imperialistic war." Here is an extract from this article:—

"No wonder Lloyd George and Poincaré, taking into account the war-weariness in their respective countries, adopted the most strenu-

ous measures for preventing the Stockholm Conference. The same Mr. Nabokoff informs us that the Prime Minister was very bitter against Henderson who dared to place the interests of the working classes above those of the Allied imperialists. Lloyd George demanded from the Labour leader such explanations at the Labour Conference as would satisfy the supporters of 'war at all costs.' Henderson was ejected from the Cabinet. All attempts at convening the workers' deputies at Stockholm were resolutely prevented and passports refused. These are the weapons used by the Allied Governments for prolonging the carnage and postponing peace. It should be noted that in all these machinations the soi-disant Representative of Revolutionary Russia has played the part of obedient servant to those who were prolonging the war and ruining Russia. He advocated the postponement of the Allied Conference. He tried to persuade England that Russia was ready to fight till the end. He asked the Provisional Government to prevent the delegates of the Soviet from agitating in favour of the Stockholm Conference. He helped Lloyd George to obstruct the Conference and in the end he

quashed it. He said he tried to raise the faith of Britain in Russia and in the final triumph in Russia of the democratic national idea and in the military power of Russia."

That is the verdict of the Bolshevik paper on my activities in London. I must confess that its admission that I "in the end quashed the Stockholm Conference"—is, of course, an over-estimate of the part I played. It is nevertheless a statement which gives me great satisfaction. I was and remain convinced that the Stockholm Conference would have led to a peace by compromise which Germany already then desired. And I should be proud to feel that I had even to a small degree contributed to averting such an international catastrophe.

It is still a mystery to me that Mr. Terechenko succeeded in safeguarding me from the effects of the scornful resentment of the Petrograd Soviet. It is true that soon after this incident a third attempt was made at appointing an Ambassador to London. The candidate, Prince Gregoire Troubetzkoi, can hardly, however, be considered as *persona grata* with the Soviet. He did not arrive, and I continued in charge of the Embassy.

CHAPTER VIII

DURING the months of August, September and October, 1917, the following important developments took place in the world war :—

The activities were disclosed of Count Luxburg, the German Minister in the Argentine. His expression, "sink at sight," became a by-word and a symbol of the German mentality. I had met this gentleman in India, where he had succeeded Prince Henry XXXI of Reuss as German Consul-General at Calcutta in the autumn of 1913. Prince Reuss went from Calcutta to Teheran where he was actively working against the Entente . . . until his expulsion from Persia. There can be no doubt that these gentlemen worked in India against the British, who showed quite extraordinary confidence in these agents. Reuss was wearing the mask of kindness and simplicity. On the whole, he was rather harmless. Luxburg, on the contrary, was impudent, haughty and malicious. He left India in the spring of 1914. His departure, following

so closely upon the annual migration from Calcutta to the summer capital, was sudden, and certain circumstances tended to show that Luxburg was quite sure he would not return to India. I personally have no doubt he was aware of the coming conflagration.

"Spurlos versenkt" naturally caused great alarm in Great Britain. The question of food-supplies was already very acute, and Luxburg's presence in the Argentine, whence large supplies of wheat were being shipped to Britain, became a serious danger. The fact that this German agent's activities were disclosed was undoubtedly an event of considerable importance and a gain for the Entente.

British troops were continuing their victorious progress in Palestine and were approaching Jerusalem. On the western front they were stubbornly holding the ground, whilst the Germans were sustaining enormous losses in their effort to break through. The British losses, however, were also very heavy.

In the autumn of 1917 the Austro-German forces made their first powerful onslaught on Italy. It was borne valiantly at first, but in October the line was broken at Caporetto and

on the Isonzo, and British troops had to be rushed to the rescue of the panic-stricken Italians.

Brussilov was no longer there to launch an offensive without heavy guns against a superior enemy, as he had done in 1916. So Italy, forgetful of the heroic effort made by Russia a year before in order to save her from defeat, and the other Allies as well, blamed Russia for these disasters. In August, 1917, our troops were already "fraternising" with the enemy, and Riga was lost as a result of this demoralisation. The last effort of the Russian Army, the offensive under the personal guidance of the Russian Premier, Kerensky, was short-lived. "The Russian collapse" had already become a current expression in the British Press.

This period—from the end of August till the Bolshevik revolution (November 7)—is the third phase of the attitude of the British Government towards Russia, the period of "Disappointment and Irritation."

Intercourse with the British Government became an increasingly difficult task for the Representative of the Russian Government. At every interview with Mr. Balfour or with

Lord Hardinge, notes of reproach, bewilderment and resentment were noticeable in their conversation. "The Kerensky Government" was obviously being scorned. Russians must have a particularly vivid recollection of this tragic period—from August till November—which ended in the odious capitulation of the Kerensky Ministry to Lenin and Trotsky. The British Government, as I have already said, was openly indignant and alarmed at the admission to Russia of these avowed enemies of the Entente. Every sober-minded man saw in the July rehearsal of the Bolshevik *coup d'état* a sufficiently clear warning. No reasonable excuse compatible with the interests of the State could be found for the complacent attitude of the Kerensky Government towards Bolshevik propaganda. It was impossible to deny that propaganda was being tolerated.

The Moscow Conference brought a short respite of optimism. But the results of the Conference discouraged even the most stolid optimists, the most patient and well-disposed. One of the British statesmen said to me in the course of a very frank and intimate conversation: "It is obvious that Kerensky is played out. Where do you see the salvation?"

I replied that in my opinion there was but one man whose name commands such respect that he *might perhaps* succeed in retaining Kerensky in the Cabinet and General Kornilov as Commander-in-Chief, and that man was General Alexeiev. The British statesman said that Alexeiev's Premiership would undoubtedly serve to revive the confidence of the Allies in the stability of the Russian Government. That was certainly the case. Alexeiev's prestige was very high in Great Britain.

It is evident from the above-quoted telegram I sent to the Russian Foreign Minister after interviewing Mr. Lloyd George, that the Prime Minister held General Alexeiev in high esteem. At the end of August, I received a belated reply to my telegram, informing me that General Alexeiev was unable to comply with the British Premier's request and to come to London. It was clear that my idea of his Premiership was out of date, and that the General himself considered the situation in Russia as hopeless.

I did not, however, lose all hope with regard to the General's visit. A Russian General Staff officer was going to Petrograd from London, and I availed myself of this oppor-

tunity for entrusting him with a personal and urgent message to General Alexeiev. I explained to the Russian officer exactly how matters stood and why it was so important that Alexeiev should come to England. A few days after the Bolshevik *coup d'état* I received a letter from Petrograd, from my "special messenger," informing me that Alexeiev had agreed, after much hesitation, to come to England and to France, not as a plenipotentiary of any sort or description, but merely to accept the invitation to visit the Western front. Fate, however, decreed otherwise.

When the first tidings reached London of the Kornilov movement, the Foreign Office naturally refrained from any comment whatsoever which might be interpreted as indicating the direction in which their sympathies lay. It was, however, comparatively easy to discover that direction. Soon after the Kornilov incident, the collective "*démarche*" of the Ambassadors of France, Britain and Italy was made in Petrograd. They visited Kerensky and addressed to him the same protest which had been intended in August. The British Foreign Office gathered from Sir George Buchanan's report the distinct impression that

Kerensky, on this occasion, had been extremely arrogant and ill-mannered. The prestige of the Russian Government suffered accordingly. It is difficult to discover the truth in this matter, as opinions of eye-witnesses differ. Mr. Balfour, however, agreed *post factum* that the objections that had been raised in August against such a "collective remonstrance" were justified, as the *démarche* of the three Ambassadors proved utterly useless.

After the Kornilov episode the British Government entertained no hope in regard to military assistance from Russia, and was awaiting the collapse of the Provisional Government which seemed unavoidable. There came another change in the tone of responsible officials. Notes of resentment and irritation became more frequent and more pronounced. The Conference which was to have met in Paris on September 15 and to which the British Prime Minister desired to invite General Alexeiev, was postponed for a month.

Meanwhile, the disruption at Petrograd was steadily increasing, and the Soviet was becoming daily more peremptory and more insistent. The suggestion was put forward that Skobelev, as representative of the Soviet, should accom-

pany Tereschenko to Paris. I well remember the categorical—not to use a stronger expression—answer I received from the British Foreign Office on this matter. I was told that the Allies, and in particular Great Britain, intended to confer with responsible representatives of the Government *only*. “We do not understand,” they said, “in what capacity the Soviet representative intends to come to Paris. One thing is certain. He will not be admitted to the Allied Conference.”

At this moment the Russian Government, presumably alarmed at their loss of prestige which reports from their Representatives abroad could not fail to indicate, decided to adopt a purely formal measure in order to raise the waning prestige. They appointed Ambassadors to London and Paris. Maklakov, the gifted lawyer and politician, was appointed to Paris. He arrived in London shortly afterwards, accompanied by M. A. Stakhovitch. The latter had been appointed Ambassador to Madrid. The circumstances which prompted the Provisional Government to send to Spain a Russian politician of wide reputation and enjoying the esteem of all political parties in Russia were the following.

About the middle of September, the Representatives in London of the Great Powers of the Entente—Mr. Cambon, Viscount Chinda, Mr. Page, the Italian Chargé d’Affaires and myself were invited to the Foreign Office to a Conference with Mr. Balfour. The Secretary of State informed us that a telegram had been received from His Majesty’s Ambassador in Madrid containing the following information. The Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs had told Sir Arthur Hardinge that in conversation with the Spanish Ambassador in Berlin, a “high personage” stated that Germany would be glad to know on what conditions Great Britain would be prepared to enter into negotiations for peace. Mr. Balfour, upon reading this telegram, added that he had invited us to discuss this matter confidentially. I took the liberty of addressing the chairman of our small Conference before Monsieur Cambon had spoken. I said: “All those who are present here know that the pressure of the extreme parties and of the Bolsheviks, inspired by their German masters, upon the Government at Petrograd is growing daily. I must frankly warn my colleagues at this meeting that it is my duty to send to the

Russian Foreign Minister a full account of to-day's proceedings. At the same time, I am painfully aware of the fact that I cannot guarantee that secrecy will be preserved at the other end of the telegraph wires. If the Soviet get wind of the 'German peace offer,' which in reality is nothing but an attempt at creating dissensions, the agitation in Russia is likely to cause considerable trouble. I therefore request that these circumstances be kept in mind in the course of the discussion." The exchange of views revealed our unanimity in considering this "kite" as a mere attempt at fostering differences of opinion among the Allies, and it was decided that an evasive reply should be given. The German Government was to be told that no conversations were possible unless the Powers of the German Coalition addressed themselves to all the Powers of the Entente and presented definite proposals. This information I transmitted to Tereschenko in a strictly confidential message which was subsequently made public when the Bolsheviki "disclosed" the diplomatic correspondence of Russian representatives abroad. A couple of months later I was told on good authority that my message

had been interpreted in Petrograd as meaning that *peace negotiations were to begin shortly in Madrid*. This would seem incredible. The fact, however, remains that M. A. Stakhovitch was sent to Madrid in order that "a prominent Russian politician should be present at the peace *pourparlers*." Such, at any rate, was the explanation given to me by Mr. Stakhovitch himself of his belated *début* in the diplomatic career. The story of this distinguished Russian politician's ordeal in Madrid is outside the scope of my personal recollections. It is, however, to be hoped that public opinion in Russia may some day be in a position to appreciate the patriotic zeal and self-sacrifice with which the veteran Member of the Duma and of the Council of the Empire endured the trials of his Ambassadorial office in Spain.

The Russian Government continued to be deeply concerned about the appointment of an Ambassador to London. Also, there can be little doubt that in the first months of the existence of the Provisional Government, the British Ambassador had been instructed to express the wish that such an appointment be made. The third candidate, Prince Gregoire Troubetzkoi, declared at the eleventh hour

that he would prefer to go to Rome. I therefore received instructions to request the consent of His Majesty's Government to the appointment of Mr. de Giers, the Russian Ambassador in Rome. Thus Mr. Tereschenko had once more failed to consult the Russian Representative in London and was persisting in introducing "cinema" methods of appointing Ambassadors. It was clear as daylight that the Provisional Government was rapidly approaching its end. In these circumstances I was determined to act in such a manner as not to place our distinguished "doyen," Mr. de Giers, in a false position. I therefore decided to convey the information unofficially to Lord Hardinge. I added that it was my intention to suggest, in a private letter, that the matter be postponed till Mr. Tereschenko's impending arrival in London. In replying to this suggestion, Lord Hardinge showed quite unusual irritation. "Three times," said the Permanent Under-Secretary, "has the consent of His Majesty been given to the appointment of an Ambassador. None of these gentlemen ever appeared in London, and the Provisional Government never took the trouble to explain the reason of this extraordinary procedure,

much less to apologize for it. This cannot continue indefinitely. I must warn you that before we ask His Majesty to consent to the appointment of your fourth candidate, we intend to have a satisfactory explanation of the reasons which prevent Prince Troubetzkoï from coming to London. I agree with your suggestion regarding an exchange of private letters."

This exchange subsequently took place, and was communicated by the Embassy confidentially to Mr. de Giers.

Tereschenko did not come to London, and a fortnight later the Provisional Government was overthrown.

In the beginning of the winter of 1917 the situation on the main theatre of war—the Western Front—was becoming very serious. The communiqués received twice daily from France were being awaited with ever-growing nervousness. The casualty lists were lengthier every day. At this time, too, the incursions of the German airmen upon the British Isles and in particular upon London were becoming more frequent. As soon as the full moon shone upon the City, the inhabitants of London

were kept in feverish expectation of these deadly visitors. When the German machines reached the line of the observation posts, warnings were sounded all over London. These signals summoned Londoners to seek shelter in cellars, underground and tube stations, etc. When the aeroplanes were over London, they were fired at by anti-aircraft guns. Gigantic searchlights cast extraordinary picturesque streams of light all over the sky. It is difficult to imagine a more thrilling or a more beautiful sight than that of an aeroplane under the converging radiance of three or four of these searchlights. It was like a gigantic silver wasp. The air was filled with the sound of shell fire, and the danger from the falling fragments was in reality greater than that from the bombs. These raids went on sometimes for three or four hours. On December 19, 1917, the Russian Embassy in Chesham place had a marvellous escape. On a cold and foggy afternoon, the warning was given about 5.30 p.m. Most of the Secretaries of the Embassy and the servants obeyed the summons and retired to the cellars. Air-raids, fortunately, left me undismayed, and I preferred my library to the cellar. At about

8 p.m. the Secretaries left the Embassy. Having finished a game of chess at about 8.40, I left with my chess-partner. A few minutes later a bomb fell in Lyall Street in front of the Embassy gate. The hole it dug in the pavement was about fifteen feet deep, and extended to about three-fourths of the breadth of the narrow street. The explosion was so violent that scores of windows were smashed in Chesham Place. Within a few yards from the spot where the bomb fell some seventy ladies were sitting round a table in a depot, "Belgravia" depot, organised and superintended by Mrs. West. The policeman on duty at the gate of Chesham House escaped unhurt by the extraordinary happy coincidence of having stepped inside the courtyard behind a pillar at the moment of the explosion; he immediately went inside the workshop, and found the ladies lying on the floor in a state of indescribable panic. He made them stand up and sing "God save the King"—thus restoring them to their senses. Had the bomb been dropped earlier by the infinitesimal fraction of a second, it would have fallen on the Embassy, and the effects would have been disas-

trous. As it happened, the damage was very slight. Nevertheless, it took seven months to repair the damage done to the pavement.

This, however, is a digression.

As stated above, the situation at the front in November, 1917, was grave. Meanwhile, the United States' troops were coming on slowly and their fighting capacity was, naturally, not quite as high as that of the British and French. The Government was therefore in a nervous and irritable mood. This irritation was, of course, directed chiefly against Russia. Russia had not fulfilled the ludicrous expectations of those who talked in the beginning of the war of the "Russian steam-roller." Russia had gone through an internal crisis during the war. Having lost her fighting spirit as a result of this convulsion, Russia had succumbed to the poison of German-made propaganda of militant anarchism. Russia therefore had alienated the sympathy of the ruling British bureaucracy. Nobody, at that moment, took the trouble to understand that the Russian nation was the victim of past errors, that the task of the Provisional Government was a hopeless one. Stern, tragic realities were apparent, not their causes.

Would the Russian people be justified in blaming the Allies, and especially Great Britain, for their attitude towards Russia at the time of the Bolshevik revolution? What help could the Allies, could Great Britain have given to Russia in order to avert the catastrophe? I can find no answer to this question. The end of 1917 was the period during which Britain strained her resources to the utmost in order to save France from disaster and to prevent the German coalition from winning the war. In spite of the tremendous difficulties in supplying Russia *via* Murmansk, Great Britain had given us colossal stores of war material. I recall the words of the then War Minister, Lord Milner, at a luncheon given in his honour by the Russian Government Supply Committee soon after the "Kerensky offensive" which ended so disastrously. Lord Milner said: "As long as Russia remains Britain's Ally, she will receive our assistance according to our possibilities. But you will understand that every shell, every gun is to us of vital necessity, and that it would be sheer folly on our part to give such material as we are absolutely certain to make the best use of—to the Russian

Army, if we have substantial reasons for doubting that this material will be used to the best advantage of the Allied cause." Had we any right to resent such a point of view? It is not metaphysical, it is not cynical, it is not opportunist. It is statesmanlike. We had nothing to say.

