

HOW THE WAR CAME

4-12

With a Chronicle of Events compiled from
all the Official Papers published by the
European Governments

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HOW THE WAR CAME.

Some people think that it is not only unnecessary but wrong to discuss impartially how the war came. We do not agree because we are convinced that unless people have some accurate information on the point they will not understand what reforms the peace should bring with it if this is to be the last of the wars. At the present moment every apologist for the war finds that he gets the cheering assent of his audience if he talks about German "Kultur," German militarism and the German Kaiser as its sole causes; books and pamphlets are published purporting to give a full and accurate account of the diplomatic events which preceded the war, but which are only biassed pieces of carefully-selected information, or do not go nearly far enough back. The country is being misled. If the hatred thus engendered and the ignorance thus spread were to end with the war and bear no evil fruits later, it would not matter so much, because obviously the war must be finished now, and, whatever may be the rights and the wrongs of its origin, a victory for German arms and the worst elements in German society which the war has put into authority, would bring political results to Europe which no one who loves peace and liberty could welcome. But when we come to ask ourselves: What have we to do in order to see that there is no repetition of this crime? Obviously we must ask the preliminary questions: Who or what is responsible? Why has the crime been committed? And we must give answers like honest men if the answers are to be of any value.

In this pamphlet we shall confine ourselves to reciting the course of events which led up to the war, and the authorities relied upon will be the various national official publications.¹

I.

In 1879 Bismarck formed an alliance with Austria. The Russo-Turkish war had ended, and the Berlin Congress had been held. Russia was displeased that she had got so little from the war and blamed Germany, and the racial controversy between Slav and Teuton was intensified. The Tsar in a letter to the German Emperor conveyed a thinly-veiled threat of war against Germany if Germany did not become more servile in supporting Russia's

¹ These publications are not of equal value. Our own White Paper is the best, and the most recently published French Yellow Book is the most unreliable, its despatches being mainly expressions of biassed opinion, and lacking the fulness of detail which they ought to supply. For instance, it is enlightening to compare the report which came to London (White Paper 6) with that which went to Paris (French Book 31) of the conversation which the British and French Ambassadors had with the Russian Foreign Minister on the 24th July.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

In printing this record of the political events which preceded the Great War, the I.W.W. Press Committee desires it to be understood that their organisation does not necessarily agree with any of the views put forward by the compilers. The same reason that prompted the Independent Labor Party of England to publish it—that is, to spread information among the people about the various forces which brought about the great catastrophe, and also to prevent sidetracking and false issues being raised by the bought press—has prompted the Industrial Workers of the World to re-publish the pamphlet.

At some later date we may publish a pamphlet dealing with the economic causes of the war, which, after all, has determined the acts of diplomats, the mobilisation of armies, the slaughter and carnage, and the lying, misleading attitude of the Capitalist Press.

If this pamphlet removes some of the misunderstandings that are at present prevalent, it will have justified its publication.

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policy in the Near East.¹ Bismarck replied by making a treaty with Austria which the Emperor at once communicated to the Tsar, so friendly were they and so pro-Russian was the personal policy of the Prussian reigning House. In 1882 Italy, angry with France for outflanking her in Tunis, and desiring to protect herself, came in and the Triple Alliance was formed. Made at first for five years, it was renewed in 1887, 1891, and again in 1902, when it was agreed to for twelve years.

The essential facts about the Triple Alliance are: the Alliance was defensive; its origin was in the Pan-Slav attack upon Teutons in the Balkans; later it became a protection against the aggressive restiveness of France; however, Germany did not mean to quarrel with Russia, with which it had a secret treaty; England encouraged Italy's remaining in because that was convenient for us, for we then regarded France as our enemy, and when in 1887 the English Conservative papers agreed that Germany might reasonably go through Belgium to attack France,² and about the same time secretly guaranteed Italy against an attack from the French fleet³ (how quickly the wheel of Fortune turns things upside down!) it was because we were very anxious that nothing should happen to the Triple Alliance. We regarded it as a protection to ourselves and a guarantee of European peace; and again, when the renewal of 1891 came, our Government strove to keep Italy in it and succeeded.⁴

Then came the balancing Franco-Russian treaty. Our friendship with Germany was the chief reason for France and Russia forming an alliance. In 1890 we made the agreement with Germany which readjusted colonies in Africa and ceded Heligoland. That friendship was taken by France as hostile to herself, and when in the same year Germany refused to renew the alliance of the three Emperors on account of the intrigues of Russia in the Balkans against Austria, Russia made approaches in France in 1891 and the treaty was concluded. The enormous expansions in Germany of both industry and population since 1871 compelled her to shape her foreign policy with an eye upon the world and not on Europe alone. She was subject to the same kind of internal pressure which in earlier times led to those great eruptions of migration which have given us our present national and racial distributions of population. In 1898 she began to build a fleet to protect her coasts and her commerce, and to add a sea power to the influence of the Triple Alliance, and as this went on, her relations with Great Britain cooled. Friction arose in Asia Minor. Turkey was played off against Russia. Whilst the German people sought a friendly understanding with Great Britain, the German diplomatic and military sections came to regard British interests

¹ "Cambridge Modern History," vol. xii. p. 143.

