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I SEEK THE TRUTH



# I SEEK THE TRUTH

A book on responsibility for the War

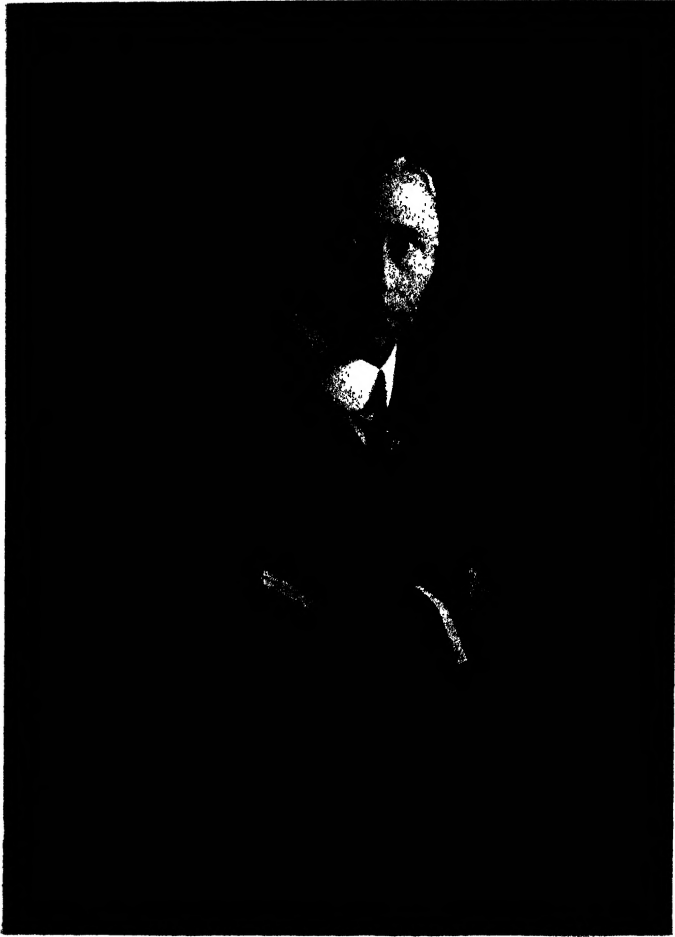
by THE EX-CROWN PRINCE  
WILLIAM OF GERMANY

*Translated from the German by*  
RALPH BUTLER



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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

SINCE the publication of this book in German, Truth, whom it is meant to serve, has made many fresh conquests (on its road to victory) in all countries.

In England a body of men and women has united in a public declaration that the judgment pronounced in Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles should be reviewed by an impartial court, and that Articles 227 to 230 " . . . were forcibly imposed upon a defeated nation under the most terrible threats, as having expressed a state of mind in the Allied and Associated Powers which has now largely passed away . . . We urge the Governments concerned either to amend these Articles with no further delay, or . . . to announce severally their intention to disregard them."

This sober statement, inspired by a fine sense of justice, leads me to believe that wider circles are ready to approach this subject with an open mind.

Though there are still many who do not yet feel justified in subscribing to this idea, and who would, therefore, find in my pages many an unacceptable passage, I hope that they will, nevertheless, not condemn unread this book, written "sine ira et studio".

In the arena which I now enter with this book in their own language I feel I shall be met with in that same spirit of "fair play" that is the common currency in the motherland of sport.

*Schloss Oels, February, 1926*

WILLIAM



## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

FOOT-NOTES by the Translator are enclosed in square brackets [ . . . ] to distinguish them from the Author's foot-notes.

Documents are cited throughout in the foot-notes by their full titles, with the following exceptions :

"*Bourgeois and Pagès*" is used to denote the Report of the Special Commission of the French Senate appointed to inquire into the responsibility for the war. It was first published in the *Journal Officiel* of 9 January, 1921, and subsequently edited for publication and published by MM. E. Bourgeois and G. Pagès under the title *Les origines et les responsabilités de la grande guerre, preuves et aveux*, Paris, 1922.

"*F.O. Papers*" is used to denote the collection of its archives, from the founding of the German Empire to the outbreak of the war, which is in process of publication by the German Foreign Office. The series is being edited by Johannes Lepsius, Albrecht Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and Friedrich Thimme under the general title *Die grosse Politik der europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914, Sammlung der diplomatischen Akten des Auswärtigen Amtes*. Some 30 volumes have appeared up to the present.

"*Erich Brandenburg*" is used to denote Erich Brandenburg's *Von Bismarck zum Weltkrieg*. Dr. Brandenburg had access for the purposes of his book to the F.O. Papers. The Crown Prince uses his book for the period 1907-1914, which the F.O. Papers have not yet reached.

"*Isvolsky*" is used to denote the Correspondence of Isvolsky, extracts of which were first published by the Soviet Government in a Russian Black Book. The bulk

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

of the documents contained in the Black Book were reproduced in German by B. von Siebert, a former Secretary of the Russian Embassy in London, under the title *Diplomatische Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der Entente-politik der Vorkriegsjahre*. A more complete collection in six volumes (containing some 500 documents which do not appear in either the Black Book or von Siebert) has recently been issued in German by the German Foreign Office. It is from this edition that the Crown Prince quotes, and to which the references in the foot-notes refer.

Where English translations of foreign works quoted by the Crown Prince exist, reference is made to these.

RALPH BUTLER

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE GERMAN EDITION

IT was not the loneliness of the grey fogs of that North Sea island, nor the separation from my home and family, nor the feeling of the depths to which we had fallen, that weighed heaviest on my soul in the five years I spent at Wieringen and thought would never end, but the consciousness that all ways that pointed to work which might be fruitful for my country were barred to me. The messages which reached me from Germany were Job's comforters indeed. They hit me harder than millions of other Germans, since I was not able to give my country in the hour of its affliction even the smallest form of service. I considered whether there was not somewhere a possibility of escape from this intolerable sense of helplessness : and it seemed to me that the possibility presented itself when in June, 1919, in the so-called Covering Note addressed in the name of the Allied Governments by Clemenceau to Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, I read for the first time set out in an official document the unparalleled falsehoods with which, since the beginning of the war, the enemy's propaganda had raised the whole world against us. The words employed in this Covering Note in explanation of Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles, which were to refute the objections of the German Peace Delegation to this Article—there was no trace of any effort to support the refutation by proof—were in the eyes of our enemies the justification for the Treaty which they presented to the world as a sentence of punishment of a criminal passed by themselves in the dual rôle of judges and accusers. I reflected that, if the falsehoods in the Covering Note as to Germany's responsibility for the war could be shown up

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as such, the moral basis of the Treaty would be gone. It would no longer appear as a sentence of punishment, but as an act of violence, and would be seen to differ from other "Peace" Treaties in nothing but the unparalleled rigour of its provisions. Its only basis would be the right of the conqueror : and the charges which Clemenceau brought against us would be revealed to all the world as no more than the sword which the Gallic King flung into the scales with the contemptuous cry " Vae victis! "

As Commander of the Fifth Army and of the Army Group "German Crown Prince", I could not fail to foresee, even during the continuance of the war, that the calumnies and animosities which, until we laid down our arms, were directed only against my father and his responsible advisers, would be extended (after they had done their work with all its consequences abroad, at home and at the front) to the whole German people. The Treaty of Versailles confirmed this assumption, and the Covering Note expressly formulated the condemnation of the whole German people.

Under the impression produced by the study of this document, for which in the whole history of the peace treaties of the World there is no parallel, I thought I had at length found the opening for which I had so long waited. I resolved to do my best in helping to destroy the War Guilt Lie which, at the outset a charge on the honour of my House, had assumed the dimensions of a calumny on Germany and the German people.

This design could only be executed with the greatest difficulty in the solitude of Wieringen. The documentary material, which reached me there, was too fragmentary : and, even had it been otherwise, I should have been reluctant at that time to draw conclusions from it for the public, as I saw how month after month brought to light new proofs, which were indispensable if the whole world was to be permeated with a conviction of the truth of which I myself had never doubted.

But, with the publication of the first four series of the

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Archives of the German Foreign Office, of the correspondence of Isvolsky, the Russian Ambassador in Paris, and of the various other documents from the Russian and Austrian archives, the moment seems to me to have come for the execution of my resolve. The material already available is sufficient to prove what has to be proved in order to deprive the Versailles Treaty of the moral basis, on which the enemies of Germany alone have based it. It is possible to prove that the assertion of the Covering Note of 16 June, 1919, was a conscious falsehood.

To afford such proof is the sole object of this book.

I am well aware, at the moment of giving it to the world, that it will appear to many as an *oratio pro domo* in the strictest sense of the words. To such readers all I have to say is this. The remoteness from the world, in which I lived for five years, was eminently calculated to promote self-examination, after the event, as to the causes which brought it about ; and objective views were likely to ripen in such an atmosphere. No one can feel more strongly than I do the injustice of the animosity with which the Emperor has been assailed. This animosity is based on the belief, spread calumniously throughout the world, that my father wished for war and promoted it, whereas I was myself an almost daily witness of the anxiety to maintain peace, than which none of his responsibilities weighed heavier upon him. But the consciousness of the injustice of this animosity has never blinded me to the fact that human fallibility on not infrequent occasions diverted into wrong directions desires of my father, which had their source in the purest of motives and often in profound conscientious convictions, while his advisers, with the best intentions, were responsible for many pregnant errors of judgment.

I have already given indications of my attitude in this connection in my volume of *Recollections*.

For these reasons it is no part of my design to undertake to prove the wisdom of German policy during my father's



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reign. The wisdom or unwisdom of State policy is a matter with which the "guilt" of the Versailles Treaty has nothing to do. In the struggle for power of the peoples, the wisdom or unwisdom of diplomatic and military means and methods is decided in the last resort by their success. With what I regard as the mistakes of German policy I am concerned in this book only in so far as the enemies allied against us have endeavoured to brand these mistakes with the name of crimes.

The question of the responsibility for the war has produced a literature in all languages, with which by now it is scarcely possible to keep pace. In Germany it has been handled by the most eminent authorities, and by many pens, qualified and unqualified. It is not therefore to be expected of this book that, apart from certain purely personal experiences, it will have much that is new to say to historians of the future who study the literature on the subject. I believe, nevertheless, that my book may render service to my country inasmuch as the question of responsibility for the war is one of those, in the case of which scientific research can prepare the way to the effective solution, but cannot itself effect that solution. The responsibility for the war is pre-eminently a political issue, and a political issue of the highest significance; and there can be no solution of the questions involved, until such time as the truth has not merely been sifted and consolidated by scientific research, but has also been spread all over the world.

Fate laid my cradle on the steps of the German Imperial Throne. To-day Germany is a Republic; but I have the right, like any other German—and, as I conceive it, also the duty—to raise my voice in order to hasten the triumph of the truth. It is the truth I seek, and my book has no other object than to seek it, and to spread it when found. If I send it out into the world under my own flag, it is because I conceive that it is likely by this means to find a way to regions further afield than it

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might reach, if it sailed under the flag of German research alone.

May its pages bring the light of the truth to countries, cities and houses whose doors are closed to the lumbering chariot of science. If it succeeds in doing so much, its object is achieved.

Oels, Spring of 1925

WILLIAM



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## INTRODUCTION

### THE TREATY CONCEPTION OF "GUILT"

IN other Treaties concluded at the close of wars there is commonly a solemn pronouncement, which appears at the beginning of the Treaty and constitutes the substance of the so-called preamble. In this the reasons are set forth which have actuated the conqueror in imposing on the conquered the conditions, the fulfilment of which he requires as the price of peace. Such pronouncements are intended to contain the moral justification of the treaty. In the Treaty of Versailles this pronouncement is to be found hidden away in the part dealing with Reparations. The foundation-stone of the Treaty edifice, which we are given to understand is a work designed for all time, has not been lowered into its place with three taps of the hammer and words of wisdom to the expectant spectators. Master builders who are proud of their work may observe such rites. The authors of the Versailles Treaty have hidden away what they had to say in the two hundred and thirty-first cell of their prison-house as though they were ashamed of it.

The grounds put forward in Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles in justification of the demand for indemnity payments by Germany are, as Lloyd George stated at the London Conference of 1921, speaking in the name of all the signatory Powers, the foundation of the Treaty as a whole. If then it is shown that the foundation of the

building is rotten, it follows—and that in the view of the architects themselves—that the whole edifice crumbles with it.

The thesis of German responsibility for the war being the moral basis without which, in the view of the Allies themselves who put it forward, the conclusion of such a Treaty would have been impossible, it might have been expected that it would have been formulated at the head of all the conditions imposed. If this was not done, there must have been some special reason for its concealment: and that reason can only have been the bad conscience of those in whose brains the thesis was conceived.

The President of the United States and the three Premiers, who in the spring of 1919 made this Treaty, were well aware that they must find some kind of justification for their handiwork. It is easy to understand why they did not carve the untruth on the façade as an inscription to catch all eyes. They draped it instead with the four seemingly harmless words "*pour les avoir causés*",<sup>1</sup> which in the official German translation are rendered "as the originator". With the unproven condemnation of these four words they thought to justify the dismemberment, the deprivation, the depopulation and the economic enslavement of the whole of a great people.

The refutation of these words being the object of this book, they are here reproduced in their entirety, though indeed they are branded on every German heart:

#### *Article 231*

"The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies."

<sup>1</sup> [In English "for causing" (see complete text of Article 231 below).]

It is asserted then in this Article, first, that Germany is responsible for the damages to which the Allied and Associated Governments have been subjected in the war because she caused them, and, secondly, that Germany and her allies imposed the war on the Allied and Associated Governments by their aggression.

I may here interpolate the remark that the second of these two assertions is false, even assuming the German declarations of war not to have been measures of defence, since it can only apply at the most to two of the signatory Powers.

Germany declared war only on France and Russia. The declaration of war on us by Great Britain on 4 August, 1914, may perhaps be regarded as at any rate indirectly forced on that Power—always assuming that the two German declarations of war and the invasion of Belgium were not measures of defence—since the British Government, diverging at this point from Gladstone's speech in the House of Commons on 10 August, 1870,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the outbreak of the Franco-German War of 1870 the British Government contemplated the possibility of a violation of Belgian neutrality. Gladstone wished to eliminate, so far as it lay in his power, the danger of England being involved in this event. He accordingly concluded Treaties with the North German Confederation and with France, under which England, in the event of a breach of Belgian neutrality by one of the combatants, assured to herself the help of the other combatant in defence of that neutrality. These Treaties were to hold good for twelve months after the war. After that time, the Guarantee Treaty of 1839 was once again to provide the security for Belgian neutrality.

Gladstone was violently attacked in the House of Commons for concluding these Treaties. He was even charged by Sherard Osborne with having dealt the Treaty of 1839 a blow from which it would never recover, inasmuch as his attitude implied that, as it stood, it was inadequate for its purpose. To this Gladstone replied *inter alia* as follows: "I admit the obligation of the Treaty. It is not necessary, nor would time permit me, to enter into the complicated question of the nature of the obligations of that Treaty; but I am not able to subscribe to the doctrine of those who have held in this House what plainly amounts to an assertion, that the simple fact of the existence of a guarantee is binding on every party to it irrespectively altogether of the particular position in which it may find itself at the time



professed to hold itself bound under the Neutrality Treaty of 1839 to go to war for Belgium's protection, and named the violation of this Treaty as the ground for her declaration of war. But what aggression of Germany and her allies imposed war on the other Allied Governments and the United States? What German or Austrian aggression imposed war on our former allies, Italy and Roumania? What menace from Germany compelled America three years after the outbreak of war to declare war? What aggression of Germany forced the South American States, Japan, China, Portugal, and even the Republic of Liberia, to join in the war? And yet all these States are signatory Powers of the Versailles Treaty. On this ground, therefore, to say nothing of the others, the second assertion of Article 231 contains an untruth patent to all the world because in flagrant contradiction to the facts. But this by the way.

