

skepticism, fatigue, all that has hitherto maintained the intolerable martyrdom of Europe — are very strong and very firmly entrenched in the press, in 'society,' and in the chancelleries and foreign offices of Europe. Against them we have to invoke the new spirit of the world, the spirit of coöperation, of reason, of that divine common sense which is the essence of religion. All these

forces are for the moment silenced among the belligerents. But they are suppressed, not killed. They are ready to awake in new strength from this horrible nightmare. Meanwhile, in America and the other neutral countries they will and must be more active than ever. For to these countries the conscience of mankind looks for its expression.

BRITISH POLICY AND THE WAR

BY HENRY W. MASSINGHAM

I

AMONG the minor consequences of the war must be reckoned its temporary obliteration of the British party system. For the first time since the great modern alignment of parties took place, and nearly thirty years after the first definite impact of the 'caucus' on our political life, the government of this country is being carried on, not only in the name of the whole nation, but with its informal assent. The administration has indeed ventured to carry just so much of its political programme as depended on its ante-war pledges to Irish Nationalists and Welsh Nonconformists and the powers it drew from the Parliament Act. There its functions as an organ of party end. That is obvious from its own reading of the situation. It has entrusted the control of the War Office to a soldier without politics, thus breaking an old Liberal tradition, and dislocating the Cabinet for purely Liberal or advanced social legislation.

Nor do any present means exist for restoring the normal atmosphere of our politics. The framework of party is broken. The organizers have shut their offices, and joined the Red Cross committees. Parliament itself is incomplete, for many members are at the front, and, save for emergency purposes, you cannot legislate through a Rump. Neither could it be dissolved on a party issue.

The only instrument of a change would be gross failure in the conduct of the war, followed either by an election on that issue, or by the formation of a 'Ministry of Talents.' Such a government could no doubt make a peace, or carry on the war, or raise almost any issues but those dividing parties last July. Thus a campaign 'drawn' after many months of bloody conflict might create a commercial peace party, backed by a coalition of financial interests, Radicals, and Labor men. But it might well evoke a passionate national sentiment in favor of a 'fight to the finish.' Such a situation would be

bound to break Liberalism, and would not find Conservatives undivided. One can at once imagine two or three figures at the head of a strong war administration. Palmerston formed such a ministry, and Mr. Churchill obviously suggests himself as a powerful figure in it.

Should the end come with Germany undefeated, her military organization in continued control of the state, and her navy intact, the national instinct might veto a peace against almost any conceivable pressure by 'moderate' statesmanship to secure it.

There is another consideration which deeply affects the future of party relationships in Britain. It is not only the balance of power in Europe which has gone for ever. The passing of Home Rule creates the need of a new Parliamentary regulator. The Liberal-Irish coalition cannot subsist on the precarious aid of forty-two votes which will be left to it when the Dublin Parliament begins to sit. Who could control such a party? What would be its terms and attitude? Irish Nationalism has never reached a real political and economic solidarity. It existed for a single definite end, and sought and maintained its Parliamentary alliances accordingly. For the future, if it can make terms with the Protestant North, it must study Ireland as a partner with Britain, not as a suitor bargaining with governments which may long lack the coherence of the great organizations as we have known them. The position of the Labor party is almost equally fluid. To-day it rests partly and most strongly on organized trade-unionism, partly — and weakly — on Socialist sentiment, and roughly speaking is divided on the diplomacy of the war (although hardly on its conduct) in proportion to the force of these two elements. In other words, it is a single wave, just rising at certain points along the pre-

sent level of national feeling, but not distinctly representative of it.