² "Standard," "Spectator," etc., of the first week of February, 1887.

³ "Fortnightly Review," September, 1902, p. 362; "Westminster Gazette," May 30, 1902.

⁴ "Fortnightly Review," September, 1902, p. 365.

and policy as hostile, and the German economic school of history assumed that British industrial interests would bring the two countries into collision in the end. This was the time when diplomacy had its opportunity. A blunder or an important move would make war inevitable. The German foreign policy became Pan-German; our own Foreign Office came under the control of anti-German and pro-Russian influences. Both ceased to trust each other. We allied ourselves with the Franco-Russian camp, and war became a question of time. This drift is admirably shown in the chapter on Germany contributed by Professor Oncken to the "Cambridge Modern History."¹

Prince Bulow had since 1897 held the office of Foreign Secretary (Staatssekretariat des Auswartigen) under the aged Chancellor, Prince Chlodwig Hohenlohe; on October 17, 1900, he succeeded to the Chancellorship and supreme responsibility for the entire policy of the empire, taking over the helm with a steady, expert hand. At every turn he found himself confronted with the necessity of choosing between England and the Dual Alliance, just as, in the seventies, Bismarck had been obliged to make choice between Russia and Austria. It seems that, in 1901, he deliberately rejected the advances of British statesmen in order that Germany might not become "the sword of England upon the Continent" and have to bear the brunt of any Russo-French onslaught. The determination to pursue an independent course in the end created ill-feeling across the Channel. Some mistakes there were; during the Boer War the sympathies of the Germans as of other nations lay with the weaker side; but at this crisis the Emperor staked his whole influence, nay, some measure of his popularity, against the popular feeling, tempered the bitterness aroused, and withstood every temptation from any other quarter. In the long run, however, apprehensions as to the commercial competition and naval preparations of Germany gained the day in England; indeed, impelled by Chauvinistic sentiment on both sides, the English nation began to accustom itself to the idea of a German peril, and finally to join the ranks of those opposed to Germany. After the Anglo-French entente of 1904 and the Algeiras Conference, a change in the old alliances began which introduced a new era in international politics; for the moment it looked as if Germany was to be exposed to the danger of isolation and to a policy of hemming in ("Einkreisungspolitik") on the part of her enemies, led, as was thought, by King Edward VII.

In 1904 we came to an agreement with France which involved us in the Franco-Russian alliance without our being formally parties to it; the Algeiras Conference and the Morocco bargaining followed, when France and ourselves deliberately threw down the gauntlet to Germany;² in 1907 we became parties to the Anglo-Russian agreement regarding Persia—an agreement which we never enforced, in spite of Russia's disgraceful disregard of it, owing to our fear lest we should offend Russia and weaken the Triple Entente.

Thus Europe became divided into two hostile camps. France

¹ Vol. xii., pp. 134-173.

² The story of how this was done in defiance of treaties and by out-ranging public law has been told by Mr. E. D. Morel in "Morocco in Diplomacy," a book carefully compiled from official documents and declarations.

and Russia on the one side, and Germany on the other, recognised that war was likely and proceeded to prepare for it. We appear to have been less careful, except as regards our Navy, though mainly owing to the revelations of the South African War, the War Office, under Lord Haldane, did set its house in order and revolutionise the training and the organisation of the Army. It is proof of no virtue, but rather of incompetence on the part of our Ministers when they tell us that they had no idea that war was coming until it was actually upon them. They are the only Ministers of any State in either the Triple Alliance or the Triple *Entente* who were so blind. From 1904 onwards European policy hatched war as a hen hatches her chickens.