In what sense is Germany saddled in these two assertions with the responsibility for letting loose the war? Article 231 itself provides no comprehensive answer to the question. Indeed a pacifist periodical<sup>1</sup> not long ago,

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when the occasion for acting on the guarantee arises. The great authorities upon foreign policy to whom I have been accustomed to listen—such as Lord Aberdeen and Lord Palmerston—never, to my knowledge, took that rigid, and, if I may venture to say so, that impracticable view of a guarantee." [*Hansard*, Vol. 203 of 10 August, 1870.]

In these words Gladstone stated his view that the Guarantee Treaty of 1839 imposed no absolute obligation on any of its signatories, and that the armed intervention against violators of the Treaty was dependent on the position of the guarantor at the moment of the violation. It was with reference to this utterance of Gladstone that Lord Grey in his speech of 3 August, 1914, defended British intervention in the war. The special position of England, he said, called for the declaration of war.

But by this very reference to Gladstone he admitted unintentionally that the British declaration of war was not forced on her under International Law by the Treaty of 1839.

<sup>1</sup> *Die Menschheit* of 3 November, 1924.

following the lead of Dr. Köster,<sup>1</sup> a former German Minister, maintained that Article 231 did not charge Germany and her allies with responsibility for the war, but merely recorded the fact that Germany had declared war, and in this sense was the author of the war, and that, even without the repeal of this Article, Germany should not scruple to join the League of Nations, and could do so without loss of honour or dignity. Such an interpretation cannot be maintained even by taking the letter of the Article as decisive and ignoring the spirit of it. To force on a war is to be responsible for it. But the question is not what the Article says, but what its authors meant it to say, and what the German people (when it learnt its purport) and the German National Assembly (when it negotiated with regard to it) and the German plenipotentiaries (when they signed it) saw in it, and what the whole world has read into it and was intended to be read into it. There is no manner of doubt that the intention of the Allied and Associated Powers in this Article was to brand Germany with the responsibility for having conceived and prepared the war beforehand, and that the German people, the German Government, the German plenipotentiaries and the world at large regarded Article 231 as the expression of this intention. At the very outset of the speech in which Count Brockdorff-Rantzau replied with courage and candour to the utterances of Clemenceau in handing over the Conditions of Peace, protest was made against the demand that Germany should admit sole responsibility for the war. Brockdorff-Rantzau said: “We are asked to admit that we alone were responsible for the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Köster in a collection of essays published by Dr. Wilhelm Ziegler under the title “Deutschland und die Schuldfrage (Germany and the War Guilt question)” (Verlag für Politik und Wirtschaft) attempted to show that Article 231 merely laid down an obligation under Civil—*i.e.*, national—Law to make reparation for damage caused. Dr. Eugen Fischer, Secretary to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee of Enquiry, refuted him with the argument that such a Civil Law obligation must have applied to all belligerent countries who caused damages.

war. Any such admission in my mouth would be a lie." In the Note of 13 May he again protested against Article 231, rejecting the idea which underlies the Treaty that the liability to make reparation is based on the sole responsibility of Germany for the war. "The German people", so the Note reads, "never wished for war, and would never have waged a war of aggression. In the mind of the German people it was always a war in self-defence. Nor do the German delegates share the view of the Allied and Associated Governments as to who is responsible for causing this war. They are not prepared to saddle the former German Government with the sole and principal responsibility for this war. In the draft Peace Treaty, which has been laid before us, there is nothing which lends the support of facts to the view of the Allied and Associated Governments. That view rests on no sort of proof. The German Delegates accordingly request that the Report of the Commission set up by the Allied and Associated Governments to enquire into the responsibility for causing the war should be laid before them."

To this Clemenceau replied that in Mr. Lansing's Note of 5 November, 1918, to which the German Delegates had appealed as the fundamental authority for the conditions in their main outlines of the Armistice and of the Peace, mention was made of the damages caused by Germany's "aggression" by land, on sea and in the air. In not protesting against this expression Germany had tacitly admitted that she was the aggressor. To the reference in the German Note to the absence of proof for Germany's sole responsibility for the war Clemenceau made no reply. The request for the Commission of Enquiry's Report he rejected.

If Count Brockdorff-Rantzau's speech and the exchange of the Notes cited above are sufficient to show that the German delegates saw in Article 231 an accusation of Germany's sole responsibility for the war, the above

utterances reveal even more clearly the enemy view that Germany designedly caused the war.

That Article 231 was intended to embody this accusation appears from the Report by the Committee appointed by the Peace Conference in Versailles to investigate the question of war guilt. This concoction, probably the most superficial and unvarnished document which was ever made to serve as the foundation for a contention of such vast significance, opens with the following sentence:

“The Commission having examined the various official records relating to the origin of the war, and the violations of neutrality and frontiers which accompanied the beginning of the war, has ascertained in regard to the question of responsibility for the war that the responsibility rests in its entirety on those Powers which declared the war in the pursuit of a policy of aggression, the concealment of which lends to the origin of this war the character of a secret conspiracy against the peace of Europe. This responsibility rests in the first instance on Germany and Austria, and in the second instance on Turkey and Bulgaria.”

In harmony with this introduction the first Section of the Report bears the title “Previous intention to make war”. The authors of the Report, the lawyer Sir Ernest Pollock for Great Britain, André Tardieu for France, Scialoja for Italy and Rolin-Jacquemins for Belgium, summarize the results of their investigations as follows:

“The war was planned beforehand by the Central Powers and by their allies Turkey and Bulgaria, and is the result of proceedings which were purposely and intentionally designed to make it inevitable. In agreement with Austria-Hungary Germany purposely laboured to side-track the various mediatory proposals of the Entente Powers, and to bring to nothing their repeated efforts to avoid war.”

Such is the Report, for the communication of which Count Brockdorff-Rantzau pressed in the Note of 13 May, and which Clemenceau refused to communicate to him on the ground that the papers of the Peace Conference could not be communicated to any Power which had not taken part in it. It came, however, through unofficial channels into the hands of the German Peace Delegation, and was answered by the statements of facts which were drawn up by Prof. Hans Delbrück, Count Max Montgelas, Max Weber and Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdi, and sent to the Peace Delegations of the Entente on 27 May, 1919, under the title "Observations on the Report of the Commission of the Allied and Associated Governments to inquire into the responsibility for the war", and subsequently published in a German White Book.

The reply to this collection of facts, in which even then the ill-founded charges of the enemy Peace Delegations were crushingly refuted (though naturally without the weight of evidence which is now available) is the Covering Note of 16 June, in which all the objections of the German Peace Delegation to the Treaty of Versailles, with slight exceptions, were finally rejected. The sentences of the Covering Note, which refer to the question of responsibility for the war, contain, in conjunction with the Report of the Commission of Enquiry, the authoritative interpretation of Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles. It is in the charges here formulated against Germany and her allies that the so-called War Guilt Lie is to be sought—here and nowhere else—; and all who have to deal with this question must always keep them before their eyes, since they were, and are, in the design of the Entente, the justification for the Peace of Versailles. They run as follows:

“ The Allied and Associated Powers therefore feel it necessary to begin their reply by a clear statement of the judgment passed upon the war by practically the whole of civilized mankind.

“ In the view of the Allied and Associated Powers the war which began on August 1st, 1914, was the greatest crime against humanity and the freedom of peoples that any nation, calling itself civilized, has ever consciously committed. For many years the rulers of Germany, true to the Prussian tradition, strove for a position of dominance in Europe. They were not satisfied with that growing prosperity and influence to which Germany was entitled, and which all other nations were willing to accord her, in the society of free and equal peoples. They required that they should be able to dictate and tyrannize to a subservient Europe, as they dictated and tyrannized over a subservient Germany.

“ In order to attain their ends they used every channel in their power through which to educate their own subjects in the doctrine that might was right in international affairs. They never ceased to expand German armaments by land and sea, and to propagate the falsehood that this was necessary because Germany's neighbours were jealous of her prosperity and power. They sought to sow hostility and suspicion instead of friendship between nations. They developed a system of espionage and intrigue which enabled them to stir up internal rebellion and unrest and even to make secret offensive preparations within the territory of their neighbours whereby they might, when the moment came, strike them down with greater certainty and ease. They kept Europe in a ferment by threats of violence, and, when they found that their neighbours were resolved to resist their arrogant will, they determined to assert their predominance in Europe by force.

“ As soon as their preparations were complete, they encouraged a subservient ally to declare war against Serbia at 48 hours' notice, knowing full well that a conflict involving the control of the Balkans could not

be localized, and almost certainly meant a general war. In order to make doubly sure, they refused every attempt at conciliation and conference until it was too late, and the world war was inevitable for which they had plotted and for which alone among the nations they were fully equipped and prepared."

There emerges clearly and unmistakably from these words what the Treaty of Versailles wishes to be understood by the expression "war guilt"—*i.e.*, responsibility for the war. The rulers of Germany and Prussia and their Governments are accused of the greatest crime in the history of the world; and the whole German people is charged with complicity in the crime, because it tolerated its rulers and Governments. It is to be shown up as the most contemptible people on earth, in order that the Peace Conference may appear in the light of an impartial tribunal and the Treaty yoke in the light of a just punishment. The conflict in regard to the question of responsibility for the war has been complicated and confused by the fact that a number of those who have undertaken Germany's defence have not distinguished with sufficient clearness between the conception of cunning, criminal responsibility, as clearly defined in the passage quoted above, and responsibility in the sense of erroneous policy. Important as the discussion of errors of policy on either side is in any estimate of the origins of the war, such discussion is without significance, so far as the problem of responsibility in the sense of the Treaty of Versailles is concerned. It is the monstrous accusations of the Note of 16 June, 1925, which we have to refute; and their refutation is sufficient to deprive the Versailles Treaty of all moral basis.

When MacDonald told the Assembly of the League of Nations at Geneva that the question of responsibility for the war could not be answered for half a century, he pronounced an annihilating condemnation on those who were prepared to answer the question half a year after the close

of the war with the intolerant assurance of the Covering Note ; but it was not the responsibility in the sense of the Treaty of Versailles that he can have had in view. The question of the responsibility, in the sense on which the Treaty of Versailles is built up, can be answered to-day. It was possible even without waiting for the publication of the archives.

The last traces of the brand, which the Treaty of Versailles set on the German people and its Governments, can be wiped out even to-day. It is possible to prove the untruth of each one of the sentences cited of the Note of 16 June and of Article 231 on which that Note is a commentary.

The obscurity as to the conception of responsibility in the sense of the Treaty of Versailles has led to an admission, at any rate between the lines, of part responsibility by Germany in the reply of the German Peace Delegation of 27 May, 1919 ; and German writers, who have written against the War Guilt Lie, are even on their guard against being thought to be concerned to prove Germany's complete innocence in regard to the outbreak of the war. They take this line with the laudable intention of avoiding objections on the ground that they prove too much. They forget that such admissions of Germany's part responsibility have no relevance in connection with the Treaty of Versailles. The "sole responsibility" for the war, with which the Treaty of Versailles charges Germany, is not the responsibility of which these writers are thinking when they make such admissions. The responsibility which they have in mind is that which arises out of errors of policy. But it is not this kind of responsibility which is contemplated in Article 231 and its interpretation in the Covering Note. The Treaty and the Note assert that Germany alone of all the Powers of the world desired the war, and intentionally provoked it, and base on this charge of premeditated guilt, and on this alone, the right of the victorious States to inflict terrible penalties. It is for us to destroy the basis



of this right, and to show clearly and unequivocally without admissions of any kind that, in the sense in which the conception of responsibility figures in the Treaty of Versailles, Germany is not even in part responsible for the war, and that, so far from desiring the war, she was afraid of it.

But the proof with which the War Guilt Lie is confuted, can already, with the historical material which is available, be extended beyond the limits of the defensive; it can attempt attack. It can be shown with complete certainty that, in the case of at least two of our enemies, the opposite charge in great measure lies; and that the Governments who were responsible in the last few years before the war for the policy of Russia and France, if they did not actually let loose the war with intention in the months of July and August, 1914, at any rate had long prepared for it, contributed to it, and hoped that it would come.

## PART ONE

GERMANY'S POLICY OF PEACE  
FROM THE PEACE OF FRANKFORT TO THE  
ASCENSION OF WILLIAM II



## CHAPTER I

### THE EMS TELEGRAM AND THE PEACE OF FRANKFORT

IT is not alone against the Government of my Father, the Emperor William II, that the Note of 16 June brings the charge of having caused and promoted "the greatest crime against humanity and the freedom of peoples", in the shape of the war which broke out on 1 August, 1914: it further alleges that those who were responsible for the Government of Germany had for long years pursued the goal of this crime, and that this goal was hegemony in Europe "true to the Prussian tradition". The Note does not say clearly and unequivocally whether these efforts to attain hegemony in Europe are to be limited to the period since the struggle for German unity, that is to say to the epoch of William I and Bismarck; but the words "true to the Prussian tradition" justify the conclusion that their authors conceive that they have discovered the roots of the "crime" at any rate as far back as the eighteenth century, and perhaps that they even make my ancestors responsible for the outbreak of this war as far back as the Great Elector himself. The leading statesmen of England and France gave expression to this idea in numerous speeches delivered during the war; and in the book, which he published in answer to my Father's memoirs with the title *Réponse au Kaiser*, Viviani makes "the spirit of crude violence instilled

into the Prussian people by the Hohenzollerns" responsible for the war. Indeed he accuses Prussian literature, Prussian science and Prussian philosophy of having inculcated, glorified and practised the doctrine of conquest for conquest's sake and war for war's sake, not to improve the lot of the population, but merely to strengthen the power of the State. And this conclusion is affirmed by Chapter VII of the Reply of the Allied and Associated powers to the German counter-proposals to the Conditions of Peace, the Chapter devoted to the assertion of Germany's responsibility for the war, in which the responsibility for the war is laid clearly and unmistakably on the shoulders of long past generations of the Prussian people. It is said in this Chapter:

"The whole history of Prussia has been one of domination, aggression and war. Hypnotised by the success with which Bismarck, following the tradition of Frederick the Great, robbed the neighbours of Prussia and forged the unity of Germany through blood and iron, the German people after 1871 submitted practically without reserve to the inspiration and the leadership of their Prussian rulers.

"The Prussian spirit was not content that Germany should occupy a great and influential place in a Council of equal nations to which she was entitled, and which she had secured. It could be satisfied with nothing less than supreme and autocratic power. At a time, therefore, when the western nations were seriously endeavouring to limit armaments, to substitute friendship for rivalry in international affairs, and to lay the foundations of a new era in which all nations should co-operate in amity in the conduct of the world's affairs, the rulers of Germany were restlessly sowing suspicion and hostility among all her neighbours, were conspiring with every element of unrest in every land, and were steadily increasing Germany's armaments and con-

solidating her military and naval power. They mobilized all the resources at their command, the universities, the press, the pulpit, the whole machinery of governmental authority, to indoctrinate their gospel of hatred and force, so that when the time came the German people might respond to their call. As a result, in the later years of the nineteenth century and during the twentieth century, the whole policy of Germany was bent towards securing for herself a position from which she could dominate and dictate."

I do not regard it as part of my task to refute these accusations, based as they are either on no proof at all or on obvious falsifications of history, in so far as they refer to the period before the founding of the German Empire. It is a vain task to bring these charges into any connection with the origins of the war of 1914. Their point, moreover, is blunted by the mere fact that they appear in a document which bears the signature of a Frenchman, and are adduced in the name of Governments of countries, whose whole history is a record of struggle for hegemony in Europe, and indeed in the world, by way of war and conquest. It is not to be taken seriously when a citizen of the State whose people once accorded almost divine honours to a Louis XIV and to a Napoleon Bonaparte, attacks the Prussia of Frederick the Great for having waged wars with no other aim than conquest. And I may add that one needs only to compare the sentence of the *Roi Soleil*, "L'Etat c'est Moi!" with that of my great ancestor, "The King is the first servant of the State", in order to illuminate as with a searchlight the utter groundlessness of the charge that the Hohenzollerns raised Prussia to the rank of a great Power merely to strengthen the position of their House, and not for the benefit of their subjects.