As regards political support, it is likewise difficult to see in what direction such support could have been given. The unfortunate fact is that there was already at the very root of the relations between Russia and the Allies, a misunderstanding and a falsehood. Many months later—and months, in those troubled times, counted for years—when Russia was already in the throes of Bolshevism, I gained the opportunity of discussing the political situation of the end of 1917 with certain Russian politicians of the Kerensky period. I learnt that there had been a few courageous and honest patriots who said to Kerensky and his associates: "Since you have allowed the army to become demoralised and have proved powerless to resist the Soviet, Lenin and German propaganda (Lenin was in Petrograd for several months, and Kerensky never dared to arrest and hang him)—Russia

cannot continue to fight. This you must tell the Allies. To conceal the truth of the real condition of Russia is tantamount to treachery." This advice was not taken. Kerensky continued his demagogy, and the Foreign Minister was sending to the Russian Representatives abroad optimistic telegrams. At the same time, the Allied Governments were receiving from their Representatives in Russia alarmist reports. The Representatives of Russia abroad were thus unwittingly made the tools of a policy based upon deceit.

I have endeavoured in the preceding chapters to describe the attitude towards Russia of Government-circles, and have omitted to mention the attitude of public opinion, of the "man in the street" towards the Russian crisis. The Russian offensive came to a close at the end of 1916. Since then British correspondents in Russia sent reports from which it was quite evident to the British public that Russia's fighting capacity had been irretrievably reduced. It is a remarkable fact that in spite of all this the sympathies of the British public were still with Russia. Of this I was able to obtain striking proofs from

accounts given by personal friends, officers in the British Army, of the spirit in which the rank and file of the British soldiers commented upon the events in Russia. These men tried to find an excuse for the collapse of the Russian Army in the exertions and losses of the first two and a half years of the War. There can be no doubt that the "man in the street" and in the trench displayed a more generous spirit than the man in the office.

I had the great good fortune of personally testing the depth of the sympathy and friendship of the "rank and file" in Great Britain. It happened in this way. In the beginning of September, 1917, I received an invitation from a Professor of Edinburgh University who had been to Russia and was then in sympathy with my country, to come to Edinburgh and Glasgow and deliver a lecture on the Russian situation, on Russia's contribution to the cause of the Entente, etc., to the members of the Anglo-Russian Societies of the above-named towns. News from Russia was more and more discouraging, and I could not make up my mind to accept the invitation. Finally, I had to agree, and the lectures were fixed for the 15th of October—three weeks

before the Bolshevik *coup d'état*, when there remained not the slightest doubt in my mind as to the turn events were taking. The reception I was given in both towns was extremely cordial, the attendance at both lectures was large and very sympathetic. It was quite obvious that my audiences realised the magnitude of Russia's services to the common cause and that the sorrow provoked by Russia's mortal malady was not mingled with any bitterness or resentment.

This visit to Scotland was the last bright moment of my career in Great Britain, the last pleasant memory. Three weeks later began the period of sufferings and humiliations unprecedented in the history of diplomatic relations between European Powers.

PART II

CHAPTER IX

ON November 7 (October 25 Russian style), 1917, the British Embassy in Petrograd received in the morning reliable information regarding the impending *coup d'état* and the arrest of the members of the Provisional Government. Three Ministers were lunching with the British Ambassador on that day. Upon hearing from the Ambassador the disquieting news they assured him that nothing of the sort was possible, that the Government had taken all necessary measures, and that they were "complete masters of the situation." In less than six hours, the Provisional Government was arrested . . . with the exception of Kerensky. Once more, as before, the Russian Embassy in London learned the news of the *coup d'état* in Petrograd from Reuter's Agency.

It is difficult to describe in concrete words the impression produced in London by the news that Lenin and Trotsky had seized power in Russia. Naturally, it was clear to every-

one that an event had taken place by which Russia had become irretrievably excluded from the group of Allied Powers waging war with all their might against the common enemy. The fact that Kerensky and his associates had departed from the scene was hardly a matter of regret to the Allies, as they appeared to have already reached the conclusion that these men were incapable of governing Russia. On the other hand, the advent to power of men who had been imported from Germany provoked feelings of enmity and indignation towards the Russian people. Neither public opinion nor the Government had in those days even a remote conception of the limits to which the Bolshevik regime would drive the ruin of Russia, and of the cruelties it would inflict upon the Russian nation. At the same time, the opinion prevailed that the *coup d'état* was a temporary phenomenon, that Lenin, who seemingly had no support from the masses of the people, would be unable to retain for any length of time the power which he had seized so easily. Guesses were made as to the number of days the Bolshevik regime would last and who would replace it.

Russians in London and elsewhere were

dumfounded. Very few of them realised the extent of the shame and of the calamity which had befallen Russia. Neither did they foresee how long the shame would last. "It is a question of a few days;" such was the view more frequently expressed. If I remember correctly, a prominent Russian politician in Paris expressed that view in a newspaper interview.

The Bolshevik Revolution opened a new page in the history of Anglo-Russian relations. It is necessary before continuing the narrative of the trying times which the Russians, and in particular, the Russian Embassy have lived in London ever since November 17 to make a few preliminary and general remarks. In the light of these remarks, I hope, the subsequent events, the waverings and certain seemingly inexplicable measures adopted by the Allied Governments and by Great Britain in particular, may be more easily understood.

In judging these subsequent events it should be continually borne in mind that all the activities of the Government and all the efforts of the nation were directed towards one goal—victory over Germany. It seems, therefore,

reasonable to apply to the explanation of the attitude of the British Government towards Russia two criteria depending upon two periods into which I divide the history of Anglo-Russian relations during the last two years: *before* November 11, 1918—the actual date of the end of the war, and *after*.

“Russia has ceased to fight. Russia has ceased to be our Ally. There are in Russia a million and a half German and Austrian prisoners. Russia also holds colossal stores, armaments and equipment which she has received from us. We must therefore make every effort in order to prevent Lenin’s Government from handing over these enormous numbers of able-bodied enemy soldiers and the war materials to Germany. To that end all means are justified.” Such seems to me to have been the trend of argument, the motto of the Allies and the main impulse of their action. I have no doubt that the future impartial historian will discern this motive and will find in it an excuse for a great deal of what the Allies and in particular Great Britain and France have done in Russia between November 7, 1917, and November 11, 1918. It was as difficult for us, Russians abroad, in

those cruel twelve months, to acquire "an historical perspective," as it is for a man who is operated upon without an anæsthetic not to scream.

The tremendous difficulties which the Allies were facing during the period extending from the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and the military operations of the Allies in France in the autumn of 1918, which ended in the complete defeat of Germany, should be understood and correctly estimated. The German armies were within fifty miles of Paris. How was it possible for the Allies to think of "saving Russia"?

Self-restraint is the characteristic quality of the Briton, of the individual as well as of the community. That quality was manifested in the early months of 1918 with extraordinary power and clearness. All the conscious elements of the nation, the Government, the Press, and the Army itself, felt that the issue of the war hung upon a thread and with it the fate of Europe. Another successful German thrust, another wide breach at the Front—and the fate of France was sealed. As I have already mentioned, it was well understood in Britain that a disaster to France

was tantamount to a defeat for Britain. The *entire* male population of Britain (Ireland excluded) physically fit for service had already been conscripted. Old men were made to join. Innumerable women were already serving in various auxiliary corps. In a word, it was evident that war must be waged with the live material available and that gaps in those numbers could no longer be filled. And yet, during those critical months, not a single panicky outcry, not a single clearly expressed word of anger and hatred towards the Russian people was uttered in Great Britain. When I compare the attitude of Great Britain with that of certain other countries, when I recall certain things that have been said and written in these countries, I cannot but come to the conclusion that in spite of all the subsequent errors of British statesmen, Great Britain, with regard to Russia, was infinitely more generous and more magnanimous than any other of our Allies.

The conditions underwent a fundamental change with the conclusion of the Armistice on November 11, 1918. From that moment the attitude of the Allies towards Russia may be analysed from an entirely different angle.

Inasmuch as the lack of foresight and generosity on the part of the powers-that-be could be explained before that date, by anxiety and by the fear of the morrow, so the shaking off of the German menace imposed upon the Allied Powers the moral obligation to come to the rescue of Russia with all the means at their disposal. This obligation has *not* been carried out. The future will show whether Russia alone will suffer from this collective sin of the present makers of the destinies of the world or whether other European nations will be subjected to trials and convulsions for the sins of individuals.

According to international law and all traditions the collapse of the Provisional Government in Russia had put an end to the formal plenary powers of the Representatives of Russia abroad. The foreign Powers had therefore the choice between two courses. Either to continue unofficial or semi-official relations with the Representatives of the last Russian Government they recognised, or to recognise Lenin's Government. Had the latter course been adopted the former Representatives of Russia would have had to withdraw

and Bolshevik agents would have taken their place.

All the Powers of the Entente with the exception of Great Britain adopted the first course. The attitude of Governments towards the Representatives of the Provisional Government varied according to local conditions and later underwent further changes according to events. In Rome, Tokyo and Washington in the first month after the *coup d'état* there was no perceptible change in the attitude of the Governments towards the Russian Ambassadors. In Washington a certain control was exercised over Russia's credits. In Paris the position of Mr. Maklakov was somewhat ambiguous. He had been appointed by the Provisional Government, but owing to the fact that he arrived in Paris on the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution, he failed to present his credentials. The attitude of the French Government, especially in the first few months, appears to have been determined to a greater extent by the personal qualities of the Ambassador than by his official title.

Very soon after November 7, 1917, the British Government applied a somewhat

different method. Alongside with the Russian Embassy, whose funds were confiscated and whose privilege of corresponding in cipher with other Russian institutions abroad was cancelled, a Bolshevik "Ambassador," Litvinov-Finkelstein, appeared in London. The Russian Embassy was subjected to many limitations and restrictions, whilst the Government was in constant intercourse with the Bolshevik Embassy. Although this "Ambassador" was never officially recognised, there can be no doubt that there existed *official* relations and that he enjoyed certain privileges such as the right to cipher and to send diplomatic couriers which were denied to the Russian Embassy. Obviously no *private* individual could have enjoyed such privileges.

Upon the receipt by the British Foreign Office of official confirmation from Petrograd of the collapse of the Provisional Government, I had an interview with Mr. Balfour. I asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether His Majesty's Government would continue its relations with the Russian Embassy in London. Mr. Balfour replied in the affirmative and added that although formally

he could not recognise me as a Representative of the Russian Government, he would be glad to hear anything I might wish to say and to consider any suggestions I might deem it necessary to make. In discussing the situation that had arisen in Russia I ventured to express the view that it would be desirable (1) to make every possible effort at supporting the Rumanian front where Russian units remained who had not yet succumbed to the general disintegration; (2) to secure the immediate withdrawal from Russia of all official Representatives of the Entente Powers, Great Britain, of course, included, and to entrust the Representatives of friendly neutral Powers with the task of safeguarding and protecting the nationals and the interests of the Powers of the Entente; and (3) to endeavour to address an appeal to the Russian people in the name of the Entente which would explain to all conscious elements in Russia all the terrible consequences Russia would have to suffer from the continuation of the plundering regime of German tools.

(On the next day I imparted to Monsieur Cambon the tenor of this conversation and asked the Ambassador to support my sugges-

tions with his own Government, more especially in regard to the collective appeal to the Russian people. The Ambassador replied that such an appeal on the part of a Foreign Power would be an unusual procedure in contradiction with diplomatic tradition and would therefore be unpracticable. I replied that in normal conditions a Government may influence public opinion in another country by means of the publication of appeals *addressed* to the Government, but in reality meant for the people. In the present case, when the normal life of a state has been interrupted, a departure from traditional methods seemed to me justifiable. I failed, however, to convince the Ambassador. Two months later, during a short visit to Paris, I met Mr. Oscar Crosby, who was then at the head of the American Financial Mission in France, and enjoyed the full confidence of President Wilson. I mentioned the matter of the "appeal" to Mr. Crosby, who seemed to favour the idea. He suggested that I should draft the appeal and promised to send a telegram to President Wilson. I declined this very complimentary offer and remarked that President Wilson would hardly be inclined to write at my dicta-

tion, the more so that he was himself a past master in diplomatic "appeals." President Wilson, as is well known, addressed a few days later an appeal to the Congress of the Soviets in Moscow. I wonder whether this appeal was not of the nature of a wrong address placed upon a good letter.)

To return to my conversation with Mr. Balfour. The Secretary of State informed me that it would hardly be practicable to support the Rumanian front, not merely for technical reasons, but likewise owing to the impossibility of removing even a small force from the Western Front. With regard to the recall of British official Representatives in Petrograd, Mr. Balfour considered that the decision in this matter must be left with Sir George Buchanan in accordance with subsequent events. I endeavoured to point out that the continued presence of official British Representatives in Petrograd would undoubtedly afford favourable opportunities for political blackmail on the part of the Bolsheviks and that they would demand the recognition of their agents and seek to obtain for these agents diplomatic privileges under the threat of reprisals in the event of these privileges

being denied. I pointed out that the British Diplomatic and Consular Institutions would hardly be in a position to protect the lives and the property of British subjects, as the licentious sailors and Red Guards, and with them all the other riff-raff of the capital, would certainly be disinclined to respect the authority of Representatives of a Foreign Power. Finally, I most emphatically warned Mr. Balfour that the lives of the Ambassador himself and of other British officials would undoubtedly be endangered, were they to fail to take advantage of the uncertainty and indecision at present prevailing in Petrograd, and to leave the hot-bed of Bolshevism at the earliest possible opportunity. The subsequent murder of Captain Cromie and the pillage of the British Embassy and of other Embassies and Legations seem to have borne out my prediction. Sir George Buchanan, as is well remembered, remained for some time in Petrograd and left only when it became abundantly clear to him that the Bolsheviks were entirely in the hands of Germany, and that the presence of a British Ambassador in Petrograd was utterly aimless and useless. Mr. Lindley, Counsellor of the Embassy, the French and

the American Ambassadors, as is now known, were prevented by the Reds from crossing the Finnish border and were "evacuated," first to Vologda and later, after a long series of trials, to Archangel, where they stayed for several months.

After Trotsky took possession of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, all communications between Petrograd and the Russian Embassies and Legations abroad naturally came to an end. A general strike took place of the personnel of the Foreign Office, and only one, Dolivo-Dobrovolsky, of the Economic Department, remained in the service of the Bolsheviks. He sent us a few telegrams on current, non-political affairs which remained unanswered. The Embassy likewise refrained from accepting the offer contained in Trotsky's circular telegram that Russian Representatives abroad should recognise the Bolshevik Government and continue to serve them. Only one Russian Representative abroad, the *Chargé d'Affaires* at Lisbon, the *Russian* Baron Ungern-Sternberg, endeavoured to send a reply to Trotsky. He also sent me the text of his reply. I informed him that such a procedure was in my opinion tantamount to treason,

and that I would henceforward consider him as having renounced his position as Russian Representative.

Curiously enough, in his telegram to the Russian Representatives, Trotsky indicated the maximum salary to which those who would remain in the service of the Bolsheviks would be entitled. He evidently admitted the possibility of some of us recognising the Bolshevik regime. These hopes, however, proved in vain. Only a few Consular agents, who considered themselves as having been badly treated by the Russian Government—most of them of the Russian Consular Service in Persia—became Bolshevik Diplomats. A high tribute should be paid to the Petrograd Personnel of the Foreign Office for their boycott of the Bolsheviks. *They* risked their fortunes and probably their lives, whereas Russian Representatives abroad ran only the remote risk of losing their property in Russia. When the news appeared in the British Press that the "lands" belonging to the Russian Representative in London had been confiscated, and that this Agent, together with the Ambassadors in France, Japan, etc., was summoned to appear before a Revolutionary Tribunal, I

received a series of letters of condolence from my British friends, whose kind anxiety I dispelled by informing them that the Bolsheviks could confiscate no property of mine, as no such thing existed.

Soon afterwards Trotsky made several endeavours at imposing Bolshevik "Ambassadors" and "Ministers" upon foreign powers. Of the neutral powers, as far as I remember, only Sweden and Switzerland admitted Bolshevik Legations. At Berne, all intercourse with the Representatives of the Provisional Government was interrupted. They were compelled to vacate the Legation and to surrender the building to a band of drunken adventurers who called themselves the Representatives of Soviet Russia. Several months later these ruffians were expelled from Switzerland in circumstances which should cause not Russia, but Switzerland, to blush profusely.

There were only two Bolshevik Ambassadors "en fonction." In London—Finkelstein. In Berlin—Joffe.