If proof is required of a truth so obvious that proof is superfluous, we have it in the fact that at the very earliest moment after the *Entente* was made, France, as honest broker, pointed out to us that it was advisable to discuss plans of military co-operation in anticipation of a European war (which could only be with Germany). Sir Edward Grey consented, and without reporting the fact to the Cabinet, allowed the conversations and agreements to mature through some years, saying nothing about them (except to the then Prime Minister, Secretary for War, and Chancellor of the Exchequer) until the Morocco affair had all but landed us in war.¹

The diplomacy which divided Europe into two camps enormously strengthened the hands of the military section in Germany and made simple the working out of its designs; it increased the confidence of the same sections in Russia and assured it that when it chose to fight for its Pan-Slav programme both France and Great Britain would be behind it; it weakened our influence both in Asia and Europe, since the maintenance of the Triple *Entente* soon became of paramount importance to us because of the German menace which it had made inevitable, and also because our obligations to France compelled us to acquiesce in Russian policy; it increased armaments and gave every country a justification for imposing heavier military burdens on its people. In Great Britain its evil effects were intensified and its issue in war made easier by the Tariff Reform campaign, during which commercial rivalries were turned into national enmity. This opens up another group of causes of the war—the economic—but in this pamphlet we are tracing the downward paths which the diplomatists and politicians pursued.

Something more must be said about the influence of this policy of Alliance and *Entente* in Germany. There, the drift towards war stimulated in an inordinate degree the military caste. Russia, France and ourselves prepared for the conflict mainly by armaments and scares and prejudices on old-fashioned and tradi-

¹ Speech in the House of Commons, 3rd August, 1914. Hansard, ix., p. 1812.

tional lines. But in Germany the preparation was more thorough and extensive. A brutal mechanical thoroughness is a Prussian characteristic. Russia is lethargic and corrupt, France is careless of detail and accepts fussiness for effective action, our authorities never understood the full danger of the game which they were playing and which was being played for them. Germany not only prepared but extended the activities of militarism.¹ Every soldier knows that the game of war is made successful by knowledge of your enemy's doings, by demoralising him and by killing him in multitudes. Big guns and carefully worked-out plans of campaign were therefore supplemented by elaborate intelligence departments. Just as in civil organisation the Germans surpassed their neighbours, so they beat them in military preparations. Today this is being used as a proof that Germany meant war more than Russia or France. But that is not the just conclusion from the facts. The militarism of all countries is cruel, immoral, unscrupulous; German militarism is able as well. That is the only difference. The Zabern affair is only an extreme and absolute expression of the military mind of every country in the world. Every nation has its gang of spies who are mostly blackguards. The Russian spy dances on the boards of the musci-halls and lives in grandeur in the West Ends of European capitals. Germany made no innovations in these respects, except that she did her work better and more thoroughly than other nations. The whole system is diabolically criminal, offensively disgusting. But it is militarism; it is a system. Germany has stripped it of sentiment, of humanity, of reticence, and has enthroned it in its appropriate savagery and scientific efficiency to kill and paralyse. German thoroughness carried to a logical and irresistible conclusion the crimes and the follies practised by every other military power in Europe. They are all involved in the crime. No one Power can take up a high moral attitude against any other Power. They can boast of nothing except a less degree of blackness.¹

II.

It happened that of the two camps into which the agreement of 1904 divided Europe, one was controlled by the Pan-Slav spirit and the other by the Pan-German spirit. This is not to say that the differentiated military classes of the two countries and their supporters on the platform and in the Press can be described in this way. Other distinctions have also been drawn between them. For instance, it is said that the *Entente* stands for liberty and the Alliance for military domination; the first for sacredness of treaties and the second for tearing up treaties according to convenience. Whoever has followed the events of the past ten years knows how history has to be twisted and pruned of awkward facts (for instance, Morocco and Persia treaties and Russian conception of the civil liberties of her people or the national liberties of Fin-

¹ See pamphlet No. 2 of this series on "Militarism in Great Britain," which will shortly be issued.

land), before the latter propositions can be supported. The former is the characteristic and decisive feature of the camps which were dominated by Russia and Germany respectively. The bugles blew in them to settle the racial quarrels between the Slav and the Teuton. After they had blown other issues arose, but these issues—Belgium in particular and national liberty and public law in general—had nothing whatever to do with the *making* of the war—though, we hope, the war is to have something to do with the settling of them.