The whole history of England and France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is the history of a struggle for hegemony in Europe, while the history of

Prussia during those centuries is the history of a struggle for existence. When a citizen of that people, which, on the hundredth anniversary of the death of Napoleon, I made pilgrimages to the grave of the Corsican in the Invalides as to a sacred national relic, which still to-day sees in the Arc de Triomphe, the stones of which are covered only with the names of battles won and victorious Generals, the monument of French glory; and has found no worthier resting place for the Unknown Soldier than the soil beneath this triumphal arch; when a citizen of that people speaks of the struggle for hegemony in Europe by means of war and conquest as a Prussian tradition, and seeks to brand such struggle as a crime; he is as intolerable as the Gracchi complaining of sedition.

But, even if the assertion that Prussia has aimed at hegemony in Europe since the days of the Great Elector and Frederick the Great were true, no Frenchman, no Englishman is entitled to bring such a charge against the Prussian people and its rulers, for Englishmen and Frenchmen still honour most those of their own rulers who have had this self-same aim. When militarism and the enthusiastic admiration of armies, which was born in Prussia of necessity but in France and England out of the lust for power, is stigmatized as a despicable, criminal and uncivilised phenomenon of Prussian barbarism, I for my part would like to ask how it is that almost every military term in all European languages is French. That can hardly be coincidence, one would say; it can only be due to the fact that the militarist spirit, embodied in forms and organizations with French names, had its origin in France.

Prince Bülow, in the admirable chapter of his book *Imperial Germany*<sup>1</sup> on "The Beginnings of Militarism", has developed the thesis that the Prussian Army and its peculiar influence on Prussian history were an inevitable consequence of the geographical position of the Prussian State, which, unlike its neighbours, was without a single

<sup>1</sup> New and revised edition, Cassell & Co., London, n.d. [1916], page 135.

protected boundary. The Prussian army was a means of defence, and not a weapon of conquest ; and it is precisely for this reason that it was the object of so much affection, and was so highly developed, and played so important a part in Prussian and German history. "In the great wars", Prince Bülow writes, "which Prussia has had to wage during the last two hundred and fifty years, her soil escaped the havoc wrought by hostile armies in battle only in the wars of 1866 and 1870-71. Fehrbellin and Zorndorf, Eylau and Friedland, the Katzbach, Grossbeeren and Wartenburg, tell the story of the past, when the liberty and life of both land and people depended on the success or defeat of the army. In this world war the names of Tannenberg, Angerburg and Mülhausen have been added to the old list. History taught us early, and has not allowed us to forget, that our defence force has its first and noblest *raison d'être* in the protection and defence of the Fatherland."

When, in spite of these undisputed historical facts, the leading men of peoples, which for centuries have made the soil of Germany the battlefield of their struggles for dominance of the world, bring such accusations against Prussia, the intention to falsify history for the political object of providing foundation for the War Guilt Lie is so obvious that detailed refutation is superfluous. The right to make such charges is not to be recognized in the case of men who glorify in the case of their own country what in Prussia they arraign. How can an Italian statesman attack the Hohenzollerns for having assumed the leadership in the struggle for the unity of the German tribes, when he acclaims the House of Savoy for assuming the leadership in the struggle for Italian unity and for becoming thereby the sovereigns of that country? How can an English statesman attack Prussia and Germany for having risen by hard struggles to the rank of a great power, when there is nothing of which he is himself prouder than of the fact that Great Britain has obtained the mastery of a third part of the globe by forcible suppression of every other maritime



power? How can a French statesman accuse Prussia and Germany of aspirations to world hegemony as of a crime, when he regards the conquests of Louis XIV and of the first and third Napoleons as heroic achievements in the service of his country, and treats the vast colonial empire which France has won with blood and iron as an inviolable heritage?

To refute the charges of the so-called historical background of the Note of 16 June, it is sufficient to show that its authors are compelled to deny the whole history of their own countries, if they wish to be taken seriously. In this book in particular these charges require no refutation, for the reason that their connection with the question of responsibility is at best extremely loose.

The same thing cannot be said of the charges which have been made against the policy of Prussia and of Germany in the era of the Emperor William the First and Bismarck, for in regard to this period they assume the substantial form of an outspoken accusation of the definite intention to make war in order to attain world hegemony through conquest. For this reason I propose to discuss these charges, although the accusation, even if it were proved, would demonstrate nothing in regard to the responsibility of Germany for the late war.

The first six volumes of the great series of archives of the German Foreign Office have overwhelmingly refuted the assertion put forward by French historians that Prince Bismarck, after the conclusion of the Peace of Frankfort, was continually looking for opportunities to wage another war which would make France incapable of aggression for all time. The archives, which leave scarcely a single point in doubt with regard to the motives of Bismarck's policy, show that the governing idea of German policy throughout the two decades after 1870 was the maintenance of peace, and that it was Bismarck's statesmanship which on numerous occasions during this period preserved the peace when it was threatened by others. Before I come

to these moments of international crisis in the reign of my great-grandfather, I propose to attempt to lay the ghost of the legend which French politicians and historians still evoke to account for the war of 1870, and which also plays a certain rôle in the attempts to establish Germany's responsibility for the world war.

It is said that the war of 1870 was designedly promoted by Bismarck in order to secure hegemony for Germany in Europe; and Bismarck is said to have been guilty of a falsification of history to this end in the shape of the falsification of the so-called Ems telegram. The assertion must be met with a sheer contradiction. The war, which led to the unity of Germany, was beyond all doubt desired by France. Even the assertion that Bismarck was behind the candidature of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern for the Spanish Throne, and promoted the candidature with a view to provoking war between France and Prussia, is at variance with the plain historical facts. The candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern was put forward without any initiative on the part of the Prussian Government, and considerably to the annoyance of King William, by the Spanish Cabinet; and Bismarck in advising King William, who wished to oppose the candidature, not to do so was by no means of the opinion that the interests of France would suffer if a Hohenzollern were to sit on the Spanish Throne. In his *Reflections and Reminiscences*,<sup>1</sup> he records that, on the night after the battle of Sedan, he replied to one of the officers who was riding with him to Donchery and who inquired about the preliminaries to the war, that he had thought Prince Leopold would be no unwelcome neighbour in Spain to the Emperor Napoleon, and would travel to Madrid via Paris in order to get into touch with French policy, forming as it did a part of the conditions under which he would have to govern Spain. We should have been much more justified, he added, in dreading a close understanding between the Spanish and French crowns than in

<sup>1</sup> Published by Smith, Elder & Co., London, 1898, Vol. II, page 86.

hoping for the restoration of a Spanish-German anti-French constellation after the analogy of Charles V. A King of Spain could only carry out Spanish policy, and the Prince, by assuming the crown of the country, would become a Spaniard. Prince Leopold (of whose presence in the darkness Bismarck then for the first time became aware) immediately protested against this assertion, as was only natural in a Prince of Hohenzollern and a German officer on the battlefield of Sedan. Bismarck could only repeat that, as King of Spain, the Prince could have allowed himself to be guided by Spanish interests only, and prominent among these, in view of strengthening his new Kingdom, would have been a soothing treatment of his powerful neighbour beyond the Pyrenees. Bismarck was far too much of a *Realpolitiker* to entertain delusions as to the power of dynastic influences as against interests of State; and he thought that Paris would take the same view. Accordingly, he did not regard the passion, which seized on the French Government and (under the inspiration of its Press) the French people, when the candidature of Prince Leopold was announced, as sincere: on the contrary he regarded it as an artificial excitement designed to enable the French Government at length to seize the opportunity, with the support of the whole French people, for a final reckoning with the conqueror of Sadowa.

It is not to be denied, and Bismarck himself, in his *Reflections and Reminiscences* admits it without compunction, that this war, which France desired and he himself regarded as inevitable, was very welcome, since the crowning of his life's work, the union of the German tribes in the Reich was only possible after a reckoning with France, who was opposed to such union and prepared to prevent it by every means in her power. Those who are prepared to attack Bismarck on these grounds must on the same grounds attack Cavour, for Cavour longed for the war with Austria, without which the union of Italy was not possible, with perhaps even more eagerness than Bismarck longed for

war with France. That France desired the war is plain from the disappointment with which the news of Prince Leopold's renunciation of his candidature to the Spanish Throne was received in Paris. The speech, which Grammont delivered on 6 July, 1870, to the Corps Législatif, was in itself (as Bismarck writes) an official threat with the hand on the hilt, before which Prussia could no longer retire without humiliation. The firmest "will to war" speaks in the words of the French Foreign Minister: "We do not conceive that respect for the rights of a neighbouring people constrains us to tolerate the placing by a foreign Power of one of its Princes on the throne of Charles V . . . the event will not occur: of that we are quite assured . . . should it be otherwise, we should know how to do our duty without hesitation and without weakness."

If any doubt were left as to France's "will to war" on this occasion, it became unmistakable when, after the renunciation by Prince Leopold, at which King William breathed again, France made the notorious demand to the King, the rejection of which led to the war, to bind himself for all time by an undertaking that no Prince of Hohenzollern should ever sit upon the Spanish Throne. France had not the vestige of a right to advance her claim; she could only anticipate its rejection. She only advanced it in order to provoke the war.

French historians seek to make it appear as though the war would never have come in spite of the rejection for self-evident reasons of this unparalleled demand, if Bismarck had not communicated the news of its repudiation to the Prussian Legations in foreign countries and to the public by transforming the Ems telegram of Herr Abeken, as Moltke said, from "a parley" to "a flourish in answer to a challenge". The form which he gave to the publication of the telegram is still described in France as a falsification of history. We know now that the contrary is the case. The picture which he gave of the incident at Ems was entirely correct; he arrived at it intuitively from the feeling

that his Sovereign could never have rejected the shameless demand of Count Benedetti in as mild a manner as the Ems telegram of Herr Abeken indicated. In the year 1921 there was published, as a *Festschrift* in connection with the tenth anniversary of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft, from the family archives of the Prussian Royal House the description which King William I wrote down himself with regard to his conversation with Benedetti at Ems. As was the habit of the King in recording important conversations with political personages, the conversation is recorded in dialogue form and in the same language in which it was conducted, in the present instance in French. It clearly reveals that the picture of this historical scene, painted by Bismarck in his published announcement based on the Ems telegram, in no sense gives a sharper turn to the King's treatment of Benedetti than the fact warranted. This little-known record, as Herr Granier who published it rightly says, leaves nothing of the story of falsification of the Ems telegram intact. For this reason it is here reproduced (in translation) in its entirety:

“ As I was making my walk on the promenade by the Pump Room as usual between 8 and 10 o'clock, Lt.-Col. Prince Radziwill [the King's A.D.C.] brought me a telegram from Paris, which Count Benedetti had that moment sent me, with the news from Madrid that the Prince of Hohenzollern had officially communicated to the Spanish Government his son's withdrawal of his acceptance of the Spanish Crown. As I had not myself received the news at the time, I sent word to this effect to Count Benedetti, thanking him warmly for the communication of news of such importance. Having completed my walk, I was proceeding to go home when I met Count Benedetti near the building of the Management. I went up to him and giving him my hand said [from this point onwards the report is written in French] : ‘ I am glad to meet

you, so that I can thank you personally for the important communication which you have just made to me. You see that you have better and earlier information at this moment than I have myself; for I have not yet received this good news direct. I have only had a private telegram [from Prince Antony of Hohenzollern—*Note by the Editor*] to the effect that Prince Leopold would probably renounce the Crown. That ends this incident, which, from the way in which it has been taken in your country might have brought our two nations into variance.'

"BENEDETTI: 'Certainly, Majesty, this news is very gratifying; and we can only congratulate ourselves on the decision of the Prince of Hohenzollern. As, however, it is only the father of the Hereditary Prince who has made the communication in the name of the latter, we must still wait until the latter confirms his renunciation.'

"I replied that this last demand appeared humiliating for the Prince of Hohenzollern, since quite certainly a decision of such importance could only have been officially communicated with the previous knowledge and agreement of his son. I added that I was still without any direct official communication from the Prince: I should probably receive such a communication in the course of the day, and would communicate it to him.

"BENEDETTI: 'It might help to remove the difficulty of the absence of a statement by Prince Leopold, if Your Majesty were willing to tell us that you undertake never to permit Prince Leopold again to consider acceptance of the Spanish Throne, should it again be offered to him.'

"MYSELF (not concealing my astonishment at such an idea): 'You are asking me for a statement which I cannot possibly give. In circumstances of such gravity one can never bind oneself beforehand. Such

questions come up under new forms and with new meanings [in French "conjectures"] and so forth, and require new and careful consideration before taking decisions of such consequence. I may add that I am convinced that Prince Leopold will not a second time think of allowing his name to be put forward in such a connection, now that he has seen the political complications which result.'

"BENEDETTI: 'It is certainly not probable, after the experiences which the Prince has had, that he will return to the project which he appears to have abandoned; but we have no assurance of that. If Your Majesty will give us the statement which I have suggested, the affair is at once and for ever concluded.'

"MYSELF: 'I must repeat that I cannot possibly make a statement which would so bind my hands: no one in my position would do so. Take the following case: Suppose yourself, as the head of your family, to have given your consent to the marriage of a member of your family, and suppose the engaged couple after some time to desire to cancel the engagement. Suppose a third party, who is against the marriage, to bind you thereupon to give your word that you will never give your assent, if the young people after mature consideration should desire to renew their engagement, being convinced that their happiness is dependent thereon. What position would you be in then in regard to the third party, if you were yourself convinced that the happiness of your relation was dependent on the union?'

"BENEDETTI: 'Oh! that would only be a private matter. It is not of such significance as a question of high policy, which is on the point of having the most disastrous consequences for ourselves.'

"MYSELF: 'But who will undertake that the Emperor Napoleon will not himself find at some future time that the Prince of Hohenzollern is the best

candidate for the Spanish Throne? What could I do then, if I had given him the formal undertaking, which you ask of me?’

“BENEDETTI: ‘But that will never happen. Public opinion against this candidature is too strongly engaged for the Emperor ever to be able to contemplate the possibility of its revival. The excitement in Paris and in my country is growing from hour to hour, and justifies the worst apprehensions if Your Majesty does not make the statement which I demand [in French “sollicite”].’

“MYSELF: ‘I might myself assert, with the same right with which you say that the Emperor will never return to the Hohenzollern candidature, that the statement made by the Prince’s father has closed the incident of the candidature for ever.’

“BENEDETTI (after a pause): ‘Now, Majesty, may I write to my Government that Your Majesty has agreed to state that you will never permit Prince Leopold to take up the candidature in question again?’

“At these words I took some steps backwards, and said in a very earnest tone: ‘It appears to me, Mr. Ambassador, that I have explained to you so clearly and unequivocally that I can never make such a statement, that I have nothing more to add.’ I then took off my hat, and left him.”

Who can maintain, in view of these notes written with his own hand while the memory of the occurrence was fresh in his mind by a Sovereign whose painful accuracy in the reproduction of his conversations is beyond all doubt, that Bismarck falsified history, when he reproduced this conversation and its sequel with the brevity indicated by its object as follows:

“After the news of the renunciation of the Hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern had been officially com-



municated to the Imperial Government of France by the Royal Government of Spain, the French Ambassador at Ems further demanded of His Majesty the King that he would authorize him to telegraph to Paris that His Majesty the King had bound Himself for all future time never again to give his consent if the Hohenzollerns should renew their candidature. His Majesty the King thereupon decided not to receive the French Ambassador again, and sent to tell him through the aide-de-camp on duty that His Majesty had nothing further to communicate to the Ambassador."