Trotsky's telegram informing Finkelstein-Litvinov of his appointment was published in all the London papers. The Press gave this sensational and highly significant event a

place of honour in their columns. Portraits of Mr. Litvinov, his wife and infant, accounts of his dubious past, innumerable interviews with this new-born diplomat appeared daily.

In order to have done with the subject of Bolshevik representation an incident might here be mentioned which took place some time later, caused by the effort to send a Bolshevik Ambassador to Paris. This gentleman, whose real name I cannot state with any degree of certainty, assumed the Russian name of Kamenev. The British Government, presumably without consulting France as to whether Kamenev would be accepted, allowed this Bolshevik to come to London. I asked the Foreign Office whether Kamenev had been granted a British visâ, and whether the Foreign Office thought that the French Government would do the same. "I doubt it," was the reply. "What then is the point in admitting him to Britain where he is certain to indulge in Bolshevik propaganda?" I was given to understand that certain Parliamentary groups were insisting upon Kamenev's admission. These groups apparently were already intent upon touching the pitch. Kamenev's visit had a rather lamentable finale. Upon the

receipt of Monsieur Clemenceau's categorical refusal to allow the Bolshevik emissary to set foot in France, and seeing that his continued presence in London caused a certain sensation in Bolshevik circles, the British Government decided to repatriate him. I understand that Kamenev's departure was attended by some rather comical incidents. One of his associates, who was determined to miss the train, went to bed on the excuse of having sent his clothes to the tailor. Apparently he was told to proceed to the station in pyjamas. The clothes turned up in time.

When I found myself in the position of a Representative of a Government which had ceased to exist, I thought it necessary to seek moral support and assistance from the Russian circles in London. The isolation of the Embassy from Russian circles to which I have alluded above, had already to a very great extent ceased to exist. During the eight months of the Provisional Government these relations underwent a considerable change. I therefore considered that the aim of transforming the Embassy into a real "centre" accessible and acceptable to all Russians whatever their political views, had already

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partially been attained. One of the first cares I took after the Bolshevik Revolution was to unite all Russians in their attitude towards this event. I therefore called a meeting at the Embassy in the last days of November. The meeting was attended by representatives of various Russian political and social groups and by the bureaucracy. The following resolution was adopted :—

“ We, citizens of regenerated Russia living abroad, cannot remain silent witnesses of the humiliation and dishonour which are being inflicted on our Country by usurpers who have criminally seized power through violence and treachery, and who, while proclaiming justice and liberty, are in reality leading to oppression and despotism. They have succeeded in spreading misery and sedition and are fast plunging Russia into destruction.

“ In order to break up our brotherhood in arms with Western democracies, to dismember Mighty Russia and deliver her to the mercies of Germany, they have torn up the solemn treaty entered into with Russia's Allies and, to use their own words, ‘ have thrown secret documents into the dustbin ’ as so much waste

paper. From all sides tidings reach us from Russia of indignation and resistance to this usurpation of power, and we feel it our duty to join this movement and to declare that a criminal faction cannot be permitted to speak for the Russian people.

“ We, Russian citizens in Great Britain, realise that the active assistance which we can render to our honest compatriots in Russia who are struggling against these traitors, can be but small owing to our limited numbers and to the distance that separates us from our Country. Nevertheless, we pledge ourselves to stand together and to use every means in our power actively to resist the treacherous forces at present profiting by the help of our enemies to destroy Russia's honour, independence, unity and liberty. In this struggle we count upon the help, counsel, and sympathetic response of the true sons of Russia who do not submit to the will of usurpers and who by their heroic resistance strengthen in us and in our Allies the faith in a speedy triumph of truth and liberty.”

Among those present were myself, the Staffs of the Russian Embassy and Consulate-

General; General Hermonius, the President, and members of the Russian Government Committee in England; Professor Sir Paul Vinogradoff, Hon. Secretary of Russian Prisoners of War Help Committee; Admiral Kedroff; Lieut.-General Dessino, Chief of Russian Military Mission in England, many other Russian Diplomatic, Military and Naval officials, a number of Russian journalists, and independent Russians. The resolution was communicated to the London Press through Reuter's Agency, who transmitted it to Paris. *The Morning Post* was the only paper which gave the full text. On the occasion of this step—the open public declaration in the name of the Russian Representative supported by prominent representatives of the Russian Colony in London, of our determination to fight the Bolshevik regime with all means at our disposal—the difference of opinion between the British Foreign Office and myself was manifested for the first time. They decidedly “disapproved” of this declaration, as they considered that “polemics” with the regime which had gained the upper hand in Russia were against diplomatic tradition, and embarrassing to the British Government.

CHAPTER X

IN the course of November, 1917, an effort was made simultaneously by Mr. Maklakov, our Ambassador in Paris, and myself to establish full co-ordination of the activities of Russian Representatives abroad and in particular of the Representatives accredited to the Powers of the Entente. This co-ordination and unity, however, was not reached. Differences of opinion arose almost immediately between Messrs. Maklakov, de Giers and Bakhmetiev, on the one hand, and myself on the other. The three above-named gentlemen considered that it was necessary to "await developments," to refrain from "drastic steps." They also thought that should some kind of coalition or compromise be reached between the Bolsheviks and other parties we should consider the attitude of such a coalition towards the war, as well as the attitude of the Allies towards this coalition. In reply to telegrams in this sense which I received from the above-named Russian Ambassadors, I telegraphed to Mr. Maklakov :—

“ In view of the fact that telegrams from Mr. de Giers and Mr. Bakhmetiev contain indications that they share your point of view regarding the possibility of a new Government being formed in Russia on the basis of a compromise with the Bolsheviks and regarding our attitude towards such an issue, I deem it my duty to state the following : I have no doubt that such a Government, even should it be formally recognised in order to avoid complete rupture with Russia, could enjoy in the opinion of the British Government and of the public neither authority nor prestige nor confidence. The task of speaking and acting in London in the name of such a Government would be one which I should never be in a position to undertake. At the present moment we are, of course, unable to make any forecast. Nevertheless, I consider that only a Government which would enjoy the full confidence and the support of the Allies, would be capable of restoring the honour and the power of Russia. Inasmuch as this consideration is capable of influencing those who will assume power in Russia after the Bolsheviks, I am convinced that it will be our duty to give expression to

this consideration as frankly as possible, should the opportunity arise."

After this exchange of telegrams there were practically no further discussions between myself and the three Ambassadors on questions of principle. The majority of Russian Representatives in Allied and neutral countries expressed the idea that it would be desirable to entrust Mr. Maklakov with the "direction" of the activities of Russian Representatives. I considered, on the one hand, that on formal grounds such a direction, were it necessary and opportune, should belong to Mr. de Giers, as the senior and duly accredited Ambassador of Russia. On the other hand, I did not see my way to accepting "directions," the fulfilment of which would necessitate a compromise. I, therefore, expressed myself definitely against any "direction" from Paris. After a while, this question lost all practical importance, as the British Government deprived me of the right of sending telegrams in cipher to my colleagues abroad.

In January, 1918, a period of complete "autonomy" for the Russian Embassy in London, or to use the fashionable expression, of "self-determination," which

lasted ten months, was opened by this restriction, placed by the British Government, upon intercourse with the outer world. There was no Russian Government from whom the Embassy could receive instructions. All the activities of the Embassy and the intercourse with the British Government depended entirely upon the judgment of the Embassy itself. In the exceptionally difficult circumstances in which the Embassy was thus placed, it was naturally impossible to work without the support and assistance of the Russian political groups in London, with whom close contact was therefore established. Of the individuals who rendered me in these days of trial invaluable services and moral support for which I shall always be deeply grateful, I may cite Mr. G. Wesselitsky, the veteran correspondent of the *Novoie Vremia*, a man endowed with exceptional mental and moral qualities, my old friend, Mr. Gregory Wilenkin, Mr. Poliakov-Litovtzev, and Lieutenant Abaza. No tribute can be high enough for the constant patriotic zeal and efficiency with which the staff of the Embassy seconded my efforts. In moments of severe trial, in the gloomy days in which I was beginning to lose faith

in the possibility of further work under the banner of loyalty to the alliance between Great Britain and Russia, when I was beginning to think that a complete rupture would do Russia less harm than the continuation of humiliating tolerance—these men more than once saved me by their counsel, aid, and more subdued patriotism than my own. In a word, by prudence, which occasionally all but deserted me under the revolt of my national pride, they prevented me from taking irretrievable steps.

Two months went by. The Bolsheviks concluded an Armistice with Germany. There followed a Declaration regarding the impending Peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk. At the same time it became abundantly clear that the usurpation of power by the Bolsheviks was not "a monstrous episode of four or five days' duration." The men who had assured the British Ambassador on November 7 in Petrograd that they were "complete masters of the situation," were still interned in the fortress of Peter and Paul. The idol of yesterday, the would-be Napoleon—Kerensky—had disappeared without leaving any trace. (He "emerged" in London several months later.)

No one rose to the defence of these godfathers of Russian liberty. It was obvious that the Russian people, driven by superhuman sacrifices and efforts to a state of complete inaction and desirous of only one thing—ending the war—were not going to follow anyone who would attempt to fight the Bolsheviks in the name of "fidelity to the Allies." Having deprived the army of the watchword "for the Tzar," the Provisional Government failed to replace it by the watchword "for the country." By his order that the standard should be carried with the transport, the War Minister of the Provisional Government killed the stimulus of the peasants of Saratov and Penza to fight against the Germans for the integrity of Smolensk. The banner from which the Provisional Government washed off the Double Eagle (in the place of which they tried to embroider the words, "Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality," words which the Russian peasant did not understand) was torn to pieces by the Bolsheviks and thrown into the bloodstained dustbin. In its stead they put forward a new watchword which proved irresistible: "Go home, and rob and kill anyone you choose on your way."

It also became apparent that the intelligent elements in Russia were isolated and powerless.

Great Britain was confronted with the question: would it not be opportune to enter into official relations with the Soviet Government in order to exercise some influence upon the course of the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk. This seems to me to have been the main reason for the parleys which took place between the Allies and which very nearly resulted in recognition being granted to the Soviet in February, 1918.

At this moment the first and only attempt was made by the Bolshevik "Ambassador" in London, Finkelstein-Litvinov, to gain possession of the Russian Embassy at Chesham House. This is how the attempt was made.

One Krysin, connected with the People's Bank and with the Co-operatives, asked for an interview with me by telephone. I had made it a rule never to refuse personal interviews to my compatriots, who were received by the staff of the Embassy only when the Chancery of the Embassy was fully competent to grant their requests without consulting the chief. Mr. Krysin was accordingly invited to come the next morning. He arrived

at the appointed hour and handed to me a letter from Mr. Finkelstein, signed Maxim Litvinov. Mr. Krysin seemed extremely perturbed. His voice was somewhat shaky and he made futile efforts at adopting an overbearing manner, which he was, however, unable to sustain owing to the polite and good-natured sarcasm with which I treated this embarrassed tool of the impudent Bolshevik adventurer who pretended to represent Russia. Litvinov's position at that moment was truly tragic. He was by no means a fool, and *could not* take himself seriously. Meanwhile, the British Government (*excusez du peu!*) were officially negotiating with him. Mr. Litvinov's (I will in the future omit to mention his real name for purposes of brevity) letter contained the suggestion that I should "hand over" the Embassy to him. The motive he adduced was that the Provisional Government had ceased to exist and that the power in Russia was in the hands of the Bolsheviks. To my question: "What does Mr. Litvinov actually mean by 'handing over'?" Mr. Krysin replied: "The British Government is most anxious to enter into relations with the Soviet Government. In order to establish these

relations, the representative of the Soviets must have at his disposal the necessary 'apparatus,' *i. e.* the Embassy buildings, the personnel, the archives, ciphers, and funds." "Why do you need cipher?" was my rejoinder. "Has not Mr. Bronstein declared in favour of the principle of open diplomacy?" "There are important communications, upon the receipt of which Mr. Trotsky (Bronstein) should be at liberty to decide whether to publish them or not. He must at any rate, be the first to receive them." "If the British Government is so anxious to communicate with Mr. Bronstein, I am certain that means may be found for the secret transmission of important communications. I am not, however, prepared to play any accompaniments to such a duet. As regards the Embassy buildings, the personnel, the archives, the ciphers, and the funds of the Embassy, all these have been entrusted to my care by the Russian Government which I recognise. I should, therefore, consider it tantamount to treason to hand them over to the representatives of a gang of traitors to Russia. Should this gang be recognised by foreign Powers as the lawful authority, such a recognition would not be binding upon

me and I should most certainly take every step in my power, in order to prevent the property of the Russian State from falling into the hands of traitors." "Is that your last word?" asked Mr. Krysin. "Yes, it is, and I should be obliged if you would transmit it to Litvinov."

Mr. Krysin retired. At the same time another emissary from the Bolshevik Ambassador arrived at the Russian Consulate-General in Bedford Square. He likewise demanded the surrender of the Consulate, and stated that "Nabokoff is to-day handing over the Embassy to Litvinov." The Consul-General, Mr. Onou, naturally did not believe this statement and dismissed the Bolshevik intruder. Soon after these episodes the Embassy was informed that the Bolsheviks intended to "invade" the Embassy and seize it by force. Personally, I doubt that such an intention really existed. However, in order to put an end to all attempts in that direction, orders were given for the gates of the Embassy to be locked after office hours. An extra policeman was stationed upon the initiative of the Commissioner of Police at the gates of the Embassy, and we lived in peace ever after.

The British Government, of course, realised that our expulsion from Chesham House was only possible in the event of the official recognition of the Soviet Government and the ensuing complete cessation of all intercourse with the Representatives of the Provisional Government. At the same time, in view of the fact that the Embassy had lost its voice in international questions, it was considered opportune to impose upon the Embassy a series of restrictions. We were deprived of the right to use cipher. The "autonomy" of the Embassy thus became "complete isolation." All the funds which stood to the credit of the Embassy and of other Russian Government Institutions in London were confiscated and the Russian Government Committee was "forcibly" closed.

The methods which were applied to this confiscation of funds and to the closing of the Russian Government Committee were such as to make it even now, after a lapse of two years, an unpleasant task to recount them.

The British Government was, on principle, entirely justified in its contention that the Russian Government Committee, whose object had been to superintend the supplies of

war material to the Russian Army, should cease to exist. It cannot be gainsaid, moreover, that drastic reforms were necessary in the organisation of the Committee, whose members, including the clerks, numbered over seven hundred. The salaries they received were undoubtedly in some cases out of proportion with services rendered. The chairman of the Committee, General Hermonius, a man of considerable ability and of an integrity beyond any doubt whatsoever, was so overwhelmed with work that he was unable to enter into all the details of administration and to investigate with sufficient thoroughness all the workings of the Committee. In the flock of seven hundred, black sheep were to be found. I had on several occasions drawn the attention of the Provisional Government to the defects of the Committee and to the fact that funds were being spent with undue lavishness. I asked for an investigation. In this question, however, as in the matter of the retirement, with promotion, of the Russian Military Attaché, whose advanced age made it impossible for him to carry out his duties with sufficient energy, all my representations were unavailing. With the exception of the "comic

turn" described above, the visit to London of the Commissary Svatikov, and of two or three minor officials sent from Russia with restricted powers—the Russian Government never made the slightest attempt at gaining adequate knowledge of the activities of the Russian Government Committee. All this, however, was not a sufficient excuse for the, to say the least, "drastic" action taken by the British Government with regard to the Committee. A full report of this incident compiled by the responsible members of the Committee will undoubtedly be made public in due time. I do not, therefore, consider it necessary to dwell any longer in these memoirs upon the regrettable incident.

Russian Government funds were confiscated to the last penny, including the sums at the disposal of the Embassy proper. The Government, however, intimated to me that they intended to "assist us." I confess that my negotiations with the Government, the questions in the House and comments in the Press on this subject are among the most painful and humiliating recollections of this unfortunate period.