These quarrels between Slav and Teuton came to a head in the Balkan States.¹ In 1912 Russia managed to induce these States to form a Balkan League, mainly perhaps against Turkey (and for that purpose it was good), but, so far as Russia was concerned, definitely against Austria. Up to a certain point Russia and Austria had agreed to a divided influence in the Balkans, but Russia subsequently, obedient to the Pan-Slav spirit, began to elbow Austria out. Austria had unjustly annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina as a move in this new policy and as a precaution against Russian intrigue. At the same time Russia was not in a position to reply, but set about building up a machine through which she might avenge herself. Of all these States the most useful to Russia was Serbia. Both in spirit and position it was the best for picking a quarrel with Austria, and so at the end of the wars Serbia was aggrandised by Russia's favour and began the peace determined that another and a greater conflict should begin. "I remember well," writes Miss Durham,² "at the close of the Balkan War, in May, 1913, a yelling pack of Montenegrins at the parcel post office bawling, 'We, the Serb people, have beaten the Turk. We are a Power. We shall set Europe on fire.' They claimed that they had all got Russia supporting them, and stated repeatedly that they would begin in Bosnia." This was repeated to Miss Durham by army officers, diplomatists and others who knew what was going on. The Austrian Consul was maltreated at Prizren so grossly that the secretary to General Vukotitch stated: "The foulest insults were hurled at him and the flag. . . . Austria dares not tell or she would be laughed at by all Europe and forced to declare war." When that did not produce the desired quarrel, the Orthodox Catholics, of whom Austria is the guardian, were told that they would either have to abjure their faith or suffer death. The threats were carried out. Austria intervened, and sounded friendly States regarding an ultimatum to Serbia. This is the "revelation" made in the Italian Chamber on the 7th December which has been palmed off on a public that does not follow foreign affairs, as something terribly sinister and as a complete proof that Austria had meant war for some years.

¹ For a complete statement see "The Origins of the Great War," by H. N. Brailsford, published by the Union of Democratic Control, 1d.

² "War and Peace" for November, 1914.

Inquiry was forced upon the culprit State, the facts were proven. The next time more care was taken. The heir to the Austrian throne was assassinated at Sarajevo owing to a plot in which Serbian officers were implicated and by bombs prepared in the Serbian Government arsenal. The Austrian ultimatum to Serbia was unjustifiable in its rigour and in the time it gave for an apology, but the whole circumstances have to be taken into account. We should like to know how a British Government would have acted to a neighbouring State that was carrying on openly an aggressive anti-British propaganda, that had grossly insulted her, then defied her rights, and finally assassinated the Prince of Wales! That did fire the powder. The train spluttered and fizzled for some time, and then the fire rushed on to the magazine and blew it up.

Let us now trace the course of the negotiations which immediately preceded the outbreak of the war. The murder of the Archduke took place at Sarajevo on the 28th June, and Austria presented her Note to Serbia on the 23rd July. On that same day Sir Edward Grey expressed a hope that Austria and Russia would discuss any differences that might arise "directly with each other." The Austrian Ambassador replied that Russia "had not been very favourable recently."¹

We shall now trace the succeeding events day by day.²

24th July. The Russian Ambassador at Vienna says that Russia will not allow Austria to humiliate Serbia,³ Germany takes the view that, considering all the circumstances, Austria ought to be allowed to settle her quarrel with Serbia and put an end to the Serbian plots and provocations;⁴ Serbia puts herself under the protection of Russia by a telegram sent to the Tsar by the Crown Prince⁵ and also appeals to Britain to get Austria to modify the Note; the Russian Foreign Minister has an interview with the representatives of the British and the French Governments in St. Petersburg,⁶ and he, with the French representative urges the British representative to press his Government to fulfil the obligations of the Triple *Entente* and to "proclaim their solidarity with France and Russia." [This is of the greatest importance as showing that Russia had no anxiety about negotiations, but was looking to war, and it must be noted that at the interview the Russian Foreign Minister said that "Russian mobilisation would at any rate have to be carried out," and the French Ambassador

¹ White Paper 3.

² Our readers who desire a fuller statement will find it in "The Diplomatic History of the War," by M. P. Price, 7/6. To this book we are, as everyone else who tries to unravel the tangle of events reported in the various official publications must be, deeply indebted. . . . chance of events clear.

³ White Paper 7. ⁴ White Paper 9. ⁵ Russian Orange Book 6.

⁶ White Paper 6. ⁷ Document 4.

gave ours to understand that "France would fulfil all the obligations entailed by her alliance with Russia if necessity arose." The German official publication⁷ states that the Russian Foreign Minister told the German Ambassador that Russia would not allow the dispute to be settled between Austria and Servia alone. [Whilst Sir Edward Grey was trying to localise the dispute, Russia had made up her mind that it is not to be localised. The German Ambassador in Paris said that the quarrel must be localised.¹ His words were: "The German Government desire urgently the localisation of the dispute because every interference of another Power would, owing to the natural play of alliances, be followed by incalculable consequences."²

Thus the game opened, and no one who studies all the papers can doubt for a moment but that Russia from the first day moved for war.]