The communication by the A.D.C., to which reference is here made, which figures also in Abeken's report, was therefore only a repetition of the rejection which the French Ambassador had received from the King direct.

France had thus received from the King, on the public promenade at Ems, the refusal which was the inevitable retort to the demand which she had put forward, accompanied by wild menaces, unaccompanied by justification, and designed solely to humiliate the recipient. The national pride of France could not bear the publication of this diplomatic reverse. France accordingly declared war. She hoped by this war to establish for all time her hegemony in Europe of the past ten years. The French historians still maintain that she was justified on ethical grounds and on grounds of international law in waging this war, and they destroy thereby the force of the historical arguments of the Covering Note.

France declared war because she feared that the shattering of her prestige might also shake her hegemony in Europe. The Germans, on the other hand, welcomed the declaration of war, not because they hoped by the destruction of the disturbers of the peace to inherit the French position in the world, but because it was only through this war that the union of the German tribes, the

ideal which had dominated the nineteenth century for all Germans, could be fulfilled. That ideal the French regard in the case of Italy as the most honourable of aspirations; in the case of Germany they brand it as a crime.

What Germany hoped for, and obtained as the result of Union, was not the hegemony of Europe, but the position of equality with the great Powers, which was due to her in virtue of her contributions to humanity in the field of culture, and had so long been denied her. The story of the origin of the war of 1870 thus represents exactly the opposite of what the Allied Powers in their answer to the German objections to the Peace Treaty assert. It was not the Prussian spirit, not content with a high and influential place for Germany in the counsels of the nations as an equal amongst equals, that was responsible for the war of 1870, as the Allies asserted, but the Gallic spirit of unmeasured arrogance, inherited from the Bourbons by the First and Second Empires, which would not be content to step down a place in consequence of Germany's rise, and to abdicate hegemony in favour of equality of rights. The real origin of the war of 1870 was the unwillingness of France to accord to the German people the right to that position of influence in the counsels of the nations which the Covering Note says was never denied her.

It was on these grounds alone, to enable Germany to maintain such a position, and not to secure for her the hegemony of Europe, that Bismarck resolved, after a successful war, to reunite with Germany the Provinces which had been taken from her two hundred years before. The Rhine was not enough : the boundary of the Vosges was necessary, if Germany was to be protected against new French aggressions ; and the experience of a thousand years was there to show that such would not be lacking, if Germany failed to assert her rights to recover that which was hers by right. A people, which demanded revenge for Prussia's victory at Sadowa, would undoubtedly seek revenge for the wound it had received in its own person

at Sedan. Bismarck gave expression to this conviction in the circular, which he addressed to the European Powers on 13 September, 1870, informing them that he would ask for the return of Alsace and Lorraine, in the following words, which accurately appraise the French national character :

“ It is the defeat in itself, it is the victorious repulse of their wanton aggression, which the French will never forgive us. If we were now to withdraw from France without any cession of territory, without any indemnity, without any advantages other than the fame of our arms, the same hate and the same lust for revenge for the affront to their vanity and their spirit of domination would remain in the French nation ; and they would wait only for the day when these feelings could be effectively translated into action. It was no question as to the justice of our cause, or fear that we were not strong enough, which held us back in the year 1867 from the war which then seemed imminent, but the unwillingness by our victory to excite those passions, and to evoke an era of mutual bitterness and perpetually renewed wars. By careful cultivation of peaceful relations we hoped with the lapse of time to create a firm basis for an era of peace and prosperity for both nations. Now that we have been forced into a war, to which we were opposed, we must endeavour to obtain better guarantees for our defence against the next French attack than that of their goodwill.”

Wilson is, therefore, wrong when he asserts, in the eighth of his Fourteen Points, that the wrong done by Prussia to France in 1870 in respect of Alsace and Lorraine had poisoned the peace of Europe for fifty years. It was the victory of Sedan, and not the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, which threatened the peace of Europe. The

annexation, that is, the enforced surrender of these districts, was no wrong, but on the contrary the reparation of a wrong done to Germany.

No Frenchman will ever willingly admit such a thing ; and French historians still deny that Louis XIV robbed Germany of this territory. Indeed there are in France historians and publicists of repute, whom it is necessary to take seriously—I will mention only Maurice Barrès—who claim that the Alsatians are not German at all, but Celtic, that the great cathedral that Erwin von Steinbach built in Strassburg was really the work of “Hervé de Pierrefonds”, a French architect whose name had unfortunately been barbarized, and that the population of Alsace throughout the Middle Ages groaned under the German yoke and greeted Louis XIV as a Liberator, and that no German ever in the least regretted the loss of these German territories.

The French language itself proclaims these legends to be mendacious. The whole of Germany is named in French after the German tribe which inhabits Alsace. How German these territories have remained after two hundred years of French rule may be seen from a single proof which every Frenchman must regard as incontestable. In the year 1892 the *Figaro* sent a circular letter to leading German politicians, scholars and writers, with the object of ascertaining what was thought in Germany with regard to the return of Alsace-Lorraine, or its exchange for French colonies, or transformation into a neutral State. Amongst the replies to this enquiry, which appeared in the *Figaro* of 5 March, 1892, is one from Prof. Lujo Brentano. I give it here, or a part of it, *verbatim*, because it is significant of the attitude of men so moderate, so peace-loving and so much in favour of an understanding with France as the well-known economist of Munich was and is. I quote it also principally because of a passage in it which contains the proof of which I spoke above.

Brentano's answer reads (in translation) as follows :

“ Dear Sir,

“ You put to me a number of questions with regard to Alsace-Lorraine, which I answer only at your pressing request, and in the hope that you will not take it ill of me if I speak quite frankly. I regard the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France, or the transformation of these territories into a neutral State, as entirely out of the question.

“ No equivalent, whether in the form of money or in the form of the cession of Tonkin or Madagascar, would ever be accepted by the German people. The explanation of this attitude is to be sought in the pages of History. Strassburg was torn from Germany in peacetime by Louis XIV. The sense of this shameful injustice has never been extinguished in the consciousness of the German people, particularly since Alsace, throughout the time that it was French, was invariably the door through which France invaded Germany. Germany will never agree to this territory, so full of perils for her security, being again in foreign hands, so long as guns and rifles decide the fate of nations in Europe. I am not disposed to deny that many of the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine are still German against their will, and have sacrificed their sentiments to the political interests of Germany with bitterness at heart. Nor do I deny that the decision of Germany to incorporate Alsace-Lorraine for the sake of her own security has cost that territory heavy sacrifices in money and in men. But you should not exaggerate the number of Alsatians and Lorrainers whose love for France prevails over their other interests. The mass of the Alsatian people under French rule never became French. I trust that you will not think that in so saying I am actuated by the least intention to wound your feelings : but you may feel that I am the prey of utopian illusions. Should this be so, allow me to cite to you classic authority for my assertion.

In the year 1869, that is to say just before the war, MM. Charles Kestner, Louis Chauffour, J. B. Rudolf, Dr. Klippel, Alfred Köchlin and August Scherer of Mülhausen addressed an appeal in German to the workers of Alsace-Lorraine. Why in German, and not in French? They answer the question themselves as follows: 'Simply because the majority, the overwhelming majority, of the Alsatian people thinks German, feels German, talks German, receives its religious instruction in German, lives in accordance with German ideas, and will never forget the German language. A great number of them, it is true, talk, write and read French as well; but even those who have learnt French feel and converse with one another in German; and it is for this reason that we address them in the language of their mothers, the language of their childhood, the language in which they educate their children and caress them, in which they woo their wives, and seek comfort when their parents are taken from them by death.'

Is it possible to find more glowing words, to prove that the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine were still German to the marrow after two hundred years of French rule, than those of these Alsations, who two years later in the National Assembly of Bordeaux solemnly protested against the Peace of Frankfort? Can, in view of this truly classic testimony, the assertion which has been repeated for fifty years be still maintained, that we "tore a piece out of France's flesh" in 1871, and severed Alsace-Lorraine from the *mère patrie* (to employ this ever recurring pleonastic expression)? How does one know the mother of a child if not by the fact that the child speaks the language of its mother, that it thinks and feels like its mother, and that both are bound by the tie of common manners and customs? If this is so, then in the view of the representatives of the Alsatian people themselves the *mère patrie* of

Alsace-Lorraine is Germany, and France is at most the stepmother who for two hundred years has alienated the children from their natural mother.

In regard to the assertion that the population of Alsace greeted Louis XIV with enthusiasm as their sovereign, and that the loss of Strassburg was regretted by no single German, I will cite only two contemporary witnesses. In the year 1664 the honest Strassburg master shoemaker, Matthias Tauberer, wrote in his "Hausbüchlein" as follows: "Three weeks before Easter came hither that Masserin (Mazarin) and would fain bring the citie under his yoke; and the citizens were in great fear here in the citie; but God hath preserved us therefrom, and may He so continue!" When later the French had their way and entered Strassburg, the same local chronicler wrote: "Anno 1673 hath God punished us with the French." And in the year 1681 the stout-hearted Liselotte of the Palatinate, Duchesse d'Orléans, who had preserved her German heart at the French Court, wrote to her brother: "I wept aloud when I rode with the King into the old German Imperial City."

The "wrong" which Germany committed in 1871, which is said to have disturbed the peace of Europe for fifty years, is found then to consist solely in having included in the German Empire without their express assent the population of a territory which spoke German, thought German and felt German. If that was a wrong, then the Powers who dictated to us the Peace Treaties of 1919 have lost for ever the right to bring it up against us; for in those same Treaties they have not only committed the same wrong, which in our case they will not forgive, but they have torn from Germany and Austria populations which speak German, think German and feel German, whereas the Alsatians never spoke, thought or felt French. They have done so, although in accepting the Fourteen Points of Wilson as the foundation of the Peace Treaties, they undertook not to do so. Those who have torn Danzig,

Memel and South Tyrol from the States to which they belonged, who have trodden under foot the right of the inhabitants of Eupen and Malmedy to self-determination by violent repression of public opinion, who have handed over Upper Silesia to its worst enemies despite a plebiscite which pronounced clearly and unequivocally that it desired to remain German, who have laid out the Polish Corridor across German territory . . . these at any rate are not the men who are entitled to denounce the reunion of Alsace-Lorraine with its mother country as a wrong. The wrongs which they have committed in carving up Germany are immeasurably greater than those which they allege Germany to have committed against France, for the simple reason that Alsace was German. And their wrong is the greater and the more unpardonable in that they, who allege that the "wrong" of 1871 has threatened the peace of Europe for fifty years, must have known that in what they did they were threatening the peace of Europe in far greater measure than ever Germany did when she took back Alsace-Lorraine. Germany could undoubtedly hope at the time of the conclusion of the Peace of Frankfort that she would succeed with the lapse of years in winning back the political allegiance of her fellow-countrymen in those territories which, though politically alienated from her, were one with her in race, in speech and in culture.



## CHAPTER II

### GERMANY'S PACIFIC POLICY 1871-1885

WITH the founding of the German Empire on 18 January, 1871, the German people took its place amongst the European Powers as an equal amongst equals. It was not its fault that its longing for unity and for the position, which was its due and which could only be based on the achievement of unity, had to be realized by a war. That it was so was due, as has been shown in Chapter I, not to the military character of the Prussian spirit, but to the unfounded fear and envy of its neighbour. The idea, which after the consummation of their desire the Emperor William I and his great Chancellor made the lodestar of their policy for twenty years, was the preservation and consolidation of that which had been so sorely won. A policy based on this idea could only have for its object the maintenance of peace; any war, in view of the jealousy with which not only Germany's Western neighbour, hard hit by her defeat, but also others of the great Powers regarded Germany's rise, could only jeopardize the position of the new Empire.

That a State, which after centuries of perpetual struggle attains to an equality always denied it, should seek to conserve and consolidate the place which it has purchased with such bloody sacrifices among the great Powers, has always and everywhere been held in History to be a natural and proper development; and any people would

rightly condemn and sweep away a Government which did not devote the whole of its powers to this most sacred of duties. Yet the German Emperor and his leading statesman are attacked by the accuser-judges of the Entente for pursuing just such a policy. One can hardly believe one's eyes, when one finds in the pages of E. Bourgeois and G. Pagès<sup>1</sup> on the origins and responsibilities of the Great War that this natural and proper development of policy is treated as matter for accusation, and the fulfilment of the elementary duty of safeguarding the position of power attained and the recovery of the rightful frontiers of the Reich is regarded as constituting a permanent menace to the peace of Europe.

Starting from this false standpoint MM. Bourgeois and Pagès write: "There were two alternatives, if it [the annexation of the two Provinces] was to become permanent. Either France must abandon even the remotest hope of a revision of the Peace of Frankfort, and thereby do violence alike to the lost Provinces and to the law of nations, or Germany must so weaken France that she need fear her no longer. So long as the Peace of Frankfort remained intact, there were no other possible political aims. The Berlin Government between the years 1871 and 1914 vacillated between the two."<sup>2</sup> The writers forget the third possibility, that by means of alliances for the maintenance of peace, and by keeping pace with the armaments of the other European peoples, Germany might contrive to

<sup>1</sup> E. Bourgeois et G. Pagès, *Les origines et les responsabilités de la grande guerre, preuves et aveux*, Paris, 1922. This book is merely the report of the Special Commission of the French Senate appointed to inquire into the responsibility for the war, first published in the *Journal officiel* of 9 January, 1921, and now expanded into book form. I shall make it for the most part the basis of what I have to say, as it at any rate attempts to prove its assertions and is still the most objective of all the publications that have appeared up to now with the thesis of Germany's designed responsibility for the war: if it is refuted, all other more superficially grounded accusations of the same character fall to the ground with it.

<sup>2</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 152.

maintain the *status quo* which was threatened by her Eastern and Western neighbours.

Throughout the two decades of his Chancellorship Prince Bismarck put this policy into practice with the aid of all the resources of his great statecraft.

It is a misrepresentation of the truth, which it is possible to refute from the published documentary evidence, that he ever attempted recourse to the second alternative suggested above, which (it may frankly be admitted) meant war.

What is represented as the goal of Bismarckian policy is in fact precisely the goal which the Powers allied for our destruction not only aimed at but attained in 1919, that is to say, the weakening of their enemy to the point of utter defencelessness. This policy, directed against Germany, has indeed been carried into effect against us, and speaks in every Article of the Treaty of Versailles.

Who could have prevented the victorious Germany of 1871 from imposing on France conditions similar to those which the disarmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty have imposed on Germany? Yet Bismarck made not the slightest attempt in the Peace of Frankfort to restrict France's right to unlimited increase of her defence force. And France made ample use of her right within a very few years after the conclusion of the Peace. On 12 April, 1875, the Secretary of State, Bernhard von Bülow, in a Direct Report to the Emperor William I, who had given expression to his anxieties as to the maintenance of peace, could write as follows: "France, which has now approximately a population of 36,100,000, should reach to date, without including the newly voted increase of the infantry cadres under the 1875 budget, a peace strength of 442,014 men and a war strength of altogether 2,423,164 men (including reserves of the active and territorial armies)." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Die Grosse Politik der europäischen Kabinette 1871-1914, Sammlung der diplomatischen Akten des Auswärtigen Amtes* (Foreign policy of the Cabinets of Europe between the years 1871 and 1914, being a collection of

Four years after the peace, France thus increased her army at a single stroke by 144 battalions. And the same persons, who accuse Prince Bismarck of lust for domination, because an increase of the French army in the face of a neighbour who desired nothing but to maintain the *status quo* caused him anxiety and led him to take diplomatic counter-measures, now dare to brand the German people with threatening the peace of Europe, because they are alleged to be in possession of a few more disused weapons of war than the Treaty of Versailles allows them. Do they not see that they thereby cut the ground from under the charge which they themselves bring in connection with their campaign of calumny against the diplomatic action in the interest of security which Bismarck took in the first five years after the founding of the Reich?