Yet it is this section of the community, now conspicuously at its weakest, which is most likely to undergo a dramatic change according to the fortunes of the gigantic catastrophe which overhangs Europe. A great victory for the Allies would bring their ideals, which are those of the Radicals, — ideals of a world-organization for peace, based on a more or less open diplomacy and a general scheme of arbitration, — within the region of practice. An inconclusive end, followed by the discharge from the army of hundreds of thousands of men, with no immediate prospect of reabsorption in the labor market, might re-create revolutionary socialism as a passionate antagonist of conscription, and bring about a total change in the personnel and leadership of the Parliamentary Laborites. Since the Napoleonic wars no such sudden and heavy draft has been made on British citizenship. A succession of armies of one hundred thousand men each have been suddenly called for from the factory and the soil. They were recruited, not from the low-paid labor of the slums and cornlands of England, but from the flower of our industrials. Men felt that the old atmosphere of things was shaken, and that these voluntary conscripts of European liberty could not be treated like the starvelings of Pitt's wars. So a movement arose for a more generous scale of pay, for pensions, separation and disablement allowances, and for removing these tokens of the nation's gratitude from the meanness of inquisitorial charity.

There was the further question of the position of the trade unions during the period of acute and widespread unemployment. Here again reformers felt that it would never do to let trade-unionism perish under an unexampled strain on its funds. Why not therefore

apply the Insurance Act, the Workmen's Compensation Act, to the business of keeping the soldier-workman and his family during the war and after it, not only in modest comfort, but in the status of an independent citizen, and make the trade unions, rather than the distress committee, the medium of the state's relief of unemployment? On the whole, this idea of public duty to the new levies seems likely to prevail, and the Labor party has had its share, though not a dramatic share, in accrediting it. If it holds, our economic structure may hold too.

But should widespread distress follow the end of the war, because our statesmen failed to realize the tremendous stake that the people have willingly put into it, he would be a bold prophet who would see a vision of Britain subject to her old controls, exercised by opportunist parties, in the hands of Liberal or Conservative leaders. England is no longer the home of the 'squalid wretchedness' which Byron described in the House of Lords in 1812. The horrors and oppressions which followed the year of Waterloo no longer exist; but neither does the submissiveness of the voteless soldiers who then returned from Belgium to take starvation at the hands of the country they had saved. Now, indeed, the nominal directing power rests with the masses. But as in the great states all the executives work on the pivot of secret action in foreign affairs, this power of direction means in practice little more than that of a scant and quite ineffective Parliamentary representation. Even with us, most of the effective instruments of our foreign policy, such as the concerted 'conversations' with French generals in 1912, and the defensive treaty with Portugal, were unknown to Parliament, and the meaning of the Belgian treaty of 1839 was quite unrealized.

The people, indeed, judging the character of the war on a broad front of normal and political issues, and feeling with fine instinct the call of national danger, approved the general purposes of the war when they knew of them. But it is necessary to realize that when all is over, our government, like every one of its neighbors, will have to make its account with a democracy unschooled in 'real politics,' and yet suffering unspeakably from its enforced ignorance of them. If revolutions devour their own children, wars also have a way of destroying the ministers who make them.

II

But this is speculative politics, and we in Britain had for the moment to deal with the situation in which the country, caught in a whirlwind, looked for shelter, first to the existing administration, and then to those central forces which alone can effect a swift organization for war. It judged at once, and judged rightly, that the organ of defense must be a Liberal government, drawing in auxiliaries from the Right and from the Left. The issue which Germany forced to the front was the one which practically united the democratic parties. Belgium was a ward of Gladstone; her independence was the point in his later career in which he diverged most sharply from the teaching of the Manchester School. Here was a definite conception of public right. It must be set up again or be smashed to fragments; no third course was possible.

No one asked for war; no one wanted it; no one expected this country to be drawn into it when the conflict seemed to involve merely a struggle between Russia and Austria for the hegemony of the Near East. If the nation had been asked whether it was converted to Con-

tinentalism, whether it had followed the slow turn of the wheels of foreign policy which had finally caught us in the sweep of the eighteenth-century doctrine of the 'Balance of Power,' it might have said, 'No,' or 'No — Yes.' German militarism spared it the trouble of answering by instantly pouring out on the world a double portion of its spirit.