25th July. Austria declined to recognise Russia's right to interfere in the Servian quarrel; Servia replies to the Austrian Note in terms which everyone knows; the German Foreign Secretary admits that the Austrian Note was bad, and agrees to Sir Edward Grey's suggestion as to the four Powers working in favor of moderation at Vienna and St. Petersburg, *should the relations between Austria and Russia become threatening*,³ the Russian Foreign Secretary declines to allow Austria to settle with Servia alone, because he says Austria is striking at Russia through Servia, he does not believe Germany wants war, but he renews his appeal to let the world know that we stand in with the Triple *Entente* and to take "our stand firmly with France and Russia";⁴ in Paris the German Ambassador explains that his Note of the previous day was not a threat, as the Jingo elements in Paris had made it out to be; in London Sir Edward Grey tries to get an extension of time for Servia, and explains that the Austrian quarrel with Servia does not concern us except in so far as it may bring in Russia. [The German attitude was that Europe should not interfere in the Balkan trouble, but that if Russia insisted on playing a part then Germany would support co-operation between the four Powers—England, France, Germany and Italy—to effect a settlement. This was before Sir Edward Grey made his proposal. It undoubtedly was a great embarrassment that Sir Edward Grey would not make his position clear. His uncertainty encouraged the military sections of Germany, without discouraging Russia, who was playing a bold and subtle game, being assured of the support of France and knowing the sympathies of our Foreign Office.

It is of the first importance to note that this day Russian partial mobilisation began, as it proved by the Tsar's telegram

1 Orange Book 8.

2 French Book 28.

3 White Paper 18; Also German Book 13.

4 White Paper 17.

to the Kaiser on the 30th, in which it is stated that the "military measures now coming into operation were decided upon five days ago."¹ The evidence which Mr. Price has so patiently collected in his book makes it perfectly clear that Russia began to mobilise before Austria. Austria did not mobilise till the 26th.]

26th July. Germany informs the various countries that Austria in punishing Servia would annex no territory and appeals to England and France to use restraining influence on St. Petersburg.² The Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg gives the same assurance to the Russian Foreign Minister, and the outlook brightens.³ Russia continues her mobilisation plans, however, and France and Germany are busy with precautionary preliminaries. Sir Edward Grey makes a proposal that the Ambassadors of France, Germany, and Italy should meet in London together with him and discuss a settlement, and states "if the war were to break out no Power in Europe could take up a detached attitude."⁴

27th July. In Vienna the Russian and Austrian diplomatists have a discussion⁵ and Germany is accused of having intrigued with Austria.⁶ Austria will not accept any settlement until she has punished Servia and, with Servian provocation ranking in her mind, accuses her of bad faith, etc. Germany expresses her opinion that if Sir Edward Grey's proposal of yesterday is to be effective, Russia and Austria ought to ask for the Conference. Germany insists that the differences between Austria and Servia should be settled by themselves. As regards the Austro-Russian dispute, that is a different matter.⁷ Germany therefore influences Vienna directly and persuades her to approach Russia direct.⁸ The correspondents of the *Times*, *Manchester Guardian* and *Daily Chronicle* agree that Germany is working for peace. But on this day Russia once more urges England to back her and bring out the *Entente* against the Alliance. At the same time the Russian Foreign Minister conditionally agrees with Sir Edward Grey's four-Power conference, "if direct explanations with the Vienna Cabinet were to prove impossible,"⁹ and the Tsar sends a telegram to the Crown Prince of Servia asking Servia to be reasonable, but assuring him that "under no circumstances" will Russia "remain indifferent to the fate of Servia."¹⁰ France continues to play her part subordinate to Russia, but accepts Sir Edward Grey's proposal, whilst the Russian Ambassador in Paris tells his Government to believe that because Germany is urging France to restrain Russia her only motive is to break up the Triple *Entente*! The English Admiralty orders the Fleet to remain concentrated, and Sir Edward Grey shows irritation against Ger-

1 German Book 23a; also French Book 50.

2 White Paper 33 and 34; German Book 10 and 10a; French Book 56.

3 White Paper 56. 6 Orange Book 41. 9 White Paper 53.

4 French Book 50. 7 German Book 12. 10 Orange Book 40.

5 White Paper 56. 8 German Book 15.

manly and gives the Russian Ambassador some encouragement by telling him of the orders given to the Fleet.² He also warns the Austrian Ambassador that Austria cannot punish Serbia without involving Russia.³ [Evidently Russia is now getting the upper hand. France is passively behind her, and Russia knows that. The French Book is one unbroken proof of this fact. England is being drawn in. Germany is miscalculating the forces, and is taking the stilted line that whilst willing to decide a dispute between Austria and Russia by the four Powers, she will not support a reference of the Austro-Servian dispute to them.]