MM. Bourgeois and Pagès recognize and admit that Prince Bismarck did not contemplate war against France in the first two years after the Peace of Frankfort. But they assert that even during these two years Bismarck made use of threats with a view to terrorizing France, which clearly reveal the essential violence of German policy. What proofs are brought of this?

In the course of the German occupation, two German soldiers were murdered by Frenchmen in November, 1871. The murderers, although they confessed their crime, were acquitted. Bismarck thereupon instructed Count Arnim, who was still at the time German Minister Extraordinary in Paris, to draw the attention of the French Government to the results of such acts and such sentences; he at the same time agreed to the introduction of a state of siege in the occupied territories, in order to ensure the application of martial law in the case of crimes committed against the troops. MM. Bourgeois and Pagès call this step an

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the Diplomatic Papers of the German Foreign Office), edited by Johannes Lepsius, Albrecht Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and Friedrich Thimme, Vol. I, page 257. This collection of documents will hereafter be cited as "F.O. Papers".

unjustifiable act of violence, because Prince Bismarck knew that the French Government was not in a position to influence the sentences of the jury courts; and they describe the publication of the letter to Count Arnim, in which Prince Bismarck justified his action, as a provocation. It is not necessary to waste words over the indignation of the writers, if for no other reason, because it comes from the lips of men who regard it as entirely justifiable that, in the territories of Germany which are at present in foreign occupation, any German who is guilty of the slightest offence against the occupying troops is brought, not before a German, but before a French military court, and is sentenced by summary procedure to the most terrible penalties. That is to say, they regard it as permissible, and indeed necessary, that the state of things which Bismarck introduced in France only after two murders had gone unpunished, should be enforced from the outset in the occupied provinces of Germany under the Rhineland Agreement for fifteen years.

When moreover one reads the text of the letter the publication of which is here criticized as a provocation, and compares it with the Decrees which have been directed against the population of the occupied territories throughout the occupation by the French Government and have been published to all the world by the Rhineland Commission, or with the Notes which the Entente Powers have addressed to the German Government on the occasion of similar occurrences for the last five years, the charge of provocation in the case of Bismarck's letter sounds like a bad joke.

Bismarck's letter to Count Arnim, dated 7 December, 1871, begins as follows:

“ Your Excellency has learned from the Press of the impression which the acquittals in Melun and Paris have made on public opinion in Germany. Whatever the differences of party in Germany, all are of one mind in face of these sentences. It is far from being our

intention to make the French Government responsible for the verdicts of the juries, and we are very ready to believe that it is also not in a position to control the sentiments of the officials concerned in such cases. On the contrary, the fact that the sense of justice in France, even in circles to which pre-eminently one is accustomed to look to find the friends of political order and respect for law, should have been lost so completely enables Europe to appreciate the difficulties which beset the French Government in its efforts to free its own sense of justice and order from the pressure to which it is subjected by the passions of the masses. If, therefore, I ask your Excellency to discuss the matter in conversation with M. de Rémusat,<sup>1</sup> I do so, not in order to direct the accusations of the German Press to the address of the French Government, but in order to avoid the objection that we have not at the time expressed our views as to the consequences of a repetition of such occurrences."

After these introductory sentences, what does Bismarck go on to say? He does not say that reprisals will be taken if such occurrences recur: on the contrary he says that the degree of ethical culture and honour-loving sense of justice, which characterizes the German people, excludes what might seem the obvious application of the law 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'.

It is the publication of this letter, the opening words of which are not an accusation against, but an apology for, the French Government, at a time when the French Press had exceeded all bounds, that the authors of the Report of the French Senatorial Commission call provocative. They have no exception to take to the long drawn out series of menaces and arbitrary reprisals in occupied Germany! If the publication of Bismarck's letter was a

<sup>1</sup> French Foreign Minister.

provocation, then every speech which has been made against the population of the Rhine Provinces by French statesmen since the year 1919, and every Ordinance of the Rhineland Commission, is a provocation a thousand times over!

It is true that Bismarck, alarmed by the frantic cry for revenge of the French Press perpetually clamouring for war, told the French Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin, M. Gabriac, that it might be prudent for Germany not to leave to the French Government the choice of the date for the opening of hostilities, if such were once again to be demanded by the French people; that is to say, he adumbrated the possibility of a preventive war. But there is no doubt that neither on this occasion nor on others did he ever seriously contemplate the possibility of a preventive war. The conversation with M. Gabriac, referred to in the report of the Commission of the French Senate, in the course of which Bismarck let fall this utterance, was no more than a grave warning, entirely justifiable in view of the immoderate language of the French Press, and (let it be noted) a warning directed against a people which was perpetually raising the menace of war, and a government which had begun to arm immediately after the peace, a warning based not on any menace to France on the part of Germany—the report itself admits that Bismarck did not desire war in the first few years after the Peace of Frankfort—but on the fact that France was not satisfied with the European settlement and was anxious to change it.

Even before the final evacuation of French territory (which General von Manteuffel announced to Prince Bismarck on 15 September, 1873, in the following telegram: "I have this moment crossed the German frontier with the last detachment of German troops, and have thus completely evacuated France") the relations between Germany and France had assumed a more acute form owing to the fault of high-placed influential Frenchmen.

On 3 August, 1873, the Bishop of Nancy had caused to be read in the churches of the dioceses of Nancy and Toul, including churches in German Lorraine, prayers for the reunion of Metz and Strassburg with France.<sup>1</sup> MM. Bourgeois and Pagès admit that these instructions by the Bishops to their clergy were very inopportune, but say that they were "not offensive in character". If to-day the Archbishop of Mainz were to cause prayers to be read in the churches of his diocese for the reunion of Strassburg and Metz with Germany, can it be doubted that he would be brought before a French military court and sentenced to many years of penal servitude? So far and no less would such an utterance be held to be "offensive", even by a Herriot Government.

Although Nancy and Toul were still occupied by the German troops, not a hair of the heads of either of the two prelates was touched. Bismarck confined himself to directing the attention of the Duc de Broglie (who, after the fall of Thiers as a result of the attacks of the Clerical Party and the election of MacMahon as President, had become Foreign Minister), through the intermediary of Count Arnim, to the provocative action of the Bishop, for whose punishment he pressed on the ground that he had violated the Treaty concluded between the two countries. The French Government, declining to accept responsibility for the utterance of the Bishop, and stating that the infliction of any form of punishment was impracticable, while at the same time it expressed regret for the Bishop's action and described it as "inadmissible", Bismarck was prepared to be content with a public expression of disapproval.<sup>2</sup> Even this he was unable after a correspondence of three months to obtain; and he finally in February, 1874, abandoned any further following up of the incident.<sup>3</sup>

If it is remembered that the negotiations with regard

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. I, page 211, No. 131.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. I, page 213, No. 133.

<sup>3</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. I, page 138, No. 150.



to this incident came at a time when the Kulturkampf was in full force, on which the French Bishops in their instructions to their dioceses had taken sides passionately against the German Government, and that all these utterances on the part of the various parties concerned were made to the accompaniment of wild language on the part of the Press, one inevitably gains the impression, in spite of the firm tone which Bismarck demanded of Arnim in Paris (whose attitude was throughout much too weak for the Chancellor's requirements), that Bismarck was not concerned at this time to provoke a new war and that throughout the course of these diplomatic *démarches* he was restricting himself to the defensive. With what delicate appreciation of the exigencies of French national sentiment Prince Bismarck acted in the course of these unavoidable negotiations—which only French citizens had occasioned—is shown by the following passage in a paper containing instructions sent to Count Arnim on 30 October, 1873. The occasion of these instructions was the action of the German Minister (ordinarily not energetic enough) who, in an interview with the Duc de Broglie, had asserted that the existing frontiers of France and the existing German constitution should be taken without *arrière-pensée* as the basis for friendly relations between the two countries. "I cannot conceal from Your Excellency", Bismarck wrote, "that in indicating to the Duke the acceptance of this basis for discussion without *arrière-pensée*, even hypothetically, Your Excellency exceeded to some extent the limits of the standpoint outlined in my circular No. 185 of 10 October. It is not possible to expect of a great Power, which has emerged from a war with a loss of territory, that it should be prepared at so early a date to agree to renunciation of such territory ; and any declaration of renouncement by an individual minister would necessarily be devoid of sincerity and substance in the same degree as the customary clauses of peace treaties which assert the maintenance of perpetual friendship between both con-

tracting parties.” One would look in vain, if one were in a position to look, in the Instructions of the various Ministers, who have succeeded one another since the Peace of 1919 in France, for an utterance containing so much reasonableness. At any rate in the published official papers there is not the slightest trace of any such consideration as the conqueror of 1870 on this occasion displayed towards the conquered. And yet the report of the French Senatorial Commission asserts that the aggressive policy of Bismarck at this period was in sharp contrast to the prudent and dignified attitude of the French Government. To prove their point, MM. Bourgeois and Pagès have had recourse to a slight falsification of history, which may here be placed on record. They say that the Imperial Chancellor, before the publication of the “instructions” of the French Bishops which excited so much indignation in Germany, used menacing language in the Press which he controlled, and indulged in provocation without any grounds for so doing. They cite in this connection an article of the *Provinzialkorrespondenz* of 24 September, in which Bismarck, without mentioning France, connects the recent visits of the King of Italy to Vienna and Berlin and their significance in relation to the constellation of Powers in Europe with “certain currents and tendencies” in other countries, and the uneasiness to which they have given rise.<sup>1</sup> But the “instructions” of the Bishop of Nancy, which had given rise to the chief indignation in Germany, were issued on 3 August, 1873, and became known in Germany at the beginning of September, that is to say, three weeks before the semi-official warning of the *Provinzialkorrespondenz*.<sup>2</sup> There can therefore be no question in this case of a challenge without provocation.

The same applies to the well-known article of the *Post* of 9 April 1875, with the heading “War in sight”, which

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès *op. cit.*, page 160.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. I, page 211, No. 131.

in its turn was due to a highly provocative step taken by the French Government, though it is described in the report of the French Senate's Commission as itself a provocation.

It is to be noted in this connection that the article in the *Post* did not emanate from Bismarck himself. It was written by Konstantin Rössler,<sup>1</sup> and the Foreign Office had no knowledge whatever before their publication either of this article or of a Vienna message to the *Kölnische Zeitung* (with the heading "Alliances") which appeared five days later.<sup>2</sup>

The above articles were occasioned by a step taken by the French Government which was calculated to excite suspicion in the highest degree. It had indeed given rise to uneasiness in the mind of Prince Bismarck, but had not made him fear a French attack in the immediate future. The step in question was an order to German horse-dealers to purchase 10,000 military riding horses for France without restriction of price at a commission of 50 francs. This order became known to the German Government on 26 February. In the telegram in which Bismarck asks Prince Hohenlohe, the successor of Count Arnim in the post of Ambassador in Paris, for information as to the extent and bearing of this astonishing order, he says explicitly: "I do not believe in any intention to make war next year; but 10,000 riding horses represent a bleeding of our resources, which we should still feel if we were compelled to mobilize in—say—three years; and if we are able to reduce the tempo of France's preparations—and we know that outside Germany she will find it difficult to obtain

<sup>1</sup> It was not till two years later that the well-known publicist became head of the semi-official Literary Bureau.

<sup>2</sup> Both articles treated the menace of a war for "revanche" as imminent. The *Kölnische Zeitung* spoke of a "Franco-Austro-Italian Alliance", representing a Catholic League against Prussia-Germany, and the *Post* treated the demand of MacMahon for the extension of his Presidency to ten years as the expression of a wish to see the "war of revenge" during his ten years of office. F.O. Papers, Vol. I, page 253, footnote.

so large a number of horses suitable for her purpose—that in itself represents a gain for us.”<sup>1</sup>

The order placed with German horse dealers was naturally to be taken in connection with the Army Law above mentioned, which was at that moment before the French National Assembly. The fact that the dealers were given the order without price limit of any kind inevitably suggested the suspicion that the reorganization of the Army was to be undertaken in feverish haste. Moreover, on the third reading of the Army Cadres Law the Army Commission proposed an amendment to the Bill, which was accepted by the Plenum of the Assembly, to the effect that the 4th Battalions of the 144 Infantry Regiments should be formed, not at mobilization, but in peace.<sup>2</sup> This amendment, as already noted, increased the peace strength of the French Army at one stroke by 144 battalions. Is it not intelligible that such increases to the military strength of France barely four years after the conclusion of peace should excite uneasiness in Germany, and be the occasion of articles in the Press expressing such uneasiness?

Supposing the Treaty of Versailles to contain no prescriptions limiting German armaments, and supposing the German Ministry of Defence to have placed an order in the year 1923 with French horse-dealers to purchase 10,000 horses in France without any limit of price, and supposing the German Reichstag at the same time to have voted an increase of the peace strength of the German army of the same magnitude as that voted by the French National Assembly on 12 March, 1875, what would have been the effect? The entire French Press, from the *Action Française* to the *Humanité*, would have resounded with a tornado of articles on “War in sight”, in comparison with which the language of the articles in the *Post* and the *Kölnische Zeitung* would have sounded like the gentle breath of a

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. I, page 245, No. 155.

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Military Attaché in Paris, Major von Bülow. F.O. Papers, Vol. I, pages 250-1, No. 159.

zephyr. The French and English Press in the five years which have elapsed since the Peace of Versailles have been full of "War in sight" articles, although only a lunatic can imagine Germany in her present position, and so long as the disarmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty are in force, to be capable of waging an offensive war.

The French Government in such a case would never have been satisfied with letting loose a storm in the Press: it would undoubtedly—so much may be assumed from every step that it has taken in the Security question in the last five years—have answered an ultimatum so pregnant with menace by a sudden and immense increase of the peace and war strengths of its defence forces.

What did Prince Bismarck do in such a case? He caused an article to appear in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* on the day following the appearance of the article in the *Post*, in which it was said that the apprehensions of the latter organ as to a Franco-Austro-Italian alliance were without foundation, and referred to the French armaments only in the following words, the extreme moderation of which everyone will admit: "As regards France, it must be admitted that the steps which have been partly taken, and are partly contemplated, with regard to the re-organization of the French army, are in themselves disquieting. It is obvious that such steps are not based on any permanent increase of the French Army, since there is no people, however rich, which could bear the extreme burden thus placed on its shoulders for more than a short time, and the new armaments are clearly designed *ad hoc*, for a purpose which is patent to every eye." Prince Bismarck at the same time took steps to counter the purchase of German horses for the French Army by simply prohibiting the export of horses from Germany.

It is true that the mild steps taken on this occasion were sufficient to induce the French Government to give assurances of its love of peace. Nor am I concerned to dispute the sincerity of these assurances. Such conviction,

however, does not prevent my thinking at the present time, any more than it prevented the German Government thinking at that time, that the ideal of "revanche" was still glowing with unaltered force under the ashes of the love of peace thus forced on the rulers of France.