The question of pecuniary assistance granted

by the Government to the Russian Embassy did not fail to attract the attention of certain members of the House of Commons who were favourably disposed towards the Soviet regime. The name of the Russian Chargé d'Affaires was continually mentioned and contemptuous comment was invariably made. While the leaders of the Bolsheviks in Petrograd and Moscow were continually insulting the Powers of the Entente in public meetings and in the Soviet Congresses, the Representative of Anti-Bolshevik Russia was the object of more elaborate derision in the British House of Commons. Not once during these days did any member of Parliament deem it proper to point out that the Russian Chargé d'Affaires remained at his post out of a sense of duty and that personal attacks were therefore not only contrary to international polity, but substantially unjust. *The New Europe*, on one occasion, made a few remarks in that sense. These remarks were indeed an isolated instance. Replying to one of the innumerable questions, Lord Robert Cecil declared (if I remember correctly it was some time in May, 1918) that "Mr. Nabokoff receives a *grant* from His Majesty's Govern-

ment." I asked for an interview with Lord Robert and pointed out that the wording of his reply was misleading. "In my capacity of the Russian Representative whose duty it is to defend in the measure of his ability the interests of Russia—*of the Russia that is faithful to the alliance with Great Britain*—I am, obviously, deprived of authority by reason of the Bolshevik usurpation. As long, however, as this usurpation is not recognised as lawful, as long as I continue to deal with His Majesty's Government, I must preserve the respect of the British public and of the Russians. I therefore cannot accept 'alms.' What is a 'grant' if not 'alms'? I cannot allow the possibility of anyone being entitled to assume that I am paid by a foreign Power. I can accept payments which are made in the guise of a loan, to be included as an integral and very small part in the Russian national debt. In omitting to mention that these payments were made as a loan to be included in the national debt, the reply allows of an interpretation which is inconsistent with my dignity, not only as the Representative of Russia, but as a Russian possessed of self-respect." Lord Robert Cecil agreed. At first

he suggested that the incident should be closed by a letter in reply to the official Note which I had addressed to Mr. Balfour on the matter. Lord Robert added that to raise the question once more in the House of Commons would mean to provoke further unpleasant comment. I assured Lord Robert that I was quite accustomed to my name being mentioned in the debate and that it did not much matter if it came up once more. The declaration, moreover, having been made in the House of Commons, I should feel grateful if it were corrected likewise in the House of Commons. Incidentally, in the course of this conversation *Lord Robert Cecil entirely agreed with the view that no Russian Government could be officially recognised which would repudiate the Russian national debt.* A few days later in reply to a question in the House, Lord Robert gave the explanation for which I had pleaded.

The British Government continued to grant pecuniary assistance to the Embassy until March 31, of 1919. After that date credits were opened by the Government at Omsk. In the course of 1918-19 the total sum lent to the Embassy by the British Government

amounted to about £190,000. Approximately at the same time another measure was adopted by the British Government which will, I trust, be fully explained in Russia when the detailed story, based upon official documents, will be written of our negotiations with Great Britain during the Bolshevik regime. It was the requisition of the Russian Mercantile Fleet. A volume might be written on this subject. As a matter of fact, the British Government was justified in taking possession of the Russian ships. Owing to the unsettled condition of the crews, these ships ran a serious risk of falling to the enemy. Also, they could be of no use to Russia at that moment as Russia—the Bolsheviks—had made peace with Germany. It was perfectly natural that all the available tonnage should be used for purposes of war. The whole point *lay in the manner in which they were requisitioned*. It fell to my lot to conduct a fierce struggle with some of my compatriots immediately interested in the matter. They insisted that I should *protest* energetically and *resist* this requisition. Fully conscious of the fact that energetic protests are of no avail unless those who make them are backed by a Government capable

of enforcing its will, I was compelled to apply the method of oral protests and written "representations," and negotiations. As a result of these negotiations I was officially informed that the requisitioned ships would be returned as soon as the war would end, or a Government come into being in Russia which would be recognised and would be capable of undertaking the care of the Russian ships. The British Government, of course, carried out this undertaking. The mistakes which were made in regard to the treatment of the officers and crews of some of the requisitioned ships, sudden compulsory repatriations from Great Britain to the Arctic Regions of Russia, and proceedings painful to all those Russians who still revered their flag, in connection with the actual "taking over" of the ships, are unpleasant memories.

Even to this day, certain Russian circles continue to level against me the accusation of having surrendered the Russian Mercantile Fleet to the British. It goes without saying that my accusers are not altogether sufficiently informed of the documentary side of the negotiations to be entitled to so severe a judgment. I feel no anxiety on that score

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as no jury would ever, on the basis of documents, which I sincerely hope may some day come to light, find me guilty of base surrender.

CHAPTER XI

THE simultaneous presence in London of representatives of the Provisional Government and of the Soviet was, of course, abnormal, and led to daily misunderstandings and complications. The Bolshevik Agency, however, caused trouble of a more serious nature, as the following incident will clearly show.

In the spring of 1918, a mutiny occurred in one of the Russian torpedo boats in Liverpool Harbour. For several days the officers were conscious of the mutinous spirit with which the crew had quite suddenly been seized. So evident was the infection with the Bolshevik idea of doing away with the officers by shooting or throwing them overboard, that the officers went about with revolvers. Finally, the crew arranged a meeting in the wardroom, and "instructed" the officers to attend. The five officers were squeezed in, and could hardly move. They thought their fate was sealed. At that moment, a British officer came on board. He asked to see the captain, and was

conducted to the wardroom. The British officer soon realised what was going on. He gave orders for the officers to be allowed to stand on the bridge, and went ashore. The crew, by that time, was a howling mob of about 120 men, who were determined to do away with their officers. The British officer had warned his Russian friends that about half an hour would be required for him to take the necessary measures. Within *seven minutes* the first British soldier's bayonet appeared on deck. Twenty more followed. There was a dead silence. The Russian crew was surrounded. In silence, with trembling lips, these men started to throw papers into the sea. They were led off to prison like sheep. Thus the lives of five Russian officers were saved by the pluck and the resourceful promptitude of a British officer.

The investigation disclosed the fact that men from this torpedo boat had visited the premises of Litvinov's Embassy. These simpletons, having seen Litvinov's portraits in the papers, really believed him to be the Russian Ambassador in London. He received them and incited them to mutiny.

A few days later, I recounted this incident

to Lord Hardinge and committed the incredible indiscretion of remarking: "This is the result of Litvinov's presence in London where he is at liberty to conduct Bolshevik propaganda among Russian sailors . . . and elsewhere." Lord Hardinge promptly and courteously taught me a lesson by remarking that Litvinov's presence in London and intercourse with Litvinov was the business of the British Government, not mine. I apologetically agreed with him, the more so, I ventured to suggest, that the consequences of this "undesirable's" activities in London would likewise be the business, not of Russia, but of Britain.

A series of episodes more or less of the same nature could not but result in a certain tension and frigidity in the relations between the Embassy and the British Foreign Office. In July, another incident occurred which very nearly resulted in the complete cessation of official intercourse and in the closing of the Embassy.

On July 15, as I was leaving the club, the Secretary of the Japanese Embassy, who had always been extremely friendly to me, asked me whether it was with my knowledge and

consent that the Russian Embassy had been described in the newly-published Diplomatic list as "Vacant," and the names of the personnel excluded from the list. My colleague added that he was intensely surprised, as, according to the information that had reached him from Tokyo, the position of the Russian Ambassador in the Japanese capital had suffered no change whatsoever. I told him that I had not seen the Diplomatic list and his query was the first intimation I had received of the fact that the Russian Embassy was vacant.

I immediately directed the first Secretary of the Embassy to make inquiries at the Foreign Office. He returned to the Embassy and informed me that the decision had been taken by the high authorities and appeared to be irrevocable. It should be understood that the inclusion in the Diplomatic list is no mere formality. It is a kind of special passport, so to speak, which involves the privilege of being exempted from taxation, admitted to clubs as honorary member, etc. In a word, of enjoying the status of a diplomat.

I asked for an interview with Lord Hardinge. I might have regarded the matter as a mere

formality, not having any serious bearing upon my relations with the Government, and trusted that public opinion, my colleagues, etc., would likewise take no notice of it. The friends of the Soviet in the House of Commons, however, would certainly have seized this opportunity for further disparaging comment upon the status of the Embassy.

The exclusion from the Diplomatic list was the culminating point in a whole series of humiliating restrictive measures. I therefore decided that the moment had come to take a definite stand and to emphasize the fact that as long as there remained in London an agency of the Russian Government which had been loyal to the obligation of honour contracted on September 5, 1914, this agency was entitled to the privileges which other diplomatic agencies enjoyed *de jure*. Also, there existed the closest possible intercourse between the Embassy and the War Office, as well as the Admiralty. Owing to the incompetence of the Russian Military Agency, the Embassy constantly communicated direct with the War Office on many important subjects, such, for instance, as the despatch of Russian officers to the North of Russia. The summer of 1918 was

precisely the time when this intercourse was particularly lively. In the South of Russia and in Siberia, forces were coming into being which it was then the common interest of all the Allies, as well as of Russia, to support and reinforce. Also, the Allies had decided to send contingents to the North of Russia. The Admiralty, still mindful of the services rendered by Russia in the beginning of the war, was giving us every possible assistance. A Russian Embassy deprived of the last vestige of official status, naturally, would have been unable to continue these negotiations. The issue, therefore, was a grave one.

I told Lord Hardinge that I had come to bid him farewell. The Embassy had been declared "vacant" by order of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. I had only just heard of this decision and had come to inform Lord Hardinge that the Embassy would be vacant to-morrow. The Military and Naval Agencies and the Consulate-General would likewise close their doors. Lord Hardinge was extremely astonished that I should take this matter so seriously. He assured me that the Government had no intention whatsoever of breaking off relations with the Embassy. He

said that I represented nobody at all, that relations with me were purely personal and private, and that Litvinov had at least as much claim to be included in the Diplomatic list as myself and my colleagues. I ventured to point out to Lord Hardinge that I found but scant satisfaction in being placed in the same cart with Litvinov, and that in this respect I was in an exceptional position, as London was the only Allied capital to which a Bolshevik Ambassador had been admitted. That, however, was not the point. In the view of those in Russia who did not recognise the Bolshevik regime, in the view of Russians abroad and in London, it was my sacred duty to remain the spokesman of loyal Russia and to defend the interests of my country and my countrymen. This was possible only on condition that the British Government granted me a certain status, of which the fact of being struck off the Diplomatic list undoubtedly deprived me. The conversation continued on these painful lines, for nearly an hour. At length, seeing that Lord Hardinge was not inclined to alter his standpoint, I left the Foreign Office with the firm intention of adhering to the only decision which I considered in keeping with the dignity of the Embassy.

About an hour later, Lord Hardinge asked me to return. Mr. Balfour wished to know whose representative I considered myself to be and whether I persisted in claiming the privileges of an accredited Representative in spite of the fact that the Government that had accredited me had ceased to exist. I replied by quoting Mr. Balfour's statement made in the House of Commons on January 16 of the same year. Mr. Balfour then said: "His Majesty's Government do not recognise the Petrograd administration as a *de jure* or *de facto* Government. Mr. Nabokoff will presumably remain at his post until he is superseded or confirmed." I added that I was unaware of this statement having ever been challenged or contradicted. Lord Hardinge said that it was a mistake on the part of the Foreign Office not to have given me to understand eight months ago with sufficient clearness that I was not entitled to any diplomatic privileges and that conversations could only be conducted unofficially. Incidentally the Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs stated that in his opinion I was not entitled to issue diplomatic passports. Meanwhile, on that very day I had received a request from

another Department in the Government for a diplomatic passport to be delivered by the Embassy to a Russian who was proceeding to Siberia under the auspices of that Department.

As a result of this second conversation—which gave me the ineradicable impression that the last vestige of sympathy and goodwill, so often and so generously manifested by Lord Hardinge both in the course of my stay in India during his Vice-Royalty and afterwards in London, had completely disappeared—a compromise was suggested. The names of the Russian Chargé d’Affaires and of his colleagues were reinstated in the Diplomatic list, in which it was mentioned that we were “the Representatives of the late Provisional Government.” Such a formula was, of course, entirely appropriate. It indicated precisely what it had been my wish to convey—that we represented the last Constitutional Russian Government loyal to Great Britain as an Ally. Also, the fact that our names were on the list, once more served to show that the Bolshevik was not placed on an equal footing with the Representatives of the late Provisional Government.

This was my last interview with Lord Hardinge. In the last six months preceding

his departure for Paris as Mr. Balfour's immediate assistant at the Peace Conference, I did not have the privilege of being received by the Permanent Under-Secretary of State. Conversations were conducted with Lord Hardinge's subordinates.

In the spring of 1918, after the Allied representatives had departed from Russia via Vologda and Archangel, Mr. Bruce Lockhart, who had formerly been in charge of the British Consulate-General in Moscow, was sent to Moscow from London as a special Envoy. As far as I know—and I do not know very much about it—his instructions can only be compared to the solution of the quadrature of the circle. For practical purposes, it was necessary that a British agent should remain in Moscow, in order to "keep an eye" on the Bolsheviks and Germans, and to protect the interests of the British in Russia. Although the special Envoy had no official status—as the Bolshevik Government was not recognised—he nevertheless was to conduct official negotiations with Trotsky. Obviously, this was possible only on condition that Mr. Lockhart entertained "friendly" relations with the Bolshevik authorities. At the same time, Mr. Lockhart

was, of course, in communication with his old friends in Moscow. The British Envoy conscientiously endeavoured to solve this insoluble problem. Mr. Lockhart was arrested. The British Government became greatly alarmed. Public opinion had not demanded stern reprisals and had not insisted upon the expulsion, from British soil, of the Bolshevik agent in London and his gang after the murder of Captain Cromie. But the arrest of a British official was likely to provoke intense indignation and to react upon the prestige of the country. So negotiations were immediately opened for Mr. Lockhart's release. The effort at maintaining unofficial Government agents in Soviet Russia failed. It was realised that attempts at "influencing" the Bolsheviks were unavailing. There can be no doubt that Mr. Lockhart's mission caused more than one friend of the Entente and of Great Britain in Russia to despair of the sincerity of our former Allies.

Soon after Mr. Lockhart had been released and returned to London, Litvinov was invited by the British Government to return to Russia via Scandinavia. Obscure Bolshevik underlings remained in London, but they "kept to

the cellars." After that, intercourse with the Bolsheviks in Russia was maintained by Great Britain through the medium of self-appointed volunteer-diplomats.

After the spring of 1918, Lord Robert Cecil, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, took particular interest in Russian affairs. It was with him that I discussed these affairs whenever an opportunity presented itself, and to him my letters were addressed in Mr. Balfour's absence. I sincerely hope that some of these letters may come to light with the advent of real open diplomacy, when the correspondence between diplomats and Foreign Ministries will no longer rust in archives, but will be submitted, in due course, to the judgment of public opinion in order to allow an estimate of the work of the Representatives of the Government abroad.

The following is the text of a letter I addressed to Lord Robert Cecil on April 18, 1918. So much water has flowed under the bridge since, and the matter which forms the subject of this letter is so completely "out of date," that I have no hesitation in giving publicity to the document. It is an expression

of personal views, which I would have been, as a matter of fact, quite prepared to state publicly at the time the letter was written.

“In the last conversation I had with you, you were kind enough to express your willingness to listen to any suggestions I might find it necessary to make, and to the exposition of my views on the Russian situation. I hope you will allow me to avail myself of this privilege, and I also trust you will forgive me if I take the liberty of writing to you with absolute frankness.

“You will remember that at the beginning of the latest phase of the Russian revolution, viz. the seizure of power in Petrograd by the Bolsheviks, I endeavoured to persuade His Majesty’s Government that as long as hostilities continued there still was not only an excuse, but a very strong reason for making an effort to support the Russian front. I then suggested that even a small contingent of British and French troops might form a nucleus round which all the loyal elements of the Russian Army would gather for effective resistance to the German invasion. I understand that innumerable memoranda from British and Russian sources—from men who

were acting in no official capacity, but who certainly held correct views on the Russian situation—were presented to various departments of the British Government and to the War Cabinet. Whatever may have been the differences in the scope of the assistance which they advocated, there was one point on which they were unanimous—and that was that without help from the Allies the Bolshevik anarchy would achieve its aim, would bring to complete ruin the severely shattered military organisation in Russia, destroy the army, thereby creating anarchy in the country, and deliver it into the hands of Germany. All this has happened. The hopes which the Allies, and in particular Great Britain, entertained that the Bolshevik anarchy in Russia would spread to Germany, and later that Mr. Trotsky's diplomatic talents would overpower the stern logic of German militarism, have been doomed to disappointment. These things have been painfully clear to all loyal elements in Russia, with whom I have not been in personal touch, owing to the fact that they are silent under the threat of immediate execution, but I have now every reason to believe that I gave a true expression to the hopes and fears

of those whom I claim to represent in Great Britain.

“ For the last month I have not considered it opportune to approach you with any suggestions. I have understood that in the hour of crisis due to the German thrust on the Western front, I could hardly expect His Majesty's Government to divert their anxious attention from that field of battle. I surmised that any cry for help to Russia would be a voice crying in the wilderness. The situation at the present moment, however, seems to warrant an appeal. I see that a certain portion of the public Press in London is beginning to understand that in order to prevent the Germans from drawing their reserves from Russia for months to come, something practical must be done to compel them to cease depleting their Russian front, and that the best means of doing so is to create a rallying point for the loyal elements in Russia.

“ This view seems to me to express the substance of what Russia, loyal to the Allies, has felt all along. It has been corroborated by prominent Russians who have recently arrived in London, as well as by British officers who have returned from Russia after

having spent over three years with the Russian Army.

“ Might I quote the words of one of these officers, who has exceptional qualifications for a true understanding of Russia, as, unlike most of his compatriots who have been there in an official or semi-official capacity, he speaks Russian like a native. ‘ I am prepared to stake my life that should the British send a small force of a few thousands of well-disciplined and well-equipped troops to any point in Russia, should the British Government understand that it is not through cinemas and leaflets, but through boots and clothing that we ought to help and enlist the sympathies of the Russian people, tens of thousands of loyal able-bodied soldiers and officers would flock to the point where this contingent would land.’