British public opinion had never realized what an organized military nation was, or how it would act. Therefore after the first fortnight of the Belgian invasion, discrimination as to the causes of the war practically ceased. It could only be visualized as an act of moral, as well as physical, devastation. Human horror at such conduct became mixed inevitably with our prevision of what such a thing would do to us when it had smashed Belgium, drawn France within its orbit, commanded Antwerp, dominated the Channel ports, including Calais and Dunkirk, and left no truly independent nation of standing between the Vistula and the mouths of the Seine. 'Finita est Anglia' is not the kind of epitaph that a proud people would choose to prepare for its tombstone.

Neither could British democracy see the liberties of Western Europe perish in the ruin which has been meted out to its own ward. We did not promise to go in even when France, through two of her most powerful public men, urged us that, if we stood aloof, the war must in effect turn France into a German vassal. It is hardly a secret that Mr. Lloyd George, with other members of the Cabinet, hesitated over their first reading of the Belgian case. Had Belgium asked only for diplomatic aid, had she suggested that she was prepared to make terms with Germany, or to let the German torrent flow quietly over her borders, war might have come, but not through this Cabinet.

The government as a whole yielded only when, the treaty of 1839 having been hastily torn up, the Belgian appeal became an urgent call for help. Shutting out the appalling issues of the war, and looking only to that appeal, it is impossible to imagine any government rejecting it, or any state of public opinion allowing them to reject it and to remain in office.

In effect, the decision rested with four men — Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Churchill, and Sir Edward Grey; for the secession of any one of them would have broken up the government. It has been said by the small dissenting minority that the war is a war of Liberal Imperialism, and it is true that, if we count heads, and associate them with abstract policies, we may reckon the Imperialists in the inner circle of the cabinet as three to one. But time, changes of attitude and circumstance, and the growing antagonism of England and Germany, due to the development of the German fleet, had largely obliterated the distinction between 'pro-Boers' and Imperialists. The two sections united to give self-government and federal dominion to South Africa. Both were content to accept Mr. Asquith's skillful and placable leadership in succession to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's. The breach was to some slight extent reopened when the processes of developing the Entente, reorganizing the fleet, and redirecting its face to the North Sea, set in together.

The situation was not managed with great skill. It was novel and disquieting. Germany was a half-read riddle. Was her true genius military or commercial? Each view was strongly held. Our Foreign Office had no new method to substitute for its traditional secrecy, and the presence of the Secretary of State in the House of Commons — for the first time since the days of Russell

and Palmerston — gave Parliament no larger measure of knowledge and control of exterior policy than it possessed before. It lacked an organ of authoritative inquiry; since the death of Sir Charles Dilke it happened also to be peculiarly deficient in private members equipped for the study of foreign affairs.

Events have made us all wiser, and to-day we should agree that a frank statement of the German peril might have cleared the thunder-laden air. But the public was not taken into the government's confidence. It was unaware either of our offer to Germany in 1912¹ of abstinence from all share in an aggressive war, or of Germany's significant response in the shape of a demand for a practically unconditional neutrality. It is open to question whether the Cabinet as a whole was acquainted with the case against German militarism; it

¹ First revealed by Mr. Asquith in his speech at Cardiff: 'We laid down — and I wish to call not only your attention, but the attention of the whole world to this, when so many false legends are now being invented and circulated — in the following year, in the year 1912, we laid down, in terms carefully approved by the Cabinet and which I will textually quote, what our relations with Germany ought, in our view, to be. We said, — and we communicated this to the German Government, — Britain declares that she will neither make nor join in any unprovoked attack upon Germany. Aggression upon Germany is not the subject, and forms no part of any treaty, understanding, or combination to which Britain is now a party, nor will she become a party to anything that has such an object. There is nothing ambiguous or equivocal about that. But, my Lord Mayor, that was not enough for German statesmanship. They wanted us to go further; they asked us to pledge ourselves absolutely to neutrality in the event of Germany being engaged in war, and this, mind you, at a time when Germany was enormously increasing both her aggressive and defensive resources, and especially upon the sea. They asked us — to put it quite plainly — they asked us for a free hand so far as we were concerned if, and when, they selected the opportunity to overbear, to dominate the European world. To such a demand but one answer was possible — and that was the answer we gave.' — THE AUTHOR.