If the attitude of Bismarck in those days of April in the year 1875 shows clearly that he did not desire to provoke war at that time, the last doubt as to the German love of peace is removed by an annotation of the Emperor William I, who would not have allowed even a Bismarck to limit his rights as Emperor, and without whose assent no war could have been waged. The Emperor's annotation may here be reproduced in full, inasmuch as it constitutes a crushing refutation of all the insinuations of the expert and inexpert champions of the War Guilt Lie as to the designs of German policy concealed behind the "War in sight" article in the *Post*. The Emperor's remarks are a comment on an article of the semi-official French *Moniteur* reproduced in the *Kölnische Zeitung* of 6 May, which had protested against the theory of preventive wars put forward in the *Preussische Jahrbücher*. The Emperor writes under date 7 May<sup>1</sup>: "I entirely agree with this article of the *Moniteur*. It expresses exactly what I wrote on the alarmist articles in the *Kölnische Zeitung* and the *Post* immediately to the Minister von Bülow. The only inaccuracy is to be found in the statement that I had used to Gontaut the words which I in fact used only to Prince Polignac, as Gontaut was not at that time in Berlin.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the articles omit the last sentence of my remarks, which was as follows: 'And all that is a result of a couple of absurd newspaper articles.' As neither the *Kölnische Zeitung* nor the *Post*, so far as I know, receive semi-official or inspired articles from Government sources, there can be no talk of

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. I, pages 271-8.

<sup>2</sup> The article in the *Moniteur* had further stated that the Emperor had said to the French Ambassador Gontaut-Biron and to the Military Attaché Prince de Polignac: "It was an attempt to put us at variance."

official influence on these organs ; and I consider it would be highly desirable that both editors should have their attention drawn to the consequences to which such foolish, and entirely imaginary, arguments may lead. They have already alarmed the whole of Europe, and have shattered the gradually reviving confidence in the duration of peace to such an extent that it has found expression in all classes of the population, and in commercial and industrial circles, as I have had opportunity to realize on more occasions than one, in the course of my recent journey and in Wiesbaden. These editors must have their consciences sharpened ; they must be shown the harm which they have done ! I desire to know what can be done in this connection."

The Reporters of the French Senatorial Commission were not unaware of the fact that the Emperor William would have nothing to do with a preventive war ; for the above-mentioned conversation of the Emperor with the Prince de Polignac had been published in the *Moniteur*. Accordingly, to support their legend of a German "will to war", they take refuge in the assertion that in this matter there was a profound divergence of view between the Emperor and his Chancellor, and that it was Bismarck's design to overcome the Emperor's attachment to peace by the invention of an imaginary French menace of war, and by stimulating public opinion in Germany to produce some *fait accompli* with which to induce his master to declare war. At least they believe that this conclusion may be drawn from Bismarck's utterances, although they say—in this respect showing more restraint than Poincaré and Viviani, who in their books <sup>1</sup> treat Bismarck's wish for war as a proved fact—that the question cannot be regarded as definitely proved, since one can see into no one's heart. They are compelled to admit that Bismarck himself in his *Reflections and Reminiscences* emphatically denies that he

<sup>1</sup> Viviani, *Réponse au Kaiser*, page 38 : Poincaré, *Les origines de la guerre*, page 19.

was for war. Looking back at the position of the world in the year 1875 it is not possible to hold that the man who was responsible for German policy at that time desired to let loose a war, unless one supposes him to have been a short-sighted individual with no aims beyond those of the present and immediate future : and the bitterest of his enemies have never denied to the great Chancellor the attributes of long sight and careful calculation of chances beforehand. By a war at this period Bismarck would have been staking light-heartedly the whole of his life's work ; for what he says in his *Reflections and Reminiscences*<sup>1</sup> is profoundly true :

“ So far was I from entertaining any such idea at the time (1875), or afterwards, that I would rather have resigned than lent a hand in picking a quarrel which could have had no other motive than preventing France from recovering her breath and her strength. A war of this kind could not, in my opinion, have led to permanently tenable conditions in Europe, but might have brought about an agreement between Russia, Austria, and England, based upon mistrust of us, and leading eventually to active proceedings against the new and still unconsolidated empire ; and we should thus have been entering upon the path which led the Second French Empire to destruction by a continuous policy of war and prestige. Europe would have seen in our proceedings a misuse of our newly-acquired power ; and the hand of every one, including the centrifugal forces within the empire, would have been permanently raised against Germany, or at any rate been ready to draw the sword. It was just the peaceful character of German policy after the astonishing proofs of the nation's military strength, which induced foreign Powers and internal opponents, even sooner than we had expected, at least to tolerate the

<sup>1</sup> *Reflections and Reminiscences*, Vol. II, page 189.



new development of German power, and to regard either with a benevolent eye, or else in the character of a guarantee of peace, the development and strengthening of the empire."

The view that this passage of his memoirs represents his reflections after the event, and not his attitude at the time, is refuted, not merely by considerations of internal improbability in view of the political position at the time, but also by direct documentary evidence. The passion with which, in a Note of 14 May, 1875, addressed to the German Ambassador in London, Count Münster, he repudiates the suspicions of the British Government as a grievous defamation of character, and asserts that the reports current in London as to bellicose intentions on the part of Germany are mendacious inventions, is evidence as to his attitude on this occasion.<sup>1</sup>

A year before moreover, when there was talk in France of a preventive war as a result of the increased tension in Franco-German relations in consequence of the French Bishops' instructions to their clergy, Prince Bismarck gave expression to his love of peace in a despatch to the German Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Prince Reuss, in the following words: "The feeling in France in favour of revenge is to us anything but welcome. We have learnt to appreciate the grave and distressing character of wars, even when they are crowned with victory, and are determined to avoid them in the future, so long as we are not persuaded that they are inevitable." And the despatch closes with the words: "It is our most earnest wish to live at peace with France, and we will leave no stone unturned in order

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. I, page 279, No. 180. Compare also the Instructions to Count Münster of 12 May, which were sent him simultaneously for communication to the British Government. The Note of 14 May, which repudiates the idea of war in sharper terms, on the other hand was marked "Strictly Confidential", which in itself shows that the indignation which he expresses at the British questioning of Germany's love of peace was sincere.

to induce the French Government to take up a similar attitude."<sup>1</sup>

When Poincaré and Viviani with one voice assert that only the representations of England and Russia prevented Germany on this occasion from overrunning France, and when MM. Bourgeois and Pagès regard the correctness of this assumption as at any rate probable, they are belied by the documentary evidence of these utterances of Bismarck. They display a failure to appreciate the Chancellor's statesmanship, which is in sharp contrast to the admiration with which it has commonly been regarded even by those who hate him most in France: for their assumption implies that Bismarck expected England and Russia to look on in silence, while France was completely annihilated, and such insane shortness of view is really not to be ascribed to the statesman whose whole policy since the Peace of Frankfort was conditioned by his "nightmare of coalitions".

That the love of peace which appears from the above-quoted marginal note of the Emperor William I was not the result of British and Russian intervention, in other words was not the fruits of fear, is shown by the date. The marginal note is dated 7 May, and the representations of Odo Russell, the British Ambassador in Berlin, which so excited Bismarck, were not made till 9 May.<sup>2</sup> The conversation between the Emperor William and the Emperor Alexander of Russia, to which Gortschakow in his Circular Telegram dated from Berlin falsely ascribes the merit of having contributed to the maintenance of peace—as though (to

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. I, page 235, No. 147. The text of this despatch was first made known by the publication of the German Foreign Office Papers. It was sent to the Ambassadors in London, Vienna, Paris and Rome, marked "Strictly Confidential", with the express instruction not to make use of it. This very despatch was made the basis of the assertion that a preventive war was under contemplation in January, 1874: it was published in a distorted form, as may be seen from Schulthess' *Europäisches Geschichtskalender* [the German equivalent to the English *Annual Register*] for the year 1874, with the result that the exact opposite of its intentions was read into it.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. I, page 272, No. 174.

quote Bismarck) it had ever been threatened<sup>1</sup>—did not take place until 11 May.<sup>2</sup>

The hollowness of this legend of Germany's bellicose intentions in the year 1875, the indestructability of which Bismarck deplures in his memoirs, is thus revealed by the Papers of the German Foreign Office.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Reflections and Reminiscences*, Vol. II, page 188.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. I, page 273, No. 175.

<sup>3</sup> The persistence of this legend is due, it is well known, to the fact that the Russian Chancellor, Prince Gortschakow, spread the statement that the Special Mission of Herr von Radowitz, whom Bismarck sent for quite other reasons to St. Petersburg in February, 1875, had as its object to secure Russia's neutrality in the event of a German attack on France, and that it ended in a complete fiasco. French opinion was confirmed in this belief by the incorrect reproduction of a conversation which the French Ambassador Gontaut-Biron had in May, 1875, with Radowitz, whom he met by chance. The first written account of the St. Petersburg inventions appears in 1880 in Ernest Daudet's *Souvenirs de la Présidence du Maréchal MacMahon*. (Recollections of Marshal MacMahon's Presidency.) The legend was revived in 1887 by the sensational articles in the *Figaro* of General de Flô, who had been French Ambassador in St. Petersburg in 1875, and attributed the same motives to the Radowitz Mission as Gortschakow, and on the same authority. Unfortunately, two German writers have helped to keep the legend alive, namely Professor Geffcken and Hans Blum, the former in his article on *Die russisch-französische Alliance und der Dreibund in geschichtlicher Beleuchtung* (The Franco-Russian Alliance and the Triple Alliance in the light of History) which first appeared in the *Deutsche Revue*, and the latter in his *Gespräche mit Bismarck* (Conversations with Bismarck) which appeared in November, 1892.

The conversation of Radowitz and Gontaut-Biron is published, from notes made by Radowitz, in F.O. Papers, Vol. I, page 275, No. 177. It is clear from these notes that the French Ambassador misunderstood Radowitz.

In the *Aufzeichnungen und Erinnerungen aus dem Leben des Botschafters Joseph Maria von Radowitz* (Notes and Reminiscences from the life of Ambassador Joseph Maria von Radowitz), pages 286-332, which appeared while the present work was passing through the Press, the origin of the legend, the purpose of its fabrication, and its entire falsity, are given in all their details, and the story may now be regarded as completely exploded. Compare on the subject also Hajo Holborn's *Bismarcks Europäische Politik zu Beginn der siebziger Jahre und die Mission Radowitz* (Bismarck's policy in Europe at the beginning of the 'seventies and the Radowitz Mission). This work, which also appeared while this book was passing through the Press, reaches the same conclusion.

I will cite one other testimony from the Foreign Office Papers as to the peaceful character of German policy. It is particularly convincing as it formulates the German attitude on the question of preventive wars in general. It is to be found in another marginal note of the Emperor William I, and was occasioned by an article which had appeared in the *Gegenwart* on the subject of Franco-German relations.<sup>1</sup> The Emperor wrote :

“ I agree with the attached article from A to Z. It is only the conclusion, which I have marked with a ‘ ? ’ that smacks a little of the German spirit of rodomontade (*Prahlerei*) which has been lately apparent once again, the idea (that is) that, if France is really only going to keep the peace until her army is re-constituted, we should not leave her the choice of the time for beginning, but should take the bull by the horns, and force war on her before her armaments are completed. That is a point of view which in everyday life has something to be said for it. It is otherwise where the dispute is between nations. To wage successful wars, the aggressor must have on his side the sympathies of all high-minded persons and peoples, and public opinion will go against whoever wages war unjustly. This was the secret of the enthusiasm in the year 1870! He who has recourse to arms without justification will have public opinion against him; he will find no allies, and no ‘ benevolent neutrals ’; indeed he will find no neutrals at all, for everyone will be against him. I put this point to the Emperor Alexander, and he took both my hands in his and expressed his complete agreement with what I said. (Russia learnt the truth of it in 1853, and Austria in 1859 and in 1866).

WILLIAM

16 May, 1875 ”

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. I, page 282, No. 181, foot-note.

This book, in accordance with the division of material laid down in its Introduction, is not designed to be a history of German policy, but merely a refutation of the War Guilt Lie. I may therefore pass over the decade which followed the year 1875, on which the Report of the Commission of the French Senate, to which such frequent reference has been made, has also nothing to say. It is true that the improvement in the relations between Germany and France during this period is attributed, without any grounds being given for the assertion, to the fact that from 1875 onwards Germany had to reckon with a France which was once more in possession of her health and strength. But, even if this were true, it would not alter the fact that during this period there is not a trace to be found, even with the magnifying glass of the most antagonistic prejudice against Germany, of German desire for war.

Our accusers write as follows :

“ There now begins in the history of Franco-German relations a second period of approximately ten years, during which Bismarck, unable to prevent the recovery of France, endeavoured to bring her into the orbit of his policy and gradually to induce her to forget and accommodate herself to her dismemberment. The relations of the two countries during this period are, on the whole, better. At moments the two countries even seem to come together. The French Government does not refuse to lend its support to certain enterprises of the Cabinet of Berlin, which for its part gives its diplomatic support to our expansion overseas. It is a period of restricted collaboration, without doubt profitable for France, during which the policy of *rapprochement*—always subject to the qualification of which we are about to speak—found convinced and adroit champions in the persons of two successive

Ambassadors, the Comte de Saint-Vallier and the Baron de Courcel." <sup>1</sup>

In thus expressly recognizing the German love of peace during the years 1875 to 1885, the Report of the French Senatorial Commission does not go anything like far enough. It was in this period that Germany, not content with promoting a *rapprochement* between the two peoples by supporting French colonial enterprises, rendered services to the maintenance of peace which in themselves are sufficient to deprive the charges contained in the Note of 16 June, 1919, of all force, by localizing the war which had broken out in 1877 between Russia and Turkey. The line taken by Bismarck after the Peace of San Stefano is at the same time a striking refutation of the assertion that the summoning of the Congress of Berlin was designed finally to establish German hegemony in Europe.

Prince Bismarck, it is well known, was for long reluctant to have the Congress (which had become inevitable if war between England and Russia after the Peace of San Stefano was to be avoided) take place in Berlin. Had he been animated by lust for hegemony, he would have done as Napoleon III did after the Crimean War ; he would have proposed his own capital as the place for the Conference in order to be able to assume the rôle of arbiter of Europe.

He had already in August, 1876, refused the proposal of Gortschakow to hold a Congress for the solution of the conflicts which had broken out in the Balkans as a result of the rising of the Slav peoples on the Adriatic ; and he gave as the ground for his refusal his disinclination to assume the leadership in Europe. In the Instructions, which he sent to Secretary of State von Bülow from Varzin on 14 August he wrote <sup>2</sup> : " The Alliance of the three

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 174.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. II, pages 31-4, No. 228.

Emperors has been hitherto the best bulwark of peace. If it is relaxed, and replaced by the establishment of elective affinities<sup>1</sup> between Austria and England or Russia and France, the incompatibility of Austrian, English and Russian interests in the East points the way towards war . . . Germany would be called upon day after day to undertake the office of arbitrator between the two opposing groups of the Congress, than which we could have no more thankless task. As it cannot be our inclination to range ourselves definitely and without reserve on the side of one of the two parties, and adhere to it throughout, there would be every prospect that our three friends, Russia, Austria and England, would leave the Congress in a state of annoyance with us for not having given any one of them the support it had expected. . . . Precisely because we are the one uninterested Power . . . we should have to shoulder alone the responsibility for the non-success of the Congress, which in such case might be expected." And in reply to suggestions put forward by Gortschakow he said that, with all her sympathy for the fate of the Christians, Germany did not feel called upon suddenly to abandon her existing attitude of reserve in order to assume the leadership of Europe.

No man, to whom hegemony in the world appears a thing to strive for, uses such language. In these sentences of Bismarck the assumption of the leading rôle in Europe is declined, and declined in the interests of the maintenance of peace. It would exceed the limits of this book to go further into the origins of the Congress of Berlin. They are illumined to the smallest details by the published Papers of the Foreign Office, which read at this point like the vivid movements of a dramatic representation. But there is one phase of the preliminaries to the summoning of the Congress on which I am constrained to linger, because it affords evidence of the most convincing character of the truth of what I have asserted, that is to

<sup>1</sup> [*Wahlverwandschaften*—the title of Goethe's novel.]

say, that the Report of the Commission of the French Senate is not in accordance with the historical facts when it claims that Germany's peaceful policy in the years 1875-1885 was due not to inclination, but to necessity.