28th July. Austria declares war on Serbia, and Germany continues to work for the success of Conversations in Vienna and St. Petersburg,⁴ although Austria seems to be opposed,⁵ But Germany is disturbed by rumors of the Russian mobilisation. The Kaiser also telegraphs to the Tsar that he is bringing pressure to bear upon Austria. Foreign newspaper correspondents confirm this. Sir Edward Grey approves of the direct communication between Vienna and St. Petersburg,⁶ but asks that his own proposal should also be accepted.

29th July. Fighting opens between Austria and Serbia, and the military party in Germany begins to get the upper hand owing to the spread of the panic about Russia's mobilisation. On this day the German Chancellor, returning in an excited state from a meeting of the War Council, makes clumsy and unacceptable proposals to the British Ambassador regarding British neutrality in the event of war.⁷ Russia again informs us through our Ambassador that Austria has declined to treat with her, and repeats her qualified acceptance of Sir Edward Grey's proposals with a new qualification—if Serbia would agree. [It appears that Russia never liked this proposal, and only French pressure made her go so far as she did in giving it conditional acceptance. The French Book is strangely silent on this matter.] Meanwhile, Germany continues her pressure on Austria and is willing to guarantee the integrity of Serbia,⁸ but is told by Russia that she will not withhold mobilisation as war seems to be inevitable. "We cannot comply with the wish of Germany, it remains only to hasten our preparations and to reckon with the probable inevitability of the war."⁹ The message sent to the Press this day by Reuter's St. Petersburg correspondent is as follows:—"Confident of England's support, about which doubts have mostly disappeared, the Russian public is prepared to accept war." Sir Edward Grey tells the French Ambassador that the English Government has not made up its mind what it will do; at the same time he tells the German Ambassador that Russia cannot be expected to allow Austria to

1 White Paper 46. 2 White Paper 47. 3 White Paper 48.

4 White Paper 71 and German Book 14.

5 White Paper 74. 6 White Paper 67 and 68. 7 White Paper 85.

8 White Paper 97.

9 Orange Book 58.

humiliate Serbia.¹ [This marks a change in British policy. It is now admitted that Russia is acting reasonably in taking a step which everyone knew would plunge Europe in war and bring the Alliance and the *Entente* into conflict. Sir Edward Grey had travelled far since he declared on the 3rd August, 1908, that England would never go to war over a Balkan question. The *Entente* had had its influence. We were no longer free. Subsequent events are little more than a manœuvring for position.]

30th July. Austria suddenly becomes reasonable² owing to German pressure, and is willing to resume conversations in St. Petersburg.³ But Russia blocks the way. The Kaiser appeals to the Tsar to stop the menace of mobilisation under the happier prospects,⁴ and King George is also asked to intervene. The pacifists for the moment are in the ascendant. But Russia's action defeats them. On the morning of this day she agrees to stop all military preparations if Austria will promise not to violate Servian sovereignty,⁵ and this is telegraphed to Berlin.⁶ Without waiting for a reply, Russia orders what amounts to an "absolute and general"⁷ mobilisation in the evening. This last step is also taken partly against the advice of Sir Edward Grey.⁸ On this day France moves with Russia and the French Ambassador reminds Sir Edward Grey of the military negotiations and the letter which the Cabinet gave him in 1912. It is important to note that M. Cambon makes it clear that if Germany demands France's neutrality in the event of a war with Russia, France could not agree. Sir Edward Grey takes further steps. He replies to the German Chancellor's proposals for British neutrality made on the 29th, indignantly rejecting them; he urges Germany to help to keep the peace and offers to effect a new European combination (thus reversing his old policy); he practically takes up the position that we shall protect the French Colonies.⁹ [The policy of non-committal and drift was coming to an end. What Russia had been manœuvring for since the beginning—viz., that the *Entente* should come into the field and oppose the Alliance—was coming about.]

31st July. Russia and Austria are coming apparently to a settlement,¹⁰ and conversations are in progress. Austria gives assurances that she does not desire to infringe the sovereign rights of Serbia, and so accepts Russia's conditions of peace.¹¹ Ger-

1 White Paper 88 and 89.

2 White Paper 112, and other scattered references.

3 Sir Maurice Bunsen's special dispatch, Cd. 7596.

4 German Book 23. 5 White Paper 97. 6 Orange Book 6.

7 "Times" and "Daily Chronicle" correspondents.