“ It is not too late. From the moment when Japan realised the necessity of stemming the German advance in Siberia, to this day, the question of Japanese intervention has formed the subject of discussion in the Press and in Parliament. In my opinion, the ill-timed and ill-advised comments of the Press in this matter have exercised a most deleterious

influence. It seems therefore obvious that should the idea of giving effective assistance gain ground, the *conditio sine qua non* of the success of such an enterprise is absolute secrecy.

"It may have been expedient for His Majesty's Government to continue negotiations with the Bolsheviks, and I consider that it is outside my province to discuss the matter. I must, however, point out the effect that this situation has had in Russia. The mere fact of His Majesty's Government admitting the presence of a Bolshevik emissary in London is in itself enough to cause despondency among all intelligent classes in Russia who are under the impression that Russia is represented in Great Britain solely by a Bolshevik agent. It is my firm and fervent opinion that dealings with this band of traitors can never bring satisfactory results. They have betrayed Russia, and their public utterances and private conversations which have been reported to me by absolutely reliable men tend to show that even those among them who may be mistaken for honest idealists are most anxious to see a revolution in Great Britain of the same nature as the upheaval which has brought about the Russian collapse. To place any reliance upon

their endeavours to create an army would be short-sighted, to say the least.

“ Whenever I have had an opportunity (and I have often refrained from availing myself of that opportunity for fear of embarrassing you and taking up your time) of discussing the Russian situation and the means of averting through energetic action further dangers to the Allied cause and to Great Britain, I have invariably been asked the same question, which negatived all further arguments: ‘ Who are the men who are showing active resistance to the Bolsheviks? Where is the party upon which we can rely, whom are we to support, and how?’ There is now overwhelming evidence that the party which is anxiously awaiting support is not a ‘ party,’ but the ‘ thin layer’ of several hundreds of thousands of Russian patriots, including tens of thousands of officers whose heroism in face of misery, insults, and death can only be placed on record by the impartial historian. This ‘ thin layer’ covers 180 millions of illiterate peasantry, including several millions of the soldiery who have been demoralised and deprived of a sense of duty and patriotism by the very agents who now call themselves the Russian Govern-

ment. Is it the present Russian Government, or the scattered remnants of patriotic Russia that can be looked to as the mainstay of the country? It may be expedient not to break with the existing regime, but if a long view is taken, it will be clear that if those elements which would reconstruct Russia are discouraged, then, in the future, when the Bolshevik regime comes to its appointed doom, nothing will stem the tide of German penetration into Russia, and through Russia into Central Asia.

“As the help I would suggest is in essence a military measure, I do not claim to be in a position to expound a definite plan. I know that there are soldiers, both Russian and British, who can elaborate this plan. In a few words it is as follows :—

“To make two of the ports in Northern Russia, as well as Vladivostok, rallying points by the despatch of contingents, the size of which would depend on the practical possibilities of the situation, as well as a base for supplies, not of war material only, but of such goods as would provide the necessaries of life for a portion, at least, of the Russian population.

“ It goes without saying that should it be found practicable to send these contingents to Russia’s Northern ports, the primary object of such an expedition would be to prevent the Germans from cutting off Russia from all intercourse with her Allies, and seizing those important strategic points. There is no doubt whatever that Germany is intent upon dealing Russia this final blow. If the Bolshevik leaders are at all sincere in their endeavours to resist Germany, they should welcome whatever help the Allies may offer Russia in that direction. If the Russian people learn that Great Britain and the United States are taking steps to satisfy their urgent need for the necessaries of life, they will understand that protection must be given to such stores as would arrive in Russia, as owing to the chaos now prevailing no equitable distribution of goods would otherwise be possible. Pillage and destruction are being practised in Russia by the soldiery who form the main force upon which the Bolsheviks rely.

“ I fully realise the strain under which the British Government is now working owing to the increased demands upon the nation. Nevertheless, I cannot help feeling that this is

a crucial moment, and that unless something is done *now* to assist Russia, the effect may be very far-reaching, and may even counter-balance the highest victory that may be achieved over the Germans on the Western front, a victory which I consider certain."

There are two or three sentences in this letter which may now, in the light of subsequent events, appear to indicate that the "reliable" people upon whose testimony my argument was based, committed grave errors of judgment. One point is that which deals with the "certainty" of hundreds of thousands of loyal Russians flocking to the Allied standards after the Allied contingents landed in Russia. As is well-known, no such rally took place at Archangel, Murmansk, or Vladivostok. In making the suggestion, however, I did not foresee that the Allied contingents would be merely handfuls of men, that they would not arrive till three months before the end of the war, and would not advance into the country far enough to reach such districts where there would be "hundreds of thousands" of Russians, and not the scarce population of the marshes surrounding Archangel. Only when the full story of the Allied "occupation" of

Archangel is written, only when impartial recorders belonging to all the countries concerned will have the courage to recount that sad story and to describe the attitude of the Allies which was that of "conquerors" and "masters," not of Allies and friends, then and only then will it become evident that the failure of the Archangel expedition cannot in justice be attributed solely to the inefficiency and lack of patriotism on the part of the Russians which are now alleged to have caused this lamentable failure. The features of the situation which I have but summarily indicated above suffice, however, to show that it was not the idea of sending an expedition to Northern Russia *while the war was still being fought against Germany*, but the manner in which the idea was carried out that led to the disastrous consequences so often cited as an argument against any further assistance to Russia.

Another point is the assertion that the Bolsheviks could not be relied upon to create an army. Now that we hear so much of the splendid organisation of the invincible Red Army which counts millions of enthusiastic soldiers, the statement may appear ludicrous.

It may seem that in writing these lines I grotesquely under-estimated Trotsky's genius as well as the enthusiasm of the Russian soldier for the communistic ideals preached by the Bolsheviki. This, however, would be a misconception. Everyone knows—and those among the anti-Bolshevik Russians who have the courage to *speak* the truth, not to whisper it *en petit comité*, know it, and admit it—that the Kolchak and Denikin Governments and armies *defeated themselves*, and that their collapse was due not to the prowess of the Red Army, but to the defects of policy and organisation which alienated the population instead of driving it into the anti-Bolshevik ranks wholesale. Since the Red Army came into being, no one has ever heard the description of a single regular *battle* won by the Red Army. This soldiery is sufficiently well-organised to terrorise the hunger-stricken population of Soviet Russia, and sufficiently well trained in the art of plunder and rapine to find in these achievements a powerful incentive for the invasion of rich districts weakly defended. But I still continue to endorse the opinion which has been expressed by a few thoughtful observers that, should this Red

Army come up against an infinitely smaller force of well disciplined troops, it would run as fast as its legs would carry it. All accounts of " battles " in Russia between the Red Army and the anti-Bolsheviks always speak of thousands of prisoners. The casualties are seldom mentioned, and the figures of the latter are, as a rule, very modest indeed. My contention that Trotsky was unable, in the spring of 1918, of raising an army in Russia *to fight the Germans*, does not seem to have been belied by subsequent events.

Letters such as the above quoted to Lord Robert Cecil were never answered. As a rule, a brief note in the third person informed me that the letter had been received and was being given consideration.

The question of Japanese intervention on a large scale formed the subject of discussion between the Allies ever since the month of January, 1918. Suggestions had been put forward as early as in the summer of 1917, that 200,000 Japanese troops should be sent to the Russian front to fight against the Germans. A tentative suggestion—in the

shape of an expression of my personal view based upon the private advice of certain military experts in London—was made by the Embassy to the Russian High Command. It was rejected as unpracticable. The negotiations regarding the despatch of Japanese troops which began in January, 1918, were conducted without the participation of the Russian Representatives. Moreover, it was impossible for these Representatives to obtain official information from British sources as to the progress of these negotiations. I received, however, authentic information from an exceptionally well-informed Allied source, and the situation, according to my informant, was as follows.

At first, the Japanese declared that they were prepared to send troops to Siberia on condition that no other Allied contingents would be despatched. The United States Government vetoed this plan. The British and French Governments then suggested that a mixed force comprising American troops should be sent to Vladivostok. President Wilson opposed the suggestion, but was finally persuaded to agree to the despatch of an American contingent, and the Japanese

Government accepted the plan of Allied intervention. More weeks went by. During these weeks, nay, months, discussions were carried on as to the relative strength of different Allied contingents, the question of the Chief Command, etc. Finally, the contingents came too late and their strength was totally inadequate. In other words, the Archangel business was repeated almost in every detail.

As regards the Archangel expedition, the reasons of its failure are briefly indicated above.

Eye-witnesses declare that when the news was received in Petrograd of the landing of British troops at Archangel (on August 2, 1918) the leaders of the Bolshevik Government in Petrograd were in a panic and started to "pack their trunks." They thought that a strong army had arrived which was going to advance and threaten Petrograd. When they learnt that only 3,000 troops had landed, they immediately understood that these dribbets of the Allied Armies would be unable to advance and would therefore only serve as an excellent excuse for further propaganda of "Allied aggression." The error of the British Command in forming a battalion of Bolshevik deserters led to the massacre of British officers.

This tragic episode caused the London Press to raise the cry "hands off," and hastened the evacuation which, however, had already been decided under pressure of the Labour Party.

There was yet another region where British troops conducted military operations on Russian territory—Transcaucasia.

I will not venture to express any judgment upon these operations, for the simple reason that I am not in possession of reliable information concerning the course of events in that part of Russia during 1918 and the first half of 1919. Owing to the complete absence of direct communication between that part of the world and the Russian Embassy in London, never once during my tenure of office did I receive a report from a responsible Russian politician or General as to what was going on in Transcaucasia. General Bitcherakhov, one of the actors in that extremely complex drama, arrived in London in 1919. His account, however, was more picturesque and more passionate than illuminating. Personal considerations overshadowed his narrative and deprived it of the weight which it would otherwise have had as coming from a man who had been on the spot at the most critical moment.

This feature of the friendly assistance of the British Government in reconstructing and regenerating Russia requires therefore to be described by more competent and better-informed historians. At the time of writing, the muddle is appalling. Self-determination, the poison gas invented originally by Germany and tried for the first time in the Ukraine in 1917 by Austro-German emissaries, later adopted by President Wilson, and finally sanctioned by the British *Empire* statesmen, is causing endless guerillas and anarchy in Transcaucasia. It is devoutly to be wished that some wholesome wind may blow this poison gas into another direction than that of Persia or further south-east. Otherwise there will be neither peace nor stability in that immense region for years to come, and Russia and Great Britain will have to pay the highest penalty for General Smuts's sixpenny pamphlets, and President Wilson's fourteen points.

In the above-quoted letter I addressed to Lord Robert Cecil, an allusion is made to the fact that during the first months after the Bolshevik revolution one of the excuses for the inactivity of the Allies was that there was no "party" or "power" in Russia with which

to negotiate. The Russian Directorate at Omsk, recognised in Siberia, had been in existence for about two months, and was replaced by Kolchak's Government in the middle of November. And yet the Allies were at a loss to find an ally in Russia.

CHAPTER XII

THE Kerensky Ministers were arrested on November 7, 1917, and cast into prison, from which they escaped unscathed several weeks later. The Premier Kerensky succeeded in escaping the efforts, which must have been lukewarm; of the Bolsheviks to capture him on the first day of the *coup d'état*. Kerensky vanished from Petrograd. After the dismal failure of his attempt to "capture" Petrograd, British public opinion ceased to take any interest whatsoever in his fate. His name appeared occasionally in Press telegrams, but the impression prevailed that as a statesman he had ended his career. In July, 1918, the rumour spread that he had fled to America. By a queer coincidence, on the very morning when the *Daily Mail* announced that Kerensky had landed in New York, he arrived in London. He travelled *incognito* with a Serbian passport. Kerensky rang up the Embassy and informed me, through the medium of his friend, Dr. Gavronsky, in whose house he stayed, that

he would like to see me, but hesitated to come to the Embassy. He did not wish to reveal his presence in London and therefore requested me to call upon him. I was naturally interested to meet the man who had played so important a part in Russian events and of whom so many contradictory rumours and legends had been circulated. Our first meeting was very cordial. The brilliant intellect and the temperament of the late Premier of Russia impressed me very favourably. He told me that he had arrived in London and intended to proceed to Paris with a "mandate" from the Union for the Regeneration of Russia to which the Governments of Great Britain and France were *formally bound by promises* (in the case of France, these promises were alleged to have been given in writing) of help and assistance. According to Kerensky the importance of this "pact" lay chiefly in the promise of the official recognition (as the Constitutional Government of Russia) of the Directorate at Oufa which was to be formed by the Union for the Regeneration of Russia. Kerensky's mission was to insist upon military and financial assistance against the Bolsheviks. He asked me to arrange for him a meeting with the Prime

Minister and expressed the wish that I should be present at the interview and act as interpreter. I wrote to the Prime Minister. The draft of my letter I presented to the Foreign Office and added that should the request be refused I should be grateful if the Prime Minister would communicate with Kerensky direct. I also declined to attend that meeting. The Prime Minister received Kerensky. The conversation, apparently, impressed the Prime Minister, as on the same day Mr. Lloyd George rebuked rather severely the opponents of intervention in the House of Commons. The Prime Minister hinted that he had obtained information from Russia from an "authoritative source."

The Labour leaders and newspaper editors were aware of Kerensky's presence in London, but complied with the *mot d'ordre* not to mention the fact in public or in the Press. About a week after Kerensky's arrival in London a British Labour Conference took place, and it was decided that Kerensky should appear at this Conference as a dramatic *hors d'œuvre*. The appearance of the late chief of the Russian Provisional Government produced a very strong impression upon the

Conference. Unfortunately, the impression was somewhat marred by the fact that he spoke Russian and his speech was translated sentence for sentence by an interpreter who incidentally was not a Russian. I had warned Kerensky's friends that such a method would undoubtedly have a bad effect, and my warning appears to have been justified.

Nevertheless, this "Kerensky turn" had an important and favourable sequel. Not so much because of what Kerensky actually said, but because on the eve of the first meeting of the Conference the Press published an account of the speech made in the Reichstag by Kuhlmann. This speech contained very plain hints at Germany's readiness to accept Peace by compromise. The speech had undoubtedly been made with a view to placing a new weapon into the hands of the British pacifists, who were thus given the opportunity of arguing at the Conference in favour of peace by making use of Kuhlmann's arguments. Kerensky's appearance at the Conference occupied the attention of the delegates to such an extent that Kuhlmann and his provocatively tempting remarks were utterly disregarded.

On the following day, after the Conference came to a close, Kerensky left for Paris, where he remained for several weeks. I can form no definite judgment of his activities in Paris, as I know of them only by hearsay. He seems to have incurred the displeasure of the Russian Embassy as well as of the French Government and of the majority of the papers. Judging from the latter, he failed to adopt the right tone in Paris.

Kerensky's return to London coincided with a short report which I made at the Russian Luncheon Club in London in regard to the international situation and to the attitude of the Allies and in particular of Great Britain towards Russia. Upon hearing that this report was to be made, Kerensky telephoned just before the appointed time to the Club Committee, requesting the favour of an invitation. Taken somewhat unawares, the Committee agreed. The reception given to Kerensky by the gathering was distinctly cool, for the simple reason that many members of this Russian Club were officers. As is well-known, Kerensky was far from popular in Russian military circles. After I had spoken, Kerensky asked to be allowed to make a few

remarks. I had explained that Italy, by reason of her remoteness from Russia, was more or less indifferent, that France was hostile, whereas Britain was unable to arrive at a definite policy, as neither the statesmen nor the political parties were in a position to acquire exhaustive information and come to definite conclusions from the innumerable and conflicting testimonies concerning the situation in Russia. I must confess that having heard so much of Kerensky's wonderful talent for oratory, I was greatly disappointed. There was nothing but the "first person" in his speech. The impression he apparently endeavoured to convey was that he had administered a severe lesson to Monsieur Clemenceau. Those who know the veteran French "Tiger" may judge of the true complexion of the interview between Clemenceau and Kerensky. There was neither clear thought nor expressive imagery in Kerensky's speech. Maybe, he was influenced by the obvious animosity of his hearers.

At this moment the Oufa Conference of the representatives of the Union for the Regeneration of Russia and of the Constituent Assembly, consisting chiefly of Social revolutionaries,

had formed a Directorate at Omsk which claimed the right to be recognised as the All-Russian Government. Kerensky considered himself not only invested with full powers of information, but called upon to defend before the British Government the rights and the interests of the Directorate. Mr. Kerensky's first effort in that direction was a failure.