is not at all doubtful that the indictment framed against it in 1909, when the competitive race in dreadnoughts began to culminate, was not the true indictment, for we were never in real danger of being outbuilt by the German shipyards. Rumors of the 'conversations' with French and Belgian generals did indeed prevail. But they were gleaned from hints dropped by French statesmen: while the menace to Belgian independence remained almost completely hidden.

A great reward might conceivably have waited on a bolder, less reticent statesmanship. Germany could have been formally challenged on Belgium, and have been offered a guarantee of peace in return for the satisfaction of Europe and England. This in fact was the substance of Sir Edward Grey's offer to her last July. But such a boon to civilization could only have been won by breaking down the counsels, at once crooked and violent, which finally swayed her policy.

However, it is a far cry from blaming the timidity of British policy to accusing it of deliberate aggression. The Haldane mission to Berlin, the movement for international disarmament, in the Liberal party and the British churches, the deputations to Germany, ought to have convinced her statesmen that peace with England could be had for the asking, and did probably convince the German Ambassador and the more moderate guides of her diplomacy at Berlin. There was passion in the early rivalry of the fleets; but in 1914 the country, if still uneasy, was strongly pacific. Mr. Churchill talked, but he offered terms of naval adjustment.

The Cabinet had successfully resisted conscription, and at no time, I think, did it contain more than two undeclared advocates of it. The proportional superiority of the fleets had indeed been increased, and the Committee of

Defense had worked out a successful scheme for the handling and equipment of the Expeditionary Force. But both steps were in the line of our traditional naval and military policy. The military force itself was small, — about one hundred and sixty thousand men, — and in view of the building of the strategic German railways on the Belgian frontier, pointing to an invasion along the Liège-Namur line, the contingency of a Continental landing could not quite be kept out of view. But I repeat that no government calling itself Liberal could well have engaged in a Continental war save in the face of some such contingency as actually arose, — namely, the complete breakdown of good faith and treaty obligation in international life, and the menace of an unchallenged supremacy in Western Europe of a single highly aggressive, perfectly organized, military state.

This is obvious when we consider the composition and the political problems of the Cabinet. The Prime Minister belonged originally to the Imperialist group, though he might always have been called a moderator in it. His personal association with Sir Edward Grey has always been close, as that of his predecessor was slight. But his easy and considerate rule was from the beginning based on the principle of a balance between the more numerically powerful Imperialists, and the weaker Radical and Gladstonian group, which on the whole commanded the country through the energy and personal force of Mr. Lloyd George. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had his policies, and they were expensive policies. The estimated combined cost of Old-Age Pensions and State Insurance for 1914–15 is over twenty and a half millions sterling. The final cost is hardly measurable, and to it must speedily have been added the burden of the great

pending scheme of housing and land-settlement.

These were the main preoccupations of Liberal and Radical Britain when the storm of last July burst upon it. The country was prosperous, but the government's finance was fast breaking down under the double burden of armaments and social reform. No one who knew Mr. George would ask him to sit for a portrait of the meekest of the Apostles, and in the alarming silence of German diplomacy in the Morocco crisis of 1911, the Prime Minister commissioned him to speak a word of warning to Berlin, which there and elsewhere awoke echoes of thunder. Pacifists thought that he had conceded too generous estimates of the needs of the army and navy. But his interest never for a moment lay in the starvation, or even the temporary obstruction, of social reform, and up to the verge of war moderation both in estimates and in policy was a leading note of our statesmanship.