Prince Bismarck in the year 1878 not only demonstrated his love of peace. It was his policy, and his policy alone, which by its mastery of touch and boldness of initiative preserved peace. The action by which this was achieved was the sending of the telegram of 9 April, 1878, to the German Ambassadors in London and St. Petersburg. What was the position on that day? After the conclusion of the Peace of San Stefano on 3 March, negotiations had been proceeding throughout the month for the calling of a European Congress to settle the differences which had arisen as a consequence of the San Stefano Treaty, the provisions of which were regarded alike in Austria and in England as impossible of acceptance. The initiative had come from Russia, and Gortschakow had again proposed Berlin as the place of meeting. This time Bismarck had accepted the proposal, albeit with reluctance: he had prudently declined to assume the initiative, so as to avoid even the appearance of desiring to take the lead. Throughout March an exchange of Notes, following literally on one another's heels, between the Cabinets of St. Petersburg, London, Vienna and Berlin, had eliminated all the obstacles (which cannot here be particularized) except one. It was this. England insisted that the entire Treaty of San Stefano should be discussed at the Conference, Article by Article. Russia wished to reserve the possibility of decision at a Preliminary Conference as to which Articles should come before the Conference. On 28 March Lord Derby, the English Foreign Secretary, and Count Shuwalow, the Russian Ambassador in London, who had worked unwearyingly for peace, believed that the Congress could not be held.<sup>1</sup> Lord Beaconsfield advised the Queen to call up the Reserves; Lord Derby resigned because he

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. II, pages 242-4, No. 272.



did not approve of this step ; and Lord Salisbury, who was not afraid of war, took his place.<sup>1</sup>

The British Fleet meanwhile was lying off Constantinople, having passed the Dardanelles in February without the consent of the Sultan, and showed no signs of moving; while 30,000 Russian troops were encamped almost at the gates of Constantinople. Prince Bismarck recognized that, in view of the great tension which had developed at the close of March, war was inevitable unless the forces of the two angry Powers could be kept at a greater distance from one another. At this critical moment, when the maintenance of the peace of Europe hung by a thread, he telegraphed (as has been said) on 9 April to London and St. Petersburg offering his mediation in the conclusion of a convention to which he shortly afterwards gave the following precise form<sup>2</sup> : “ The English fleet will leave the Constantinople roads and pass the Dardanelles. Russia will simultaneously withdraw her forces from the Bosphorus to such distance as they can cover in the time taken by the English fleet to resume its present position.”

The two Powers, after raising objections to the positions to be taken up by the Russian troops—which objections Bismarck met by proposals rapidly drafted in brief and masterly terms—finally accepted the proposed convention. Time was thus gained, which was essential if the hitherto apparently unreconcilable standpoints of the two disputants were to be accommodated, and the Conference proposal rescued. The story of how the two divergent standpoints were accommodated is to be found in the Foreign Office Papers ; and it is impossible to read them without admiring the combination of clearness in view, power in action and restraint in negotiation of the man who was then responsible for German policy.

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor William wrote in the margin of the despatch in which Count Münster reported the resignation of Lord Derby and the appointment of Salisbury, with obviously painful feelings : “ So the die is cast ! ”

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. II, pages 262-3, No. 381.

I have been concerned in this connection only to prove that it was to Bismarck and to the Emperor William—the latter had personally intervened on 23 March with a Rescript to the Secretary of State von Bülow instructing his Ministers to take active steps to maintain peace<sup>1</sup>—that in April, 1878, the peace of Europe was preserved.

Of this action of the German Chancellor there is no single word in the historical survey of the French Senatorial Commission. Mention of it would have cut the ground from under its accusations.

To-day there can no longer be any serious statesman or conscientious historian who can still assume, after reading the German Foreign Office Papers, that German policy during the twenty years that followed on the Peace of Frankfort was not directed at every step towards the maintenance of peace, while in one case, after the conclusion of the Peace of San Stefano, the maintenance of peace was due to German policy alone.

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. II, page 240, No. 369.

## CHAPTER III

### GERMAN COLONIAL POLICY AND THE CRISES IN THE YEARS 1885-1887

IN the last five years of his Chancellorship, Bismarck, according to MM. Bourgeois and Pagès, not only aimed at hegemony in Europe; he also worked directly for war. "The period of *rapprochement*, which followed on the crisis of 1875, was at an end," they write at the conclusion of the chapter in their book which deals with the events of the year 1884.<sup>1</sup> And they begin the next chapter with the assertion that the preceding decade of *rapprochement* was succeeded by a new crisis, which bore a striking resemblance to that of the year 1875, alike in respect of the manner in which it was evoked and in the phases through which it passed.<sup>2</sup> By which they mean nothing less than that Prince Bismarck from 1885 onwards was making conscious and deliberate preparations for war with France, and was only prevented from carrying his designs into effect by the restraint, prudence and love of peace of successive French Governments and by Russian intervention. When they brought these accusations they had not yet seen the first six volumes of the published Papers of the German Foreign Office. Had they seen them, even they would not have maintained their accusations: the contrast with the facts, as they emerge from these Papers, is so sharp that even

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 216.

<sup>2</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 212.

a publication with tendencious political purposes such as theirs must have abandoned charges, the maintenance of which would have impaired the force of their argument in regard to the post-Bismarckian, as well as the Bismarckian, era.<sup>1</sup>

Prince Bismarck's love of peace was not less in the last years of his Chancellorship than it was in the first decade and a half after the Peace of Frankfort. His complex system of alliances had no other object than the maintenance of peace, since any war, even if crowned by success, was bound to endanger his life's work. For ten years he had endeavoured to attain his end of peace in Europe by a *rapprochement* with France, whose continued desire for revenge was for Germany the greatest peril to European peace; and he would have continued his efforts in this sense, if France had not, after the fall of the Government

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately there are historians who adhere to their previous untenable view of Bismarck's policy even after the publication of the Foreign Office Papers. Amongst these is the American Professor Fuller, who in his book *Bismarck's Diplomacy at its Zenith*, which appeared in 1922, asperses and calumniates, like any Frenchman, the policy of Bismarck before and during the Franco-German crisis of February and April, 1887, in the most unscientific manner and in flagrant contradiction of the Foreign Office Papers. His first book on the "War in sight" Crisis of the year 1875 is thoroughly refuted by Herzfeld in his work in the *Forschungen und Darstellungen aus dem Reichsarchiv* (Records and researches in the German archives). With his second book—for which, in view of the fact that it appeared after the publication of the F.O. Papers, there is no excuse—Heinz Trütschler von Falkenstein deals in his *Bismarck und die Kriegsgefahr des Jahres 1887* (Bismarck and the danger of war in 1887). Fuller is unfavourably distinguished in these books from many American historians and politicians, in whose ranks the opponents of the War Guilt Lie have become considerably more numerous in recent years than its defenders. It is particularly regrettable that even a German scholar, Kantorowicz, lecturer on Criminal Law in Freiburg, finds in the F.O. Papers the opposite of what they really contain, and thus provides grist for the mills of the champions of the War Guilt Lie. The paper of this writer, which appeared in the *Tagebuch* No. 9 of 1 March, 1924, is crushingly refuted by Dr. Thimme in the August, 1924, number of the *Archiv für Politik und Geschichte* (Political and historical Archives).

of Jules Ferry, placed insuperable obstacles in his path.

It may here be said at once that it must frankly be admitted that it was not so much the Governments in France who contributed to undermine the relations between the two neighbouring peoples (which, if not friendly, had at any rate become tolerable) in the crisis which was in preparation from the year 1885 onwards, as the French people, or perhaps only a minority of the French people, which, owing to the faint resistance offered by the majority of the nation and by successive Governments, threatened to become more and more the decisive factor in determining the spirit of French policy.

The Report of the French Senatorial Commission itself reveals the grounds which made it impossible for the German Chancellor, with all his unmistakable love of peace, to believe in the permanence of good relations between France and Germany. It contains the following admission: "This time negotiations<sup>1</sup> took place, and Bismarck did not conceal from the Baron de Courcel (French Ambassador in Berlin) that his desire for years had been for a *rapprochement* with France: mutual mistrust had always stood in the way of its realization: but the moment seemed to him favourable for consideration of the question whether this mistrust was invincible, and he must frame his policy accordingly. What he did not say, and what Jules Ferry and the Baron de Courcel very soon perceived, was that he wanted much more than any French Government could ever have given him. He wanted, he always wanted, France to accept the past and to forget."

Here is the open admission that no French Government could ever accept the Peace of Frankfort and forget Sedan. That can have no other meaning than that the basis of

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.* page 209. The negotiations in question were opened by Bismarck in May, 1884. They were concerned with an Agreement between France and Germany on African questions. They ended ultimately in October in the Congo Conference.

French policy, the essential all-embracing aim of her efforts was the repetition of the wrong committed by Louis XIV against Germany in the hour of her defencelessness.

The authors of the Report of the French Senatorial Commission are right in saying that Bismarck wanted France to accept the past. They are wrong in making that a charge against him. It is clear that a people, and that Governments, whose whole foreign policy is dominated by a single longing, must inevitably seize any and every opportunity to gratify it. It is for this reason that the demand for "acceptance of the past" was a wholly justifiable demand on the part of any statesman, who wished to protect from violence the position which his country had with such difficulty attained: the peace of Europe was threatened, not by the party which made the demand, but by the party which declared it impossible of acceptance.

Since all efforts to conciliate France by supporting French desires for expansion during the ten years 1875-1885 had failed to attain their object, and since without its attainment there was no assurance of the peace of Europe, Bismarck's policy had to be directed to preventing France from finding allies to assist her in her task of disturbing the peace.

It was this idea which dominated the policy of the great master in the play and counterplay of the diplomatic chess-board in his last years of office. The conclusion and renewal of the Alliance of the Three Emperors, the Triple Alliance, and the attempted approach to England in the year 1885 (which according to the authors of the French Senatorial Commission's Report had no other object than to extend German dominance to the Mediterranean by isolating France) the unpopular Russophil attitude maintained by Berlin throughout the Bulgarian crisis of the year 1886, and the Reinsurance Treaty, all sprang from this fundamental idea. None of these alliances were concluded with the design of establishing German hegemony in Europe: in all the years, in which

he had the support of these alliances, Bismarck never took a step to secure any increase of Germany's power. It is well known that it was only with reluctance, and under pressure of the increase in the German population and the demands of the German trader and the German youth (which, unlike the youth of other Great Powers, had no room to stretch its legs) that he resolved on the acquisition of oversea possessions for Germany. His acquisitions were confined to regions which, so far as could be foreseen, could touch no vital interest of the other Great Powers with their satiety of colonial possessions.<sup>1</sup> The colonial empire thus peacefully acquired was in area, population and natural wealth so infinitely smaller than the colonial possessions of all other Great Powers that its acquisition did not in any sense affect the power or position of Germany in the world. And yet Germany's accusers, the authors of the French Senatorial Commission's Report, see in the colonial acquisitions of the Bismarckian era a proof of the design of Germany to extend her hegemony at the price of the world's peace. How unfounded this accusation is, appears with overwhelming clearness from the attitude of Bismarck in the conflict with Spain over the occupation of the Caroline Islands. There is no reference to his attitude in this matter in any of the innumerable publications of our enemies on the subject of Bismarckian policy. I propose to recall the story here, as it constitutes one of the strongest proofs of the peaceful character of that policy.

The Palao or Caroline Islands to the West of the Philippines, then still in Spanish possession, had been the subject of Notes from the German and British Governments dated respectively 3 and 4 March, 1875. The Notes arose out of the action of the Spanish Consul in Hong Kong, who

<sup>1</sup> The single exception is the case of the occupation of South West Africa, where the German flag had followed the German trader, and could not be hauled down. But even in the case of this colony, against the occupation of which England protested, matters never came to the point of serious conflict. F.O. Papers, Vol. IV, pages 56 to 108, Nos. 741 to 761.

had endeavoured to exercise administrative functions in respect of these islands; and the German and British Governments represented that the islands were territories to which Spanish sovereignty did not extend. The Spanish Government, as a result of these Notes, instructed the Spanish Consul in Hong Kong to refrain in future from all interference with the trade of foreign ships in the Caroline archipelago, and recognized the islands as territories without sovereign. Later, in August, 1885, German traders who had settlements in these islands asked the German Government for protection; and Prince Bismarck raised no objection to acceding to their request. He informed the Spanish Government on 6 August through the German Minister in Madrid, Count Solms-Sonnenwalde, that the Emperor William had decided to hoist the German flag in the Carolines. The German Government was greatly surprised when the Spanish Government on 12 August objected to this occupation. On 21 August the Spanish warship *Manila* appeared off the island of Yap. The captain landed troops; but no flag was hoisted, as an altar (which the Spaniards regarded as indispensable for such a ceremony) was not available on the spot, and would have to be brought from Manila. In the meanwhile the German gunboat *Itis* had arrived off the island. As soon as it had anchored, on 24 August, the Commander immediately landed troops and had the Imperial Proclamation read to them, and the German flag hoisted, to the sound of drums, at the factory of Herren Robertson and Herrnsheim. The captain of the Spanish ship, on being informed that the island was thenceforward under German protection, remarked that he had intended to proclaim Spanish sovereignty over the archipelago on the 27th.

Before the news of the hoisting of the German flag had reached Europe, intense excitement arose amongst the Spanish people as a result of the announcement communicated by the German Minister, the purport of which had been made public.



Prince Bismarck took no notice of this excitement, the flame of which was fanned by Republican and anarchistic elements, but replied to the Spanish protest by a note, dated 31 August, in which he showed that Spanish claims to these islands were without foundation, but at the same time asserted his earnest wish to remove the conflict which had arisen by friendly negotiations, and in the extreme case by resort to arbitration. In this he was following exactly the procedure laid down at the Congo Conference, although this procedure was only intended to apply to conflicts over sovereignty in Africa.

In spite of this readiness on the German side to meet the Spanish objections, the excitement in Spain increased, and on 4 September the Madrid mob tore down the German flag from the Legation building. This insult to the German flag was treated by Prince Bismarck as an incident which could have no influence on his decisions. The Spanish Premier called at the Legation and offered his excuses, and the German arms were once more put in place over the door of the Legation to the accompaniment of the customary ceremonial. On 10 October Bismarck proposed to the Spanish Government, to the intense astonishment of the whole world, to settle the dispute by submitting it to the arbitration of His Holiness Pope Leo XIII, that is to say a personage who must quite certainly appear an acceptable judge to the Church's most faithful daughter. Most astonishing of all, he did not recede from his proposal when the Spanish Government was not prepared to accept the Pope as an arbitrator but only as intermediary, and reserved the right not to accept the papal verdict if not satisfied with it. The decision of the Pope was given, as everyone knows, in favour of Spain. Spanish sovereignty over the Carolines was recognized ; but the Germans were to have freedom of trade and freedom of navigation and the right to erect a naval and coaling station on one of the islands.

Can there be a more convincing proof of the love of peace of the man whom French historians represent as

the uncompromising champion of the principle "Might goes before Right", than Bismarck's attitude in this case? There can be no doubt that by forcible handling of the matter he could have carried his point: nevertheless—and in spite of the insult to the German flag—he invoked the arbitration of a Power whose relations with Spain were closer than with the German Empire. Is this the action of a man whose one ambition is to create a position of dominance for his country?