8 White Paper 103. 9 White Paper 101. 10 Cd. 7596.

11 White Paper 137.

many continues to keep pressure on Vienna, but Berlin is agitated by the widened Russian mobilisation which is being pushed ahead. The German Chancellor refuses to respect the neutrality of Belgium in the event of war.¹ ["The long-laid military plans had to be worked in full if they had to be worked at all." That is the curse of stupid militarism. It never sees beyond its nose, and has no conception of the working of the finer mechanism of human nature.] The preliminaries to German mobilisation are taken, and the Kaiser makes a final appeal to King George. [The criminal folly of the German military chiefs in refusing to recast their military plans (even though these plans had been no secret for many years and had received the sanction of Conservative opinion in England as far back as 1887), enabled the whole issues to be confused, and immediately played into the hands of the military and war sections of the *Entente*. Ultimately it brought destruction on an offending people and broke up the Peace Party in England.] Russia defends her mobilisation to us through our Ambassador, but the explanations are worthless when tested by published facts. The Tsar explains to the Kaiser that he will take no provocative action, although the action he is taking is as near as no matter a declaration of war. Germany regards it as such and presents an ultimatum. France agrees to respect Belgian neutrality, military circumstances making that declaration a mere matter of course. Sir Edward Grey again declines to ask Russia to stop her mobilisation,² though he expresses an opinion that Austria's mobilisation was not too great in view of the Servian army of 400,000 men [and therefore, by implication, that Russia was not justified in using Austria's action as a justification for her own.] If Germany would bring forward some proposal making it clear that Austria and herself were trying to preserve peace,³ he informs the German Ambassador, he is willing to tell Russia and France that they should accept such proposal, but although the conditions seem to have been fulfilled, nothing happens. Once more an appeal is made (this time from France) to Sir Edward Grey to say definitely what he is going to do. His uncertainty is jeopardising peace.⁴ Belgium is discussed with France, and Sir Edward Grey's statement is that the invasion of Belgium would *not* be a "decisive, but an important factor in determining England's attitude." Only "important!"⁵

1st August. Germany mobilises, and those working for peace and all considerations of policy, other than those of the brutal,

1 White Paper 122.

2 White Paper 110.

3 White Paper 111.

4 White Paper 119.

5 This must be read with the letter of the Opposition leaders urging war, sent to the Prime Minister two days later in which there is no mention of Belgium, but only of our obligations to France and Russia.

mechanical, murderous, military kind, are swept on one side. But before the pacifists go finally they make one more effort. The German Ambassador in London begs Sir Edward Grey to say on what conditions England will remain neutral,¹ and a misunderstood telephone message regarding French neutrality is seized upon in Berlin as an opportunity for localising the war. [In the House of Commons on the 27th August, Sir Edward Grey explained, in answer to a question by Mr. Keir Hardie, that the German Ambassador's proposal referred to in the White Paper 123 was not official and was "without authority." That may have been so, but the documents bear no trace of it. Its opening paragraphs are patently official, and the statement of the proposal is in no way differentiated from the other part of the document. If any injustice has been done to Sir Edward Grey he alone is to blame. At the time, the House of Commons was not in a frame of mind to listen to any criticism. But when Document 123 is re-discussed later on, more explanations will be required. As it stands, with Sir Edward Grey's House of Commons statement added to it, it is either a very imperfect record of the interview or is most misleading. If it records a purely personal appeal from the Ambassador it is rather strange that it was telegraphed to Berlin embedded in official matter of considerable importance. As a matter of fact the German Ambassador had telegraphed to the Imperial Chancellor that he was to discuss neutrality with Sir Edward Grey, and this did give some official authority to the conversation.² Moreover, in Sir Edward Grey's statement we find use made of the fact that the German Ambassador begged him on the 3rd August not to make Belgian neutrality a condition of England's neutrality. The only comment that can be made on that is that it was a clever way of confusing the narrative. The incident of White Paper 123 took place two days before that. The appeal of the 3rd came naturally because the suggestion of the 1st had produced no result. If the White Paper proves anything with absolute certainty it is that Sir Edward Grey never tried to save Belgian in the event of a war breaking out. He was hopelessly tied up by the *Entente*. He could not honorably have remained at the War Office if Great Britain had remained neutral. It is evident that Sir Edward Grey had now made up his mind that the *Entente* and its sequel, the naval arrangements with France, bound us to take part in the war—not for Belgium, not for liberty, not to suppress militarism, but because our honor had been committed to France. Besides, it was at this time being freely rumoured in the House of Commons, and found its way into the Press, that

1 White Paper 123.

2 Published amongst the supplementary official documents which appeared in the "Nord-Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung," September 5.

if the Cabinet had decided upon neutrality Sir Edward Grey would have resigned, as he was of opinion that his whole policy had been consistent with neutrality.] Whilst Russia's European war is in progress, Vienna and St. Petersburg are settling their differences and the original cause of the quarrel bids fair to be adjusted.¹ France mobilises in the afternoon. In London the misunderstood telephone communication referred to above takes place.