Mr. Churchill was a statesman of a different type and lineage. He had come to Liberalism on the Conservative issue of free trade, and with a reputation for brilliancy of rhetoric and power of literary statement unsurpassed, save by the Prime Minister, in our modern Parliamentary speech. In the Colonial Office he did well and played a part of some consequence in the settlement with the Boers. His earlier essays as a Radical, and in the work of the Board of Trade and the Home Office, were less successful. His succession to the Admiralty alone satisfied his ambition, and gave scope to his administrative skill. The key of his policy, and of the rapid development of the four features of British naval strength on which it rested, — dreadnoughts, light cruisers, submarines, and aviation, — was his belief in the inevitability of an Anglo-German con-

flict, and of a German provocation to England, and a challenge to treaty law, in the shape of an invasion of Belgium.

No one will say that the expression of this conviction was always measured or prudent. But it was persuasive enough to convince the Radical Chancellor and his colleagues that the rising bill for the navy could not be cut down. Social reform and armaments, therefore, ran together in a desperate race for primacy, which was unconcluded when the war broke out. No basis for Germany's charge of a plot to engineer or even to aid an aggressive war against her lay in this distribution of the political fund of the nation. Rather it represented the conflict, as old as modern Liberalism, between the idea of a pacific state, absorbed in the endeavor to raise the physical and moral standards of its citizenship, and the pessimistic view that under the pressure of European militarism, as governed by Germany, no such development was possible.

Sir Edward Grey himself, an Imperialist and a Whig, a critical student of German diplomacy, but not an impassioned Jingo, lent his aid to both schools in turn. I conclude therefore this brief analysis of political tendencies by repeating that 1914 found the country in two minds as to the chances of avoiding war, but with a deeper desire to escape from it than at any period since the climax of the Anglo-German confrontation. Our Foreign Office had little but praise for Germany's seconding of Sir Edward Grey's campaign of peace during the Balkan war. Germany had been more than 'correct'; and England entered on the earlier phase of the short and terrible encounter of July last in the firm belief that Berlin was prepared to offer another sacrifice to peace.

She was soon undeceived. The power of England to keep the peace fell from her hand as soon as it was clear

that Germany was prepared to give Austria 'a free hand,'¹ and that the irresistible force coming from Berlin was one of propulsion, not of restraint. When again Germany's military policy pointed to the ruin of Belgium and the absorption by her of the three small independent States of western Europe, the never-long-dormant passion for nationality awoke, and the whole country, almost irrespective of political attachments, approved the war. It had had enough of propaganda by 'shining armor' and 'mailed fists.'

III

If, therefore, we remember that this was the mood in which our people accepted the war, we have a clue to the spirit in which they hope to end it. So far as the post-war diplomacy of the three great combatants of the Allies is concerned, I believe that its present exchanges of feeling and policy point to a moderate settlement. Even Russia has allowed it to be understood that she desires no spoil in the shape of German territory, and that her aspirations in the East point not to Constantinople as a neo-Russian capital so much as to the more modest and also traditional aim of a free passage through the Straits.

France has obvious reasons for desiring to avoid a war of exhaustion. For us, again, the idea of peace has come to centre round one field of vision: disarmament, and the enlargement of the sphere of international action. If the Allies fail, or half-succeed, a peace concluded with the Germans on French and Belgian soil, and with the Russian advance stayed on the frontier of Silesia, leaves Europe encumbered with a fresh crop of unreaped but ripening

¹ 'We therefore permitted Austria a completely free hand in her action towards Servia.' — *The German White Book*.

hatreds, and us, with still uninvaded soil, either plunged straightway into conscription, or engaged in a life-and-death struggle to avert it. The people would enter on that struggle in a mood of war-weariness and war-hatred in which every European nation would share, and an issue in favor of forced service would destroy the national unity, totally alter the character of our political institutions, and undermine the case on which, with a good conscience, the country embarked on a conflict for the ending of the Prussian military spirit. It is enough to repeat that, in my view, no existing British party would survive it without a fundamental and probably a revolutionary change.