The British Government had given a British passport for transit from Mesopotamia through the United Kingdom into Siberia to a certain Russian called Zavoiko. This gentleman was piloted in London by the late Petrograd correspondent of *The Times*, Mr. Wilton, who detested Kerensky. I did not have the opportunity of meeting Mr. Zavoiko in London. According to reliable information he had been one of General Kornilov's advisers during the famous Kornilov episode. On the face of it, there was, of course, no reason to grant a British passport to a Russian citizen, and it would have been more correct to direct this gentleman to the Russian Consulate-General. Complete chaos, however, reigned in those days with regard to passports, and the British Government may have had special reasons for

taking the step which roused Kerensky's red-hot anger. The War Office more than once requested that I should give diplomatic passports to Russian officers proceeding to Siberia, whilst the Foreign Office did not recognise these passports and viséd passports granted by Litvinov. The mere fact, however, of Zavoiko receiving a passport from the British authorities had no political importance whatsoever. Obviously the last person entitled to raise his voice in protest was Kerensky himself, who had arrived in London with the benevolent assistance of the British authorities in Russia, and had moreover himself accepted a foreign passport. Kerensky, however, tried to raise a row. He came to see me, bitterly attacked the British Government and asserted that one of the Departments in the British Government was using Zavoiko as a tool in a monarchist plot in Siberia. I tried to persuade Kerensky that all this nonsense was a mere product of his vivid imagination. He replied that I was "blind," that I was being deceived by the British, etc. On the next day he published a letter in the *Daily News* in which he denounced the Government in violent terms.

The British Government was inclining towards the official recognition of the Directorate at Omsk. In order to enable me to establish relations with this, the first serious effort at organised resistance to the Bolsheviki, approximately in the middle of October, 1918, the British Government granted me once again the privilege of using cipher for telegrams to Omsk and to my colleagues abroad. Kerensky apparently was in touch with some minor officials in the Foreign Office, and consequently became aware of this measure. He immediately addressed to me the request that he should be allowed to use the Embassy cipher, or a cipher which he pretended to possess in order to send "information" to Omsk. In support of this claim, he produced a telegram which he had received from his intimate friend, Mr. Avxentiev, the then President of the Directorate, informing him that his telegrams were expected. The letter by which the Foreign Office had notified me that I was entitled henceforward to use cipher, contained the definite indication that this privilege was granted "as a token of special personal confidence," and that the Foreign Office felt certain that cipher would be used

only for the transmission of *my* political and business telegrams. In view of this categorical declaration, and also bearing in mind that the transmission of political information emanating from irresponsible sources by means of the Embassy cipher was against elementary diplomatic ethics, and in practice detrimental, as it would inevitably result in contradictory information, I refused Kerensky's request. He did not seem to understand at the moment that his rôle as a politician had come to an end in Russia. He adopted a very haughty tone, invoked his "power," was very reproachful in regard to my "abetting British conspiracies," etc. It was a painful interview, as Kerensky displayed scant self-possession, great anger, and no wisdom whatsoever.

I promptly informed the President of the Directorate at Omsk of this incident. The reply was that "Kerensky is in London in private capacity, that he has no mandate from the Union for the Regeneration," and that I was entirely justified in refusing to grant him the use of cipher. I forwarded to Kerensky a copy of this telegram—it occurred on or about October 25—and I have not seen him since.

After the overthrow of the Directorate and

the assumption of supreme power by Admiral Kolchak, Kerensky conducted in Paris and in London an agitation against the Omsk Government. This attitude was severely criticised by the great majority of Russian progressive elements who had temporarily sacrificed their partisanship in the attempt at giving support to the man who had raised the standard of the unification and regeneration of Russia on democratic lines. The future will show whether Kerensky will ever be in a position to return to Russia and to play an important political part. Personally, I doubt it. The hatred of the Russian military circles, big and small, towards Kerensky, is everlasting. To a great extent he deserves it, if the stories which I have heard from distinguished Russian officers of his haughty and contemptuous attitude towards Russian generals are true. It is often alleged that Kerensky is responsible for the disruption of the Army. Such an accusation is not fully justified. It is obviously childish to declare one man responsible for a process which was undoubtedly elemental and which none could have been in a position to stop. There can be no doubt that Kerensky was not up to the

mark as Prime Minister of Russia. There can be no doubt that he was afflicted by the *mania grandiosa*. It is equally certain that the famous Order No. 1 and many other measures sanctioned by the Provisional Government as a whole contributed to the complete breakdown of discipline in the Russian Army. If Kerensky is responsible, others share his responsibility. Kerensky may write many more volumes about the Kornilov affair. He will never succeed in refuting the charge of duplicity and of weakness. I would, however, remind the detractors and abusers of this gifted but unbalanced favourite child of the first Russian Revolution, that superhuman genius, energy, and will power were needed in order to cope with the problems with which Kerensky was confronted. In spite of all his qualities and shortcomings, he is not a superman.

In the course of 1919, Kerensky remained outside the Russian political Conference in Paris, which included, apart from Russian diplomats and cold-storage statesmen, several of his former friends and collaborators. This compulsory aloofness and isolation rendered him extremely nervous, and he continued systematically to attack such attempts

at creating strong governmental nuclei in Russia (in Siberia and in South Russia) as it was the task of the political Conference to represent and to support. Upon his arrival in London in the summer of 1918, Kerensky was an ardent supporter of intervention. A year later, seeing that this intervention was limited to half measures and was accompanied by sporadic and equivocal attempts at coming into touch with Lenin, Kerensky became an equally ardent opponent of intervention. I would ask some of Kerensky's detractors, are they entitled by greater services to Russia than those rendered by Kerensky to condemn a man who saw the salvation of Russia in a policy which differed from that in which they failed more lamentably than Kerensky had failed before?

CHAPTER XIII

ONE of my colleagues in the Russian Diplomatic service who had retired a couple of years before the war from an important post, told me the following story. In the month of February, 1918, he happened to be in Petrograd, where he was living very quietly on a modest pension. Having discovered his presence, the Bolsheviks invited him to the Foreign Office "for a chat." He was received courteously and had the honour of being admitted to the presence of Chicherin himself. The Bolshevik Ministry evidently imagined that he would be willing to serve them, as he was considered as one of the "malcontents" owing to the fact that his resignation had been more or less forced upon him by the Sazonov Ministry. My friend was invited to join the service. He refused. With a frankness which was always characteristic of this very able man, he informed Chicherin that he considered the Brest-Litovsk treaty an act of folly and of treason. Chicherin replied: "We have been com-

pelled to make peace with Germany because we could not go on fighting. But the Brest-Litovsk treaty exists only on paper. *Cannot you realise that Germany is already beaten?* The entry of America into the war has already settled the issue in favour of the Entente. When the Allies win, the Brest-Litovsk Treaty will be annulled either by them or by ourselves."

Thus in Soviet Russia, where the leaders were well informed in regard to the internal conditions of Germany, the latter was considered as defeated at the very moment when the Brest-Litovsk Treaty was signed. No notion of that sort existed in the countries of the Entente. In April or May (I cannot recall the exact date) one of the London papers published a series of articles, the author of which, a business man by profession, had been interned in Germany since the beginning of the war. Owing to exceptional circumstances, he had the unique opportunity of making extensive inquiries into the internal conditions of Germany. As soon as he succeeded in escaping, he published a series of articles. The gist of these articles was that Germany might last for another six months or

so (after March, 1918). The possibility of further military successes was not excluded. But the disintegration in the rear was such that a *sudden and complete* collapse was inevitable. The question was whether this collapse would come three, four, or six months hence. But the collapse would be such that Germany would capitulate.

These articles, although strenuously advertised by the paper—and events have proved that the advertisement was well deserved—passed comparatively unobserved. They were understood as an *unsuccessful* effort at raising the spirit in Great Britain, where doubts were being expressed of the possibility of complete victory over Germany. There prevailed a certain subdued despondency. From March till August, it is no exaggeration to say that the country lived with its heart in its mouth. “*Paris!*” The word was on everybody’s lips. When the Germans launched their last offensive against Paris and the capital was already being shelled by the uncanny “*Big Bertha,*” it seemed that France was doomed. It was only in August, when the offensive came to a standstill and the victorious Allied troops commenced their march across

the devastated districts of France, that Great Britain breathed freely again. The above-mentioned articles of March were to me personally a source of constant and unshaken confidence in the triumph of the Allied cause. Somehow, I believed every word of the author's seemingly too optimistic predictions.

After the Brest-Litovsk Treaty had been signed, and as late as in August, 1918, I repeat, the issue of the war hung fire. British Government circles were concerned with nothing else. Neither was public opinion. How could the Russian Embassy, isolated not only from Russia, but even from other Russian Embassies and Legations, achieve any results in the endeavour to obtain help and assistance for Russia? The Ministers, Members of the War Cabinet and the Prime Minister himself awaited with ever-growing anxiety the communiqués from the Western front which appeared twice daily—at about three p.m. and just before midnight. Could they then think of the morrow, could they take a long view and understand, *at that moment*, that by leaving Russia to the tender mercies of Bolshevism they were running the risk of jeopardising the fruits of their victory, however

complete? No, they could not. They "waived Russia aside," and waived aside the question of assistance to Russia. Our assurances that the conscious elements in Russia expected help and would not be reconciled to the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, were treated with scepticism. They argued thus: as long as we see no active and organised resistance, what do we care about the feelings and the fate of those who are unable to organise resistance to the Bolsheviks? •

This mentality prevailed during the first half of 1918 and as late as in August and September. Consequently, the activities of the Embassy were perforce limited during these months to the struggle against the violation of Russia's interests and of the rights of Russian citizens. All the while, the Embassy was under the threat of having to close its doors as a result of the official recognition of the Bolsheviks. On more than one occasion "competent" and "well-informed" friends of the Embassy warned us that this recognition was being "considered." The only weapon at the disposal of the Embassy was ardent faith in the inherent nobility of the British nation and in the righteousness

of the Russian cause which we were trying to defend.

The first news of the formation in Russia of a *Governmental* power and organisation to fight the Bolsheviks was received at the Embassy from Vladivostok. It was the first time for seven months that an appeal was addressed to the Russian Embassy in London by a Russian administration. The "Union for the Regeneration of Russia," which had originated in Russia (Moscow) as early as February or March, 1918, had never directly approached the Embassy. Whether it was by reason of material impossibility, or because the idea never occurred to the promoters and leaders of the "Union," I do not know. I doubt, however, that the Moscow group was really unable to send a message to the Embassy. Mr. Lockhart was in Moscow, and he was in a position to send official messengers and messages. Be that as it may, the fact remains that I never received a single line from the "Union" and was therefore unable to speak in its name. I learnt of its existence from Kerensky in June.

The first Vladivostok Government was headed by Mr. Derber, a Socialist who was

utterly unknown at the Embassy. In reply to his first telegram I expressed the readiness to approach the British Government on his behalf and to assist him in so far as his activities would be directed against the Bolsheviks.

Almost simultaneously, a message reached me from General Horvat, who had formed another anti-Bolshevik Government at Harbin. This Government, as far as I could make out from contradictory news, was more moderate than the Government at Vladivostok. Telegrams travelled very slowly, and it was well-nigh impossible to derive from them exact knowledge or definite ideas as regards the actual course of events or prospects of success of these embryos of an All-Russian Government. I had to grope in the dark, directed chiefly by newspaper telegrams and information sporadically derived from official British sources. I did everything in my power to make it clear to the two above-mentioned Governments and later to the Government which was formed at Omsk and described itself as the "Siberian" Government that partisanship and quarrels about the right of each of these administrations to call itself the "All-Russian" Government were ludicrous

and detrimental to the cause which they professed to have espoused. I expressed the view that all these local Governments should endeavour to establish law and order and prevent economic and political disruption each within its territorial limits, and that the best thing they could do would be to conform to the territorial divisions which existed before the revolution. In such matters as, for example, the railway traffic, it was their sacred duty, dictated by common-sense, to achieve complete co-ordination. My idea was that autonomous administrative units should be formed akin to the "Governor-Generalships" of the old regime, but, of course, upon entirely different lines as far as administrative methods were concerned.

The Siberian papers published during that period, as well as documents published in large quantities by the Omsk Directorate, give an exhaustive history of the events in Siberia which culminated in the unification of Siberia (which, alas, was of short duration), and in the recognition, by the whole of Siberia, of the Oufa Directorate which had migrated to Omsk, as the "All-Russian" Government.

To recount all the negotiations which led to

this consummation would be to exceed the scope of this narrative. Suffice it to say that inasmuch as the advice of the Russian Embassy in London was capable of influencing the course of events, it was given in the sense of complete solidarity of all parties opposed to the Bolsheviks and of loyalty to the Allied cause which every patriotic Russian *in those days* regarded as being the Russian cause as well.

For the Russian Embassy in London the first telegram of the President of the Directorate at Omsk, Mr. Avxientiev, was the opening of a new phase since the Bolshevik revolution. We ceased to "hang in the air." We were at last given the opportunity of saying to the British Government: "In the distant Far East a new Russian State is coming into being. It seeks the support of the Powers of the Entente. In order to counteract the unholy alliance between the dwindling German autocracy and the rising Russian Bolshevism, lend this new Russia your support."

Political work was made possible once again. At this moment I was given the opportunity of obtaining information from Omsk

and Vladivostok about the true state of affairs in those regions from sources in which I could have *full* confidence. This information was independent of the official communications of the Directorate. And these reliable informants very soon began to send messages which indicated that the Directorate was not strong enough to create a Government capable of coping with all the innumerable and complex problems of the situation. In particular, it was unable to raise an army. These messages were confirmed from British sources. A month had not elapsed since the advent to predatory power of the Directorate, when news was received that a *coup d'état* was imminent, and that such a *coup d'état* was essential for the formation of a strong Government.

The date of November 11 is the greatest date in the history of Europe of the twentieth century. The firing of guns which started at 11 a.m. announced to the residents of London that the war had ended. The Armistice which meant the capitulation of Germany had been signed. It is impossible to describe the exultation that followed. For a whole week this exultation continued. It assumed the shape of wanderings of gay throngs, from

noon till the early hours of the morning, of innumerable crowds in the streets of London, walking, motoring in taxi-cabs, lorries, 'buses. Processions were formed, choruses sung, bon-fires lit. As far as I was able to discern, the crowds were mad with joy not so much on account of the defeat of the "boche," being an event of the greatest importance in the realm of international politics, nor even so much on account of the tremendous triumph for the national pride of Great Britain, as by virtue of a kind of primitive happiness *resulting from the fact that the slaughter had ceased*, that mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, wives and children would no longer open telegrams with trembling hands lest these telegrams contain the tragic news of the death of their dear ones. The aspect of the London restaurants, streets, theatres, habitually so placid, silent, and restrained, changed completely. In this rowdiness, utterly devoid, however, of vulgar excesses, there was something genuine and spontaneous.

The feelings of Russians in London naturally defy description. A series of solemn festivities took place, from which we were excluded. The keynote was given in the Mansion House

speeches made by Mr. Balfour and Mr. Lloyd George.

London was profusely beflagged for about a week. There were Serbian, Greek, Portuguese flags, but no Russian. Only the War Office—the staunch friend endowed with better memory than the rest of Whitehall—flew the Russian flag, and a handful of friends of Russia, private persons, remembered among the seven million Russian casualties the names of their personal friends who had died for the cause of the Entente.

Mr. Balfour and Mr. Lloyd George forgot all about Russia in their Mansion House perorations. The Press, of course, followed the lead. There were, however, *some* people who did remember. They were the officers who had been attached to the Russian Army. Still more sympathy was shown by the British officers who had been prisoners in Germany with the Russians. And the numbers of these sympathisers were considerable. Their sympathy was a valuable compensation for official indifference.

At the first interview I had with Lord Robert Cecil after the Armistice I handed him a memorandum which I supplemented by

a fervent appeal to the Government on behalf of the Russian prisoners of war in Germany. "If these men are given full liberty and not taken care of, they will be irresistibly drawn towards Russia. They will find themselves in Soviet Russia where they will be confronted with the alternative either to join the Red Army, or to be shot, or die of hunger and cold."

Events have confirmed my apprehensions. The fate of the Russian prisoners in Germany did not attract the attention of those who drafted the military clauses of the Armistice. They were not mentioned. Efforts were made later to establish some kind of control over those prisoners in order to prevent them from reaching Soviet Russia. In one of the departments of the War Office an officer who had been in captivity in Germany together with the Russians, took special interest in the matter. I am bound to state that this officer displayed greater energy, sympathy and compassion than the entire personnel of our Military Agency in London. Personally, I feel more indebted to these British friends for all the care they took of our prisoners than words can express. Alas, their

efforts were *individual*. The "powers that be" . . . went on repeating *ad nauseam* the same aphorisms about "Russia's dismemberment" and "disappearance."

There occurred, however, a lucid interval in the attitude of the British Government towards Russia during the first few days that followed the Armistice. I strongly suspect that the initiative in this case belonged to Lord Robert Cecil. It seems to have dawned upon the British Government at this moment that the recognition of a Constitutional Government in Russia was a necessary preliminary to the solution of all questions concerning the reconstruction of Europe. Although the British representatives in Siberia reported that the position of the Omsk Directorate was by no means stable, that an acute conflict had arisen between the Social-Revolutionaries (who dominated the Government) and the military elements, it was decided to recognise the Directorate, and a telegram to that effect had already been drafted on November 17.