2nd August. It is rumored in Berlin that Russian troops have crossed the frontier, and the Kaiser, addressing a crowd, says Germany has been attacked; in St. Petersburg it is published abroad that Germany has attacked Russia. Sir Edward Grey, for the first time, has a majority of the Cabinet with him on the plea of Belgium and notice is given of resignations. [On Monday afternoon, the 3rd, some were withdrawn.] The Cabinet agrees to back France, putting in as a condition which was (purely nominal) in the circumstances that Parliament would support it.]

3rd August. Germany declares war on France; Sir Edward Grey addresses the House of Commons.

4th August. Meeting of Reichstag is held, and later the Chancellor has his "scrap of paper" interview with the British Ambassador. Great Britain declares war on Germany.

III.

The chapter we set out to write is finished and all that remains is to gather together into a brief conclusion what it means.

(1) The war arose from a policy to effect a balance of power in Europe through a Triple Alliance and a Triple *Entente*.

(2) It happened most fortunately (though this ought to have been foreseen and guarded against) that the Alliance and the *Entente* were respectively dominated by bitterly opposed racial influences, and these influences provided the circumstances from which the conflict arose.

(3) As a matter of fact, Great Britain was as much bound by the *Entente* as though she had made a definite written commitment—indeed the unwritten agreement bound us more than a written one would have done; just as a specific obligation is less dangerous in business than a vague understanding. In any event, the *Entente* led to the Naval conversations which committed our honour². None of this was told to the country, which was led to believe that it was quite free.

¹ White Paper 137; Cd. 7596. There is a conflict of evidence here between our own papers and Russian statements (cf. White Paper 139), but no jury would believe what the Russian Foreign Minister was then saying without corroborative evidence. Even the Russian Orange Book 73 casts doubts upon the word of her Foreign Secretary.

² See the use made of this by Sir Edward Grey in his speech on the 3rd August, Hansard, lxx., pp. 1815-18.

(4) Throughout the negotiations the Powers were compelled to act with their Allies. In the first stage of the negotiations Germany represented Austrian interests—France was a mere second to Russia, and we were hampered.

(5) Either Sir Edward Grey's proposal or the German one would have secured peace in Europe if the Austrian quarrel with Servia had not been extended by Russia. Indeed, this quarrel was in a fair way to settlement when the bigger one—purely the creation of the diplomatists and the result of the alliances—was bringing war upon Europe.

(6) None of the matters which fill such an important place in the minds of the people and their newspapers at present—Belgium, nationality, public law and right—appear in the negotiations until war has become inevitable. Indeed, most of them come into play only after the war began. With the war, the floodgates were opened; all the questions leading up to the war were submerged and altogether new problems arose.

(7) The military frame of mind was common in varying degrees to every country. The Franco-Russian Alliance was meant to be aggressive; Russia and France both meant to use us in their quarrels; we had our Bernhardis; the German military class was strong; the ablest in Europe, and aggressive.

(8) The military sections and the preachers of organised force were not strong enough in any country to make war had not the diplomatists played into their hands. The flood of stuff poured out about warlike historians and philosophers is but academic vanities and pomposities, mainly used by philosophers for making profits. Within the memory of one who has lived only a little more than a generation, Russia and France have both been anathematised by us as being dangers to the peace of Europe; the wheel of time has now brought Germany into that place; and on each of these occasions, Russia, France and Germany have believed that Great Britain was an intolerable power which had to be taught a lesson.

(9) In every country there was a strong peace party, but in no country had that party time to make itself effective. In Russia it was weakest; in Great Britain it was strongest. So weak was it in Russia that it never counted; in Germany it was active until the Russian mobilisation; in France it did little but look on, except that the Socialist parliamentarians, headed by Jaures, held frequent conferences with the Prime Minister and urged him to influence Russia. It is known that the interview which Jaures had with Viviani an hour or two before his assassination was on this very point. In England, the German invasion of Belgium broke up the pacifists. But the records of the negotiations show that every country except Russia strove for peace, and that but for the alliances and the treaty obligations war would never have broken out at all.

But war has broken out, and this statement of how it came has been made because unless we can restore some balance and accuracy to popular criticism, some knowledge of reality to supplant absurdities about Germany and silence about Russia, the peace will come and the triumph of the Allies will mean nothing either to the peace or the liberty of Europe.

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I. W. W. PREAMBLE.

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production, and abolish the wage system.

We find that the centralizing of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping to defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries, if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wages for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is with the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the every-day struggle with the capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

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