But as the country assumes and believes in a victory for the Allies, it is of the utmost consequence to ensure that its deep underlying mood should find embodiment in the terms of peace. It is obvious that nothing which provides for a mere resumption of the war of naval estimates — 'the war of steel and gold' — would find an assenting party, for that implies the destruction of progressive England. But it is equally out of proportion to insist that the Allied powers should press for a cut-and-dried solution of the problem of armaments

on the crude lines of destruction of the German fleet and naval arsenals. It would be far more pertinent that when the Prussian 'domination,' to use Mr. Asquith's phrase at the Guildhall, is ended, the Allies should summon and provide for a European Conference. To this assembly Germany, unlike the France of 1815, would necessarily be a party. The Conference would, of course, be a temporary instrument. But it would be specially charged with the constitution of a European or rather a world-Parliament, on which in turn would devolve the settlement of a new scale and a restricted use of purely national forces. Such an issue in itself excludes the notion of a dismembered Germany, taking over from France the seeds of revenge implanted by the Treaty of Frankfort. It is to this general end, with increasing agreement as to means, that Liberal sentiment in France, England, Belgium, and even Russia — mindful of the assistance offered by the Kaiser in 1905 for the crushing of the Russian revolution — is moving with no uncertain step.

The one hidden factor is the attitude of Germany after the war. It is there that the supreme danger and uncertainty of the situation rest.

TSINGTAU: THE SEQUEL TO PORT ARTHUR

BY GUSTAVUS OHLINGER

I

'THE Asiatic considers only superior force, and respects those only who he knows will use this superiority to the utmost limit. This respect we have won for ourselves in a signal manner, and it will bear fruit in the future.'

With this vaunt Count von Waldersee greeted his countrymen upon his return, in 1901, from Peking, where he had commanded the German East Asiatic Expedition. As an estimate of the Oriental the statement may well challenge criticism. Its importance lies, however, in the insight which it affords into the principles which have dominated German policy in the Far East.

German ships and subjects made their first appearance in China and Japan under British protection. In 1842, by the Treaty of Nankin, England had forced from China recognition for her subjects, and the United States and France followed her example with similar treaties two years later. A decade later still, Commodore Perry opened Japan to foreign intercourse. But it was not till 1860 that a Prussian squadron, on a diplomatic mission representing thirty-three German states, appeared in Eastern waters. Through the assistance and influence of Townsend Harris, the veteran American minister, a treaty was negotiated between Prussia and Japan. The other states of the Confederation were not included in the treaty, the Japanese plenipotentiaries, who were appalled by the long roster of names, not being prepared to

grant treaties by wholesale. Similar assistance was rendered by the British and French representatives in the negotiation of a treaty with China. This treaty, in a secret article, obliged the Prussians to forego for a period of five years the right of diplomatic representation in Peking. During this interval, as before, the subjects of the various German states were glad to avail themselves of the protection afforded by the officials of friendly powers.

In 1866 the first Prussian minister arrived in Peking. He took up his residence in an exceedingly unpretentious building adjoining the British legation grounds. With 1871 there naturally came an accession of prestige, but for many years Germany's position was well represented by the humble quarters in which her diplomatic representative was lodged. Bismarck regarded the lack of vital interests in the Near and Far East as elements of advantage, allowing Germany to maintain a neutral attitude in the disputes of the European powers until such time as she could play her stake at the best odds. Moreover, a conciliatory foreign policy was necessary, in order, as he says in his *Memoirs*, 'To win the confidence, not only of the smaller European states, but also of the Great Powers, and to convince them that German policy will be just and peaceful, now that it has repaired the *injuria temporum*, the disintegration of the nation.' As expressions of this policy he explains the conciliating attitude of Germany with reference to the Caroline Islands and