The *coup d'état* of November 18 at Omsk caused this telegram to be withheld. Admiral Kolchak had been proclaimed Supreme Ruler. When I saw Lord Robert Cecil on the next day,

he said: "We were ready to recognise the Directorate. It has been forcibly removed. Who can tell how long the present power will last, and whether the same thing will not happen in another three weeks? How do you expect us to arrive at a decision in these circumstances? We must wait and see what happens."

They have waited and seen. It is true that since these words were spoken the opinion has become engrained in the minds of British politicians that the capture of Moscow is the decisive event, and that "as long as Lenin sits in Moscow, no other Government can be recognised in Russia." . . .

Russian Liberal circles in London were deeply perturbed by the news of the downfall of the Directorate. They took it for granted that Kolchak's Government was nothing else than a military dictatorship. They were convinced that Kolchak himself was a reactionary. They said that the rightful succession of power (which, in their opinion, had passed from the Constituent Assembly dispersed by Lenin to the members of the Directorate who were also members of that Assembly) had been broken. It soon, however, became ap-

parent that Kolchak was being supported not merely by a group of reactionary officers, but by powerful social and political groups and parties. The great majority of the Russian Liberals in London (except, of course, the small Kerensky section) allowed themselves to be persuaded that agitation against Kolchak was detrimental to the Russian cause, and that the regeneration of Russia could not be achieved by the Social revolutionaries alone, but was only possible if all political parties forgot their shibboleths and united in support of law and order and in the task of forming an army capable of overwhelming Trotsky's Chinese and Lettish mercenaries.

A couple of days after the Armistice had been signed, a meeting was held at the Embassy at which representatives of all the political Russian sections (to the exclusion, once more, of the Kerensky group) were present. The question was discussed of the bearing the cessation of the war would have upon the attitude of the Allies towards Russia. Such meetings had become a customary occurrence ever since I realised the impossibility for the "autonomous" Embassy to remain isolated from Russian circles in London. In the

capacity of Chairman of the meetings held at the Embassy, I opened the discussion by stating that *in my opinion to demand the despatch of a single Allied soldier to Russia would be tantamount to placing Russia on the same level as Persia or Mexico. "Whatever we do, we must avoid the danger of becoming the vassals of our would-be friends. We should have to pay by decades of humiliation for the life of every British soldier lost in the Russian civil war. The demand for military assistance in men as well as in war material, was perfectly legitimate as long as the war lasted. Now that the war is over, it would, in my opinion, be a crime against the national dignity and sovereignty of Russia."*

This statement caused a certain amount of very excited comment, and I regret to say that very few of the members of the meeting supported my views. Those who argued against me on November 13, 1918, have since been cured of the particular Daltonism which affected their eyesight at that moment.

Meanwhile Western Europe, freed from the nightmare of German militarism, was making preparations for the Peace Conference. The question was raised as to the admission of

Russia to the Peace deliberations. A few days before Mr. Balfour's departure for Paris, I had a long interview with him. It was the last occasion on which I had the privilege of speaking to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. (Lord Curzon, who took charge of the Foreign Office first *ad interim*, and later as Mr. Balfour's successor, never condescended to receive me.) I argued that the presence of Russian representatives at the Peace Conference was not a matter of sentimental acknowledgment of "services rendered," but a practical necessity, as all questions affecting the frontiers of Russia and the status of such States as would receive complete or partial "self-determination," could never be satisfactorily settled in the absence of Russia. I also endeavoured to show that the Kolchak Government at Omsk, which had already lasted more than twice as long as the Directorate, represented the regeneration of Russia. Mr. Balfour replied by making a sweeping gesture over the map of Russia, showing the extent of the Bolshevik domination, and added: "As long as Lenin sits in Moscow, I shall not believe in the success of the national movement in Russia." It is

quite possible that some British statesmen not only agreed with this idea of Mr. Balfour, but also thought that to assist Russia, to help her to rise from the abyss, was tantamount to strengthening the *inevitable* Alliance between Germany and Russia. From that point of view the longer Russia is paralysed, the safer Great Britain in the East. The policy of Great Britain for the last two years shows many signs of this theory having prevailed over the idea that the advent of a constitutional Government in Russia is a *conditio sine qua non* of the restoration of stable peace in Europe.

The Armistice opened the gates which separated Southern Russia from Western Europe. Then, General Denikin's Volunteer Army and Political Council became another important factor in the history of the regeneration of Russia. Alongside with Archangel and Omsk, a third nucleus was formed in the South to which the Allies had even easier access than to the remote regions of Siberia and the dreary North.

Had the Russians who were beginning to gather in Paris and to assume the part of spokesmen for these nuclei proved worthy of

their task, the reunion of all anti-Bolshevik forces would have been achieved. Such, however, was not the case.

With the Armistice, a new phase had been opened in the Russo-Entente relations.

CHAPTER XIV

THE opening of the Peace Conference in Paris which followed so quickly upon the conclusion of the Armistice, marks the beginning of the last phase of my activities as Russian Chargé d'Affaires in London. During that period, diplomatic work proved extremely arduous, if not impossible, for two fundamental reasons. The first was the departure to Paris of the responsible chiefs of the Foreign Office, with whom I had hitherto negotiated, and the transfer of the centre of British policy from London to Paris. Lord Curzon, as I have already mentioned, never granted me the privilege of an audience. Personal discussions with Sir Ronald Graham and his immediate assistants were therefore to a great extent academic. When, following the custom which had been established in "normal days," I supplemented personal explanations by the presentation of memoranda, notes, or letters, I was invariably informed that these documents were being transmitted to Paris for

decision. The second reason which paralysed my work was the formation in Paris of the Russian Political Council and the arrival in the beginning of January, 1919, of Mr. Sazonov.

The question which was in the minds of all Russians and upon which there was no difference of opinion in Russian circles was that of the representation of Russia at the Peace Conference. Bearing in mind the speeches made by Mr. Balfour and Mr. Lloyd George, I personally had no doubt whatsoever that Russian delegates would not be admitted. The solution of this question obviously depended entirely upon the recognition of the Omsk Government. Had this recognition been granted, the best method in my opinion would have been for that Government to appoint as delegates the Russian Ambassadors in Paris and Rome and Mr. Tchaikovsky, who was then the head of the Archangel Government, or Sazonov, as Kolchak's Foreign Minister: these delegates to receive instructions from *Russia*, in other words, from the Governments of Kolchak and Denikin.

No such plan, however, materialised, and the events took an entirely different course. A Russian Political Council was formed in

Paris under the presidency of Prince Lvov. It included the Ambassadors in Paris, Rome, Washington and Madrid (Messrs. Maklakov, de Giers, Bakhmetiev, and Stakhovitch), the Russian Minister in Sweden (Mr. Goulkevitch), Mr. Iswolski (the late Russian Ambassador in Paris), Messrs. Sazonov, Konovalov, Savinkov, Tchaikovsky and Titov. In an official Russian document, enumerating the members of the Council, my name was cited as belonging to that body. I hastened, however, to inform the Government at Omsk that I took no part in the deliberations of the Council, that I disagreed with some of its fundamental principles, and therefore considered it more useful to remain in London.

None of these gentlemen were invited to the Peace Conference. The Council, however, held daily meetings, presented notes, memoranda, and reports to the Conference. These notes were signed by Lvov, Maklakov, Tchaikovsky and Sazonov.

About a fortnight after Mr. Sazonov's arrival in Paris, I was advised by some friends to take a trip to Paris in order to establish personal contact with the man in whom Denikin and Kolchak placed their full trust and who

had again become my 'chief' by reason of his acceptance of the post of Foreign Minister in Kolchak's Government.

By an unfortunate coincidence I arrived in Paris at the very moment when the Paris evening papers published the famous radio-telegram inviting all Russian parties to a Conference at Prinkipo.

The capitulation of Germany afforded a powerful stimulus to the Russian national movement. The Russian people were beginning to understand the fallacy of Bolshevism, which had promised peace, liberty, and plenty, but had given slavery, poverty and death. Russia believed that the Powers of the Entente delivered from the nightmare would assist her. We got "Prinkipo" instead. As a product of the collective brain and spirit of the representatives of the triumphant, great Western democracies, it is the most pitiable act that has ever disgraced the pages of world-history. It is an accepted fallacy that Prinkipo strengthened the Bolsheviks; to my mind it is exactly the reverse that happened. Every conscious, proud, and honest Russian patriot was made to understand that Russia must *save herself* and that all hopes for assist-

ance from our late friends were in vain. *Pas de tête plutôt qu'une souillure au front* became the motto which burnt in the hearts of ever-increasing numbers of Russian patriots. Such is my opinion to-day of the effects of "Prinkipo." It can easily be understood how much stronger were the feelings of indignation evoked by this pernicious invention of anonymous advisers at the moment when it fell upon our heads like a bolt from the blue. There still remained in those days Russians who thought that Western Europe could not remain an indifferent witness of the sufferings of Russia. "Prinkipo" sent all these hopes to the four winds.

Sazonov, immediately informed of the publication of the famous radio-telegram by a British friend of Russia (the French Government, of course, sent him no intimation, as then he was already being completely ignored), adopted on this occasion the right tone. In an interview with the correspondent of the *Matin* he emphatically declared that the suggestion was unacceptable and insulting. On the next day I attended the meeting of the Russian Political Council. Opinions were expressed that we should abstain from hasty conclusions,

await developments and, in particular, ascertain the intentions of the French Government, whose previous attitude towards the Soviet power tended to show that the French themselves realised the impossibility of any compromise with the Bolsheviks. I ventured to express the opinion that we should lose no time in resolutely repudiating the suggestion, and obtain, without further delay, resolutions of protest from Russian organisations in London and in Paris in support of our attitude. "We cannot," I remarked, "leave all the indignation to *The Morning Post*." As it was generally believed that the initiative in this case belonged to the British Government, some of my colleagues did not miss the opportunity of making sarcastic remarks with reference to my influence upon that Government. It was therefore decided to await developments. On the same day, a crowded meeting of all the political groups of the Russian Colony in Paris was held at the Embassy. A resolution was carried unanimously, proclaiming not only the refusal to accept the invitation to *L'île verte*, but also the expression of an indignant protest. As I had been present at the meeting, I intended

to sign this declaration, but was told on high authority that, as the Russian representative in London, I should refrain from "committing myself." The argument which was put forward in private conversation by some of my British friends was the following: "You should accept. The Bolsheviks will refuse. Then the whole world and British public opinion, including the circles in sympathy with Lenin, will clearly understand the impossibility of making peace with the Bolsheviks. Then Great Britain will be in a position to use force in order to destroy Bolshevism. If you refuse, you will be accused of being intent on deliberately prolonging the civil war. You will have to pay for the consequences." I replied that should I agree with this argument, forget the shame of Brest-Litovsk and consent to begin negotiations with the Bolsheviks which would obviously be doomed to failure, such a personal sacrifice on the part of one Russian representative would be of no avail, as the Russia which he represented would immediately repudiate him.

Seeing that my further presence in Paris was utterly useless, and that no personal contact with Mr. Sazonov was possible, as

he was already strongly prejudiced against me, I returned to London forthwith. My impressions of all I had seen and heard in Paris were more than painful.

As I have already said, diplomatic work in London was rendered extremely difficult. I continued, however, my endeavours to explain to the Kolchak Government the actual state of affairs. Sazonov tried to prevent me from doing so. In February, I received 'instructions from him to the effect that my telegrams on political questions should be addressed to Paris, not to Omsk. As the representative of the Omsk Government, I was, of course, compelled to take into account the instructions of the man who had been appointed Foreign Minister. At the same time, I was conscious of the fact that in the task of informing the Government at Omsk of the political currents and events in Britain, I was more competent than Sazonov. I therefore telegraphed to the then Prime Minister, Mr. Vologodski: "I am not giving you political information, as Sazonov objects to such a procedure. Should you desire to obtain this information, kindly send me instructions to that effect." The Prime Minister

replied as follows: "Your information is very valuable. Please continue."

At the same time, the work of the Embassy became more complicated in another direction. After the Armistice, the British Government removed certain restrictions which had been imposed upon the arrival in Great Britain of Russian citizens. Also, the routes from Russia to Great Britain via Archangel, Vladivostok, and the ports of the Black Sea became more accessible. Russians flocked to London from these localities, as well as from Finland and Scandinavia. These Russians included many prominent statesmen and politicians. The Embassy made every effort at maintaining close relations, not only with various political groups in London, but at affording the newly-arrived Russians the chance of coming into contact with their compatriots in London. Meetings were therefore frequently held at the Embassy, attended by a limited number of representatives of political groups, at which the newcomers gave accounts of their impressions of the conditions prevailing in such parts of Russia as they had been in a position to study,

It soon became apparent that differences of opinion between the Russian Political Council, and especially Mr. Sazonov, on the one hand, and myself on the other, were of such a nature as to render political work in London futile. The first important subject upon which we fundamentally disagreed was that of the recognition by Russia; immediate and unconditional, of the independence of Finland. I suggested to Admiral Kolchak that Russia should conclude a free agreement with Finland and submit this agreement to the Peace Conference and the League of Nations for sanction.

The views I held in the question of the recognition of Finland's independence were communicated to Omsk in the following telegrams.

February 14, 1919.

"Professor Peter Struve has arrived in London from Finland on his way to Paris. He has addressed an official letter to me in his capacity of official representative of the Russian organisations at Helsingfors. General Yudenitch and Mr. Kartashev are at the head of these organisations. Mr. Struve informs

me that there is at Helsingfors a 'Russian Committee' presided over by Kartashev. This Committee is sanctioned by the Finnish Government. The task of the Committee, which includes representatives of different political and social groups, is to render assistance to the Russians who have fled from the Bolshevik regime. The Committee is working in full accord with the Finnish Government and under the latter's control. An important part is played in the Committee by the representatives of commerce and finance in Petrograd, whose eyes are naturally turned to the capital.

"Apart from the 'Russian' Committee, there is in Finland a smaller political circle whose members are endeavouring, in conjunction with other forces in Russia, as well as with Kolchak and Denikin, to work for the liberation of Russia, and in particular of Petrograd, from the Bolsheviks. In accordance with its fundamental political and military aims, this circle has recognised General Yudenitch as its leader. Kartashev exercises a great influence within the circle.

"Both these organisations have empowered Struve to appeal, through the Russian Political Council in Paris as well as through the Russian

representatives with the Entente, to the Allied Governments with the following requests :—

“ 1. That immediate help be given to the Russians who have fled to Finland, chiefly by sending food, and thereby relieving the burden imposed upon Finland by this influx of refugees.

“ 2. That assistance be given to the Russian organisations in Finland under Yudenitch and Kartashev in their task of collecting food-stuffs without which the liberation of Petrograd is impracticable, as it would not be a lasting one.

“ Struve adds that (1) Yudenitch, as chairman of the above-mentioned organisation, has formally recognised Kolchak as the Supreme Ruler and placed himself at the disposal of the Admiral. (2) That the Russian politicians who are collaborating with Yudenitch and Kartashev have unreservedly adopted the principle of loyal recognition of the independence of Finland, and (3) that he, Struve, was a member of both organisations.

“ Struve thinks that the question of feeding Petrograd could and should be settled only in connection with the Russian non-party organisations in Finland.

“ I have communicated the tenor of Struve’s letter to the British Foreign Office. I suppose the Russian Council in Paris, after hearing Struve, will agree with his platform. As the Peace Conference is sure to insist upon the independence of Finland, I consider that the moment has arrived for Russia to take the initiative. At the conclusion of peace with Japan in 1905, I was present when the Japanese requested that an Ambassador be appointed to Tokyo. The Imperial Government declined to take this step, which would signify the recognition of Japan as a Great Power. All the other Great Powers sent Ambassadors, and we had to follow suit. Such mistakes should not be repeated and the inevitable should not be postponed. Struve assures me—and I have full confidence in his judgment—that the present Government in Finland is favourable to us. My personal intercourse with the Finnish representatives here leads me to believe that Finland is most anxious to obtain recognition. It would be short-sighted not to take advantage of this frame of mind. I consider that Kolchak and Denikin should enter into contact with Yudenitch and Kartashev and give them the

rank of official representatives of Russia in Finland."

Commenting upon a telegram from Kartashev addressed through the Embassy to the Governments of the Entente and to the Russian Military Chiefs regarding the aims and composition of the "Russian Committee," I telegraphed to the Omsk Government on February 17.

"This telegram which completes the preceding messages and gives fuller data regarding the broad problems confronting the Russian organisations in Finland, should serve to convince you that it is imperative that these organisations should be immediately placed in the most favourable position. As a necessary preliminary, our relations with Finland should be placed on a regular basis. I earnestly beseech you to gain full consciousness that the independence of Finland is a *fait accompli*. The Powers of the Entente will sooner or later recognise Finland's independence, and they are not likely to be too much perturbed by this or that attitude of Russia in the matter, and to take into account the views of the Russian Government which they refuse to recognise."

This advice was not heeded by the Kolchak Government. On the one hand, Kolchak considered that he had no right to take upon himself the responsibility of recognising Finland's independence. On the other hand, my telegrams to Omsk were followed by messages from Paris in which the Russian Political Council expounded entirely different views. The result was that Kolchak in his replies to the Foreign Representatives at Omsk and the Political Council, in Paris in their notes and memoranda addressed to the Peace Conference insisted upon the question of the recognition of Finland's independence being dependent upon the sanction of the future Russian Constituent Assembly. Such a condition, however correct from the point of view of strict constitutionalism, naturally implied a practical *non possumus* which did not help to remove the deadlock. My prediction has come true. There are to-day duly accredited Finnish representatives in the capitals of the Entente, but the representatives of "loyal" Russia are still outside the pale.

Thus the opportunity was lost of enlisting the co-operation of Finland in the early months

of 1919. As late as in June, Sazonov, while in London, stated to me most emphatically that he was opposed to any "concessions" being made by Russia to Finland. . . . *Quos vult perdere Jupiter dementat.*

There followed the categorical refusal of Finland to co-operate in the proposed operations for the capture of Petrograd. It was decided to transfer the "base" to Esthonia. Again the obstinacy of the Russian Political Council in Paris in refusing to deal with the "small" nationalities directly was the main cause of the failure of the entire business. It was, of course, by no means the *only* cause. Political causes were manifold. But the fundamental reason of this dismal and tragic failure, which resulted in tens of thousands of Russians being killed or dying of starvation, exposure or typhus, was that Russia, the Russian Government, was simply "left out" by the Allies, who took the matter in their own hands and made a ghastly muddle of the whole affair.

As soon as the decision was arrived at to transfer Yudenitch's base to Esthonia, I ventured to point out to the British Foreign Office that in dealing with the problems of

the Baltic, the following considerations should be borne in mind :—

There is a fundamental difference between the status of Finland and that of the former "Baltic Provinces" of Russia. Whereas the former had always enjoyed very broad autonomy, had a constitution of her own, a culture, a class system, a "national" existence in the truest sense of the word, no such conditions obtained in Esthonia. The population of Esthonia consisted before the war of peasants, Esthonians proper, of landlords who were chiefly German Barons, and of the middle-class—teachers, merchants, lawyers, etc.—who were either German or Russian, the latter being in the majority. After the Bolshhevik revolution, the landlords had been expelled or had fled. All Germans had likewise been driven out, and the Esthonians were intent upon destroying the last remnants of the Russian middle-class elements. But there was no such a thing in Esthonia as a class sufficiently intelligent to "govern" the country according to the principle of self-determination.

Apart from that, to deprive Russia of access to the ports in the Baltic would be a

repetition of the adventures of Charles XII of Sweden in the first decade of the eighteenth century.

To encourage the exaggerated desiderata of these peoples would be to play into the hands of Germany. Russia, in the years to come, would have infinitely graver internal problems to cope with than Germany. Germany would naturally strain every nerve in order to penetrate into these tempting regions, depleted as they were of cultured elements capable of withstanding such a penetration. The Entente, on the other hand, by encouraging the formation of independent states, would incur the moral obligation of supporting them politically and *financially*. Financial support would naturally depend upon compensations to be obtained from those regions. Compensations would mean concessions. Concessions would naturally be interpreted as exploitation.

The only possible course, it seemed to me was to make it quite clear to these "small" nations that their future lay within the Russian State or Federation on condition that they should enjoy a broad measure of local autonomy.

Curiously enough, the author of the "fourteen points" proved to be the statesman whose views upon the fate of the border States of the late Russian Empire were more in keeping with the dictates of wisdom and foresight than those of any other statesman among the Allies.

The idea of a Baltic Federation including Finland originated in the Chancelleries of Great Britain. Would-be specialists in matters Russian drew up lengthy memoranda on the subject. All the dustbins of the world would not suffice to hold all the innumerable articles, notes, memoirs and other documents which were prompted by the desire to see Russia cut off from the Baltic.

CHAPTER XV

HAVING satisfied themselves that the Russian Political Council in Paris and the Kolchak Government were unable to evolve a sensible policy of their own in regard to the Baltic and to Finland, the Allies took the matter into their own hands, and the tragedy began.

Being at variance with Omsk and Paris on these questions, I was unable to present any "official" views to the British Government. Also, official views had ceased to be taken into account. Meanwhile, the Foreign Office and the War Office received and consulted innumerable irresponsible Russians. To-day it was Mr. Trotsky Seniutovitch, a capable and eloquent lawyer from Petrograd (not to be mistaken for his great namesake), to-morrow Struve, then Guchkov, Shebeko, Neratov, Hessen, Prince Belosselsky. . . . Their names were "legion." They all had their say. No sooner would the door be closed upon their exit, than all sorts of self-appointed "representatives" and "dele-

gates" of Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia, Azerbaidjan, etc., etc., etc., would occupy the stage. A regular Tower of Babel. The unfortunate gentleman who was in charge of the Russian section at the Foreign Office must have suffered from many a headache. . . . To disentangle the truth and to find a way out of the labyrinth of conflicting testimonies and suggestions was, however, a different matter. The thread which might have helped to find the way out of the labyrinth (namely, the fundamental principle of the *inevitable* reunion of these autonomous regions with Russia on a Federal basis) having been broken by the Russian politicians themselves, who continued to prate about the Constituent Assembly and refused, under the guidance of Sazonov, to "make concessions" to the Finns, was not picked up by the Allied Chancelleries.

In the meantime, Bullits, Steffenses and others had free access to the "Big" four and were making persistent suggestions of the desirability of coming to terms with the Bolsheviks. In these circumstances, the Russian official Representatives were deprived of the last vestige of authority.

When the first news reached the Press of the

formation of the North-Western Russian Government and was later in the day corroborated by official messages to the Embassy, I consulted the Foreign Office, who disclaimed all knowledge of the extraordinary performance of Colonel Marsh (presumably under instructions from General Sir Hubert Gough). Authentic records of the proceedings which accompanied the formation of that Government *under the threat of immediate withdrawal of British support* have since appeared in the Press. The whole story is nothing but a series of inane opportunist wanderings of irresponsible underlings in political fields which had better been left to more competent explorers.

It is a story upon which I do not care to dwell. General Sir Hubert Gough has since expressed his views upon the Russian national movement of resistance to the Bolsheviks. He was the British representative in the Baltic. *Honni soit qui mal y pense.*

I am firmly convinced that since the Peace Conference met in Paris, the influence of Russian politicians, diplomats and casual advisers upon the policy of the Entente was reduced to naught. More especially was this

the case in Great Britain. In fact, immediately after the Armistice, a fierce controversy began between two opposite currents of public opinion which was reflected in the Press as well as in Government circles. On one side stood the Secretary of State for War, Mr. Winston Churchill, and a small group of members of Parliament. On the other, the Radical and Liberal Press, the Labour and Socialist leaders.

The future historian who will devote his attention to the study of the events which followed upon the conclusion of the Armistice and of the attitude of the British Government, the Press and public opinion in Great Britain towards Russia will undoubtedly be led to the following conclusion : *After November 11, 1918, and all through 1919, the British Government carried out the policy that was dictated by the extremist section of the Labour and Socialist parties.*

The present reminiscences are not intended as an historical treatise, with every thesis supplemented and proved by documents quoted in small print. Having borne for nearly three years the responsibilities attached to the office of Russian Representative, sub-

jected to criticism by my own countrymen to an extent unknown to any of my predecessors, and having been, during the last eight months of my tenure of office, incessantly stabbed in the back instead of receiving the support and encouragement to which I was entitled, I do not pretend to pose as an historian. I recount what I have seen, heard, suffered and accomplished. The degree of interest which these notes may present depends entirely upon the degree of confidence my narrative may inspire.

The historian of these tragic days, more fateful than any other period in the history of Anglo-Russian relations, will have at his disposal not only the diplomatic documents, but the British papers and . . . Hansard. This is what he will discover and supplement by lengthy quotations, chiefly by printing in parallel columns the *Daily Herald* and extracts from Parliamentary debates :—

“ Alarmed at the exceptionally favourable conditions for assisting Russian National forces which had arisen in December, 1918, a certain section of the British Press, and particularly the *Daily Herald* (it was in those days a weekly paper) began to agitate in favour of the cessation of further military assistance to

Russia. 'Now that the war is over, the excuse of a common enemy has ceased to exist. No more troops should be sent to Russia.' In this the Government promptly acquiesced. 'All Allied forces to be withdrawn from Russia,' pleaded the *Herald*. The Northern region was evacuated and the removal of British forces from the Caucasus accomplished in so far as was compatible with palpable, obvious *British* interests. 'All assistance to Kolchak, Denikin and Yudenitch must be stopped,' demanded the *Herald* and its acolytes in a commanding voice. An announcement to that effect by the Government in the House of Commons was made shortly afterwards. 'Peace with Russia, trade, and recognition of Lenin' is the fourth commandment of the pro-Bolshevik prophets. We are now entering upon the fourth phase of British policy of assistance to Russia."

The above is a quotation from an article by "A Friend of Britain" which appeared in the *New Russia*, a weekly journal edited by the Russian Liberation Committee in London. It correctly expresses the views which, in my opinion, the future historian is bound to endorse.

Why has all this happened ?

All stereotyped sayings, such as " perfidious Albion," all suspicions of " British hatred for Russia," and of designs to prolong the agony of Russia in order to dismember her, I reject wholesale. I am convinced to this day that the British people sincerely sympathise with Russia and realise the magnitude of Russia's sacrifice in the Allied cause and of her present day sufferings. Tommy Atkins who pitied " Fritz " more than he hated the poor deluded cannon fodder in the hands of William II, cannot and does not hate Russia. From " Tommy " upwards, the British Army was Russia's friend, a warmer friend than other contributors to the Allied victory. General Sir Charles Briggs, General Sir Alfred Knox, General Sir John Hanbury Williams were and remain friends of Russia.

I shall never forget the following incident. On the day of the triumphal march of the Allied contingents through the streets of London—the grandiose Peace celebration in which the Russians did not participate—I chanced to meet General Sir John Hanbury Williams in the street. In accents of deep and ill-concealed emotion, the General assured me

of his sincere sympathy and of the feeling of intense *pain* he felt in watching the procession in which Russian troops were not marching.

Those who declared that they did not care a scrap whether Petrograd was starving or not (such a declaration was made to Prince Lvov in December, 1918) were in a minority. I am certain that should the news of the overthrow of the Bolsheviks and of the establishment of a Constitutional Government reach this country, the rejoicing would be *universal*. Where disillusioned and distracted Russians see "perfidious" designs, far-seeing calculations and malice, I see nothing but . . . a void.

My reading of the enigma is that Allied statesmanship have been groping in the dark, not knowing what they were doing, and having lost all capacity for seeing beyond the "needs of the day." Why was that?

In 1917 and 1918 the clamour was constantly heard, the cry repeatedly raised: "Yet another effort is needed. Russia has capitulated. Russia is no more. But America is with us. America will save us. Give us more men, more money. The war costs eight million pounds a day. There is no

bread, no meat, no coal. Be patient. We must save Europe and ourselves from German aggression. We shall win, and there will be peace, liberty and plenty. This is the war that will end wars."

Victory came. On November 11 the bells rang . . . and disarmament forthwith proceeded. The "Big Four" assembled in Paris and started to settle the destinies of the world. Instead of making peace with Germany, they produced litter upon litter of stillborn puppies of self-determination. Julius Cæsar, George Washington, Socrates, Napoleon . . . would not have been immortal, had the cinema been in existence in their lifetime. No mortal can be cinematographed, photographed, snapshotted fifty times a day, smiling, frowning, lifting his hat, walking down majestic staircases, or, if on flat ground, lifting his legs as for the goose-step . . . without imagining that he is the man destined to be immortal. So the "Big Four" really believed, in all sincerity that if, like Joshua, they said, "Sun, stand thou still," the Sun would stand still in the midst of heaven.

Victory came. But peace, liberty and plenty did not follow. Every day, the perplexed

victors were discovering, to their intense astonishment, that peaceful times were still far off, and that the fruits of victory were dry. The supplies of bread, meat and coal did not increase by the magic of the fourteen points. Life was more arduous than ever. The people began to be angry. German militarism is no more. The Kaiser, the hated symbol of all the evils of his age, the target of caricaturists and satirists—a pitiable prisoner in a commonplace Dutch chateau—is utterly forgotten. But life is difficult. Heroes cannot find employment. Their sisters who had been earning £10 per week in munition factories have been dismissed. And the cost of living is high. As a result, the cry was raised: "Economy." The Government dare not spend a penny. The Army must be reduced. Away with superfluous civil servants. We don't want a powerful Navy. We thought we were going to skin the Germans, and lo . . . we find they cannot pay, because the Peace Treaty has deprived them of the resources which would have enabled them to stand on their feet again. Hence the irritation.

That was the psychology of which Bolsheviki propaganda took clever advantage in order to

raise the cry, so easily understood by the man in the street: "Assistance to Russia means expenditure. We have no money to throw away. Therefore, however much we may sympathise with the sufferings of our Russian friends, we cannot help them." That is the *leit-motiv* of the propaganda.

We find that *leit-motiv* elsewhere.

Only two of the Entente Powers are, in fact, closely and immediately concerned with the fate of Russia—Great Britain and France. Others are either too remote or too small to care or dare express views of any sort. France opposes British plans of "peace and trade with the Bolsheviks." The reply comes from across the Channel: "Are you prepared to send troops or to spend more money in order to save Russia?" "When it comes to the essentials, to the outlay of money, you come to us. Very sorry, we can go no further."

And they *cannot*. That is the tragedy. Public opinion has been bred in that belief. And it is now irritated and disillusioned, and does not stop to think of the fatal consequences which the triumph of Bolshevism may lead to. Public opinion will not permit any further "sacrifices" for Russia's sake. On

the contrary, it is anxious that Great Britain should benefit by the Russian "raw material." It is "raw material," and not principles or any other out-of-date political considerations that now serve as the guiding star and *ultima ratio* of international politics.

In June, 1919, I endeavoured to make it clear to the Omsk Government, whom I continued to inform of the trend of events and of public opinion in this country, that we must abandon all hope for the continuation of assistance from the British Government, in a measure commensurate with our needs. I therefore suggested that we should cease begging and try to place the whole matter of material assistance on a business basis. It was obvious that our requirements would grow with the increase of the territory occupied by the White armies. I considered that it would be more practical to get into direct touch with business organisations in Great Britain (offers were forthcoming), or if need be in America. We could offer these concerns "values" in exchange for "values" obtained from them. Omsk absolutely refused to understand the point. As every advice, every

suggestion I made was negated from Paris, so was this scheme. The Kolchak Government replied: "We must obtain supplies from the British Government."

In the middle of 1919 the fundamental reason of the impending failure of the Whites became apparent. They were unable to introduce in the rear the elementary conditions of economic welfare and political tranquillity which alone could induce the population to support the army and resist the Bolshevik propaganda. In order to achieve these conditions, an effort was required of our Allies, not military, but purely commercial, of which they were no longer capable, owing to complex internal problems of which the powers that be were, of course, fully aware. What happened on a small scale in the North-West—the transition from the Red terror to pillage and destruction by the Whites—was repeated on a larger scale in Siberia in mid-summer and later in South Russia.

Since mid-summer, 1919, I ceased to have any hope whatever for the triumphal entry of Kolchak into Moscow.

My work became still more strenuous. Week after week, excited friends, upon their return

from a short stay in Paris, warned me of the impending arrival of a successor appointed by Sazonov with the consent of the Omsk Government. Meanwhile, the Paris Political Council and Sazonov were not very popular with the heads of the Foreign Office in London. I considered it rather peculiar that a man should occupy the post of Foreign Minister of the Kolchak Government who had stayed in Paris all through the Peace Conference without being admitted into the august presence of any one of the "big" four or five, and I said so. It was arranged between Mr. Balfour and Mr. Sazonov in Paris (the Foreign Office in London was not informed, so I was told afterwards) that I should be relieved of my functions. This is the text of Mr. Sazonov's letter which was handed to me by my successor :

"During my last stay in London (in June, 1919) I drew your attention to the fact that the well-nigh complete absence of intercourse between the British governing circles and yourself results in a situation which is highly detrimental to the interests of Russia. In the present crucial days the personal influence of our representatives abroad is of particular importance, as it should to a certain degree

supplement the temporary loss of Russia's authority in international questions.

"I can no longer assume the responsibility for this condition of things in London, and am compelled to instruct Mr. Sabline to supersede you at the Embassy. I request that you should proceed in the nearest possible future to Christiania and take charge of our Legation in Norway to which you were appointed by the Provisional Government in 1917.

"The Supreme Ruler and Mr. Balfour have been duly notified of the above."

On September 9, 1919, I sent a letter to Lord Curzon informing him of my resignation. The Secretary of State acknowledged receipt.

I was thus spared the trial of once more, as in 1917 and 1918, representing not a Government, but a "late" Government. The difference between 1917 and 1920 is that we *then* believed fervently in the future "White" movement. Now, we are mourning its past.

In 1918, Litvinov entered through the back door, if ever. Now, Krassin drives up to 10, Downing Street, in a motor and is "cinematographed."

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