This practical application of the idea of arbitration reveals the utter groundlessness of the suspicions of Prince Bismarck's policy with which the Senatorial Report is interlarded, and in particular of the theory of an ambition for hegemony, which the Report finds behind every diplomatic action which the Chancellor ever took. But the Chancellor's action in this case was not an isolated instance; it was he who introduced the idea of arbitration into the modern law of nations, if only for a particular territory by a pact signed by fourteen nations. This idea of arbitration, which the representatives of forty nations assembled in Geneva acclaim as a newly-discovered panacea for the maintenance of Peace, was in fact made the basis of an international agreement by the man who is described by our enemies as the most imperialistic statesman of recent history.

The Twelfth Article of the Third Part of the Congo Act, which was signed by Belgium, Denmark, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria-Hungary, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Norway and Sweden, the United States, and later by Turkey, runs as follows:

"In the event of serious conflict arising between the Powers who have signed, or who later adhere to, this Act with regard to the boundaries, or within the boundaries, of the territories specified in Article 1<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The territories specified in Article I are all territories in the basin of the Congo and its tributaries.

which come under the Free Trade regime, the said Powers undertake to invoke the mediation of one or more allied Powers before having recourse to arms. In the same event the said Powers reserve the right to propose recourse to a Court of Arbitration as they may prefer."

Although this Article, like the Covenant of the League of Nations, does not contain any obligation to accept an arbitrator's decision, it contains nevertheless an obligatory provision that recourse to mediation must be tried before recourse to arms, and is not very different in its operation—except that it is restricted to a narrow territory—from the provisions of Article 12 of the Covenant of the League.

That this Article introduced quite a new conception into the modern Law of Nations was freely recognized at the time. Prince Bismarck himself, in the speech with which he concluded the proceedings of the Conference which had sat from 15 November, 1884, to 26 February, 1885, in Berlin, said: "In the same order of ideas you have been at pains to anticipate misunderstandings and disputes to which new annexations of territory on the African littoral might give rise. The declaration as to the forms to be observed, if such annexations are to have legal force, introduces a new rule of international law, which will play its part in helping to avoid disturbances of the peace of nations."

At the students' *Kommers* in honour of Theodor Mommsen at the end of February, 1885, the historian Karl Wilhelm Nietzsche, in a speech on Bismarck, referred to the Congo Conference and said that the Chancellor, having long been a maker of history (*Historiker der Tat*) had now become a maker of law (*Jurist der Tat*) for out of the new Empire, which he had created, there had proceeded a new corpus of Law, the Law of the peace of nations, in the formation of which the Congo Act repre-

sented a significant advance.<sup>1</sup> Such was the impression which the Congo Conference made on contemporaries. It appeared to them as the first approach to an international organization for the maintenance of the world's peace, such as the very men, who now attack its author as the conscious disturber of the peace, were eager to extend to the whole world in the belief that therein lay the happiness of humanity. With such procedure of international law as the Congo Act lays down, ambitions for world hegemony are not reconcilable : the whole purpose of arbitration is to frustrate such ambitions. That the "new rule" of International Law was not merely an ordinance on paper for the man who had called it into being, was shown by him a month or two later when he had recourse to it in the conflict with Spain, which was a conflict outside the scope of the provisions of the Congo Act. Let us see what has been the attitude of other Powers since that time towards the conception of arbitration.

In the year 1904 Great Britain and Germany concluded an Agreement dated 12 July, under which all disputes not affecting the honour or vital interests of the two Contracting Parties were to be settled by arbitration.

After the Boer War differences arose between the two Contracting Parties as to the amount of compensation to be paid to the German settlers in the Transvaal who had suffered damage in the war ; and the Compensation Commission set up by the English Government to assess the damage rejected the protest, which the German Government had lodged against its assessment as being too low. After fruitless negotiations extending over some years, Germany in 1910 proposed to submit the dispute to arbitration under the Arbitration Agreement. The English Government declined this demand, on the ground that the honour of Great Britain forbade it to submit the

<sup>1</sup> S. Oncken, *Das Zeitalter Kaiser Wilhelms* (The era of the Emperor William), Vol. 2, page 916, and Gareis, *Institutionen des Völkerrechts* (Institutes of International Law), Giessen, 1888.

decisions of its Commissions to a Court of Arbitration. Bismarck did not find it inconsistent with the honour of Germany to submit the validity of a solemn Imperial Proclamation to a Court of Arbitration: Lord Lansdowne found it inconsistent with the honour of England to allow a Court of Arbitration to reconsider the amounts of compensation fixed by English Commissions. The Germans in the Transvaal accordingly were the sufferers. Can anyone who compares the attitude of Bismarck in the Caroline Islands dispute with that of Lansdowne after the Boer War, be in doubt as to which country was the more ready honourably to apply the arbitration idea? To ask the question, as I see the matter, is to answer it in the negative.

When the Caroline Islands dispute seemed likely to provoke war between Germany and Spain, the cry for "revenge" sprang up again in France, and was not quieted by the announcement of Bismarck's proposal of arbitration. In this Bismarck saw a confirmation of his rooted mistrust of French public opinion. He wrote on 21 September, 1885, to Prince Hohenlohe<sup>1</sup>: "The impression which the Spanish incident made on its first appearance, on Frenchmen of all Parties, has shown us that the French, however divided they may be at other times, are all at one in the design of seizing the first favourable opportunity of a breach with Germany. Fifteen years of friendly concessions in every corner of the political field, with the sole exception of Alsace, have not availed to produce any change or moderation in the French attitude. The suspicion with which the French population has received our conciliatory advances during all these years, their—not always secret—tolerance of the activities of the Ligue des Patriotes, the terrorism which the latter exercises over public opinion through its organs in the Press (subsidized in part out of public funds), the continuance of agitation amongst the population of the Reichsland—all

<sup>1</sup> F.O Papers, Vol. III, page 452, No. 707.

these are factors which we cannot ignore, and which will compel us, in the event of a war with Spain, to take measures for the security of our Western border. Our arming will in that case lead to counter-moves in France, and the reciprocal effects of gradually increasing armaments and gradually increasing tension may end in France being compelled by internal pressure to take action. It is probable that a reference to these dangers will influence such Frenchmen as are in favour of peace at all in the direction of the maintenance of a peaceful attitude in the Spanish question. Your Serene Highness will be good enough to conform your language to these lines on such occasions as may present themselves, but never without adding that we for our part shall continue to cultivate peaceful and neighbourly relations, though it is hard for us to believe that the same will always be the case on the French side."

Even in the words of this gentle warning there speaks the patent desire to maintain good relations with the unruly neighbour, despite all doubts of the love of peace of the French people.

MM. Bourgeois and Pagès contend that Bismarck had no grounds for such doubts of the French attachment to peace, that he only voiced such doubts in order to find pretexts for war, and that the reason why he was not convinced of the sincerity of the French attachment to peace was that he did not wish to be.<sup>1</sup> In support of their contention they adduce a number of assurances of leading French statesmen, in which (it is not to be denied) there appears to be sincere attachment to peace. Nor did Prince Bismarck himself question the sincerity of these assurances. That appears, amongst other indications, from the marginal notes which he has made on the report by his son of an interview at which the French Ambassador, Baron de Courcel, replied on behalf of the French Premier, Freycinet, to the warning quoted above, which had been

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 216. "Si Bismarck ne fut pas convaincu, en effet, c'est bien qu'il ne voulait pas l'être."

passed on by Hohenlohe. The Ambassador conveyed the lively regret of the French Premier that the German Press should have expressed doubt as to the loyalty of the French attitude in the Spanish conflict. On the word "attitude" Bismarck annotates: "Hardly of the Government": and on the French Premier's assurance that the French Government had from the first maintained an entirely correct attitude in the matter he notes "Certainly!" but adds: "But have all the Parties?"<sup>1</sup>

Bismarck was afraid, and in view of the circumstances of the outbreak of the war of 1870 he could not be otherwise than afraid, that the Government would be swept off its feet by a popular movement, if such were to assume threatening proportions. French Governments are, and have always been, much more susceptible to popular movements than those of any other European Great Power.

Had Bismarck cogent grounds, in the years which followed the decade of Franco-German *rapprochement*, for the fear that such a popular movement might arise and carry the French people with it, as it did in 1870?

The answer to this question inevitably calls up memories of the name Boulanger.

The General Boulanger appeared like a meteor in the French political heavens, and disappeared as quickly; and one has forgotten in consequence that the menace of war between France and Germany in the year 1887 was so closely connected with his name. The question of the grounds of Bismarck's mistrust can only be answered, if one recaptures the picture of the situation at the moment when French popular feeling, liberated by Boulanger from the phase of latency and suppression, and knowing no further restraint, actually brought Europe to the verge of catastrophe. It is quite wrong to say, as the Report of the Senatorial Commission says, that "certain demonstrative activities (*initiatives tapageuses*)" on the part of General Boulanger counted for nothing in the presence of

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. III, page 453, No. 708.

the peaceable assurances of successive French Governments. The French Government itself regarded the agitation very differently: it was full of anxiety lest it should be carried away by the Boulangist movement.<sup>1</sup>

Before he joined the Freycinet Cabinet in 1886, General Boulanger was already one of the most popular men in France; and it is significant of the fundamental military strain in the French character, how he first aroused enthusiasm. He had been appointed to command the troops in Tunis, and he resigned because a Ministerial Decree was issued placing him under the Civil Governor. For this action his friends in Paris, with Clemenceau at their head, began to chant his praises. His resignation was the signal for a struggle for a political principle. On becoming Minister of War, he won popularity with the country and with the Army by the issue of a number of service regulations of a democratic character, relaxing the rigour of the existing discipline.

On 13 March, 1886, in the debate on the conduct of the troops in the miners' strike in Decazeville, he used the memorable words: "At this moment, it may be, each soldier is sharing his soup and his ration of bread with a miner!" which was the signal for a storm of applause, not only in the Chamber, but in the entire Republican Press.

To the Cadets of Saint Cyr he said: "Open wide your hearts to the ideas of the century to which you belong! Let the breath of Progress enter, which is about to waft your generation so high and so far!"

At shooting and gymnastic celebrations in Nantes and Limoges, in Romans and in Bourg, he delivered speeches with political allusions such as the public had not been accustomed to hear from the lips of Ministers of War. For all these speeches he used the Press with great skill as a sounding-board; and they had a wide echo in the country.

<sup>1</sup> The following description of the Boulangist movement is from notes made by an authoritative observer, who was in Paris throughout the successive stages of the movement.



His popularity was so great that Ranc was constrained to state publicly in the *Matin* that the Republican party was united in declining to accept a General under any circumstances either as President of the Republic or Premier. To which the aged Republican Madier de Montjau in a speech at Valence, where the General was being fêted, replied to the accompaniment of loud applause: "The only man to make a really national army is the man who said at the tribune that the soldier would share his ration-bread with the worker!"

So powerful did he become that he could venture without fear of consequences to distribute public reproofs to such distinguished officers as General de Gallifet, the leader of the gallant and desperate cavalry attack at Sedan, and General Saussier, the Commandant of Paris. He even caused his strictures to be circulated by the official telegraphic agency, reckoning on the impression which anything unusual always makes in France. He knew how to hold and stimulate the popular enthusiasm by his personal appearance. A good rider and a graceful figure on a horse, he appeared at the parade in Longchamps on a magnificent black Arab horse. The sight of this superb War Minister in his General's uniform, galloping on his fiery Arab with a cavalcade of officers along the front of the troops, diverted all eyes from the unobtrusive Grévy in the Presidential Box. The real representative of the Republic on that day was the democratic General. Amid the jubilations of a thousand voices he rode through the Arc de Triomphe, not like a General returning from a review, but like a conqueror returning from a victorious campaign.

He knew how to exploit this enthusiasm. Two days after the parade he inaugurated a Military Club (which was more popular with the population of Paris than it was with the Army) and caused a procession of soldiers bearing torches to pass before its windows on the Place de l'Opéra. For this display he was greeted by the plaudits of the Paris mob. On 17 July the *Figaro* compared the popular

enthusiasm with that which greeted Louis Napoleon in 1850. The *Soleil* described the scene before the Cercle Militaire as “ the apotheosis ” of Boulanger. Delafosse, writing in the *Matin* under the heading “ Vive Boulanger ! ”, said that the country in its longing for a change left it to the General to choose between Brumaire and Fructidor. The spectre of the *coup d'état* loomed on the wall.

Underneath all these demonstrations of course the idea of “ the Revenge ” was smouldering, at first veiled behind the enthusiasm for the Army, but later appearing more openly. It was the driving force behind this stormy movement.

The ballads of the street have always been the best measure of national feelings : and it is proof of the strength of the impression which Boulanger had made on his compatriots that the *chansonnier* Paulus, the uncrowned king of the *cafés-chantants* of Paris, was a powerful ally of his. One of the most inane *chansons* that ever was written—the one beginning with the words “ En revenant de la revue ”—caught on like fire after Paulus had once sung it, and was heard wherever French “ patriots ” were gathered together. It rivalled for this purpose the *Marseillaise*. The applause with which it was greeted is clear proof of the strength of the “ Revanche ” ideal in the minds of the people. As soon as the idiotic verse

Ma tendre épouse bat les mains  
 En voyant v'nir les Saint Cyriens,  
 Ma belle-mère pousse des cris  
 En regardant des Spahis :  
 Moi, je ne fais qu'admirer  
 Le brave Général Boulanger.<sup>1</sup>

was sung at the Scala, it was the regular signal for a clamour from the gallery of “ A bas la Prusse ! ”

<sup>1</sup>My dearest wife exclaims : “ What pets ! ”  
 At sight of the Saint Cyr cadets.  
 A Spahi squadron pleases more  
 Her dear Mamma, my mother-in-law.  
 But as for me, I sit all day  
 And think of General Boulanger.

Ten days after the farce with the black horse, Ph. Girardin had an article in the *Figaro* with the heading "Boulangier, c'est la guerre!" in which the following passage occurred: "It does not require much reflection to see that the only General who is capable of giving France the mastery for which she has long been waiting is he who can offer us in our patriotic mourning satisfaction for Metz and Sedan. That is the idea behind this enthusiasm for military display. This General is for war; that is the point! And, to repeat a *mot* which it is said someone has made on the subject, the new Fructidor is to be merely the overture to a second Marengo."

A caricature appeared with a flight of ravens wearing German *Pickelhauben* (spiked helmets) on their heads scattering from the French frontier at the sight of Boulangier as a scarecrow. Underneath were the words:

Les vieux corbeaux teutons semblent glacés d'effroi  
 Au moindre vent soufflant de Lorraine et d'Alsace.  
 Boulangier, ombre en chair, au ventre leur fait froid,  
 Et c'est avec terreur qu'ils évitent la place.<sup>1</sup>

In the organ which the Chauvinists had started, the *Etendard*, there appeared a delirious poem, which represents the culminating point of the national movement in France at the close of the year 1886. It ran:

Tire nous de l'abîme où notre orgueil se traîne,  
 Conduis nos légions au glorieux chemin.  
 Rends nous l'honneur! Rends nous l'Alsace et la Lorraine!  
 Reviens en ramenant les deux sœurs à la main.

Alors tu seras tout, tu seras l'aube blanche,  
 Que le pays attend sur le vieux Rhin en feu;  
 Tu seras plus qu'un roi, tu seras plus qu'un Dieu,  
 Car tu seras la France, O général Revanche!<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The slightest breath of air from Alsace and Lorraine  
 Scatters the ravens black across Teutonia's plain.  
 At sight of Boulangier they instantly take flight:  
 'Tis very clear they have no stomach for the sight.

<sup>2</sup> See page 79.

Marius Richard meanwhile was singing in the Scala every evening a song which was greeted with storms of applause. The red glow of the longing for revenge in its verses is there for all eyes to see. “I ask not”, the song runs, “to know thy name: for us thou art ‘Hope’! To thee the fiancée offers her fiancé, the mother her son! The sailors come in from the depths of the Atlantic, and swell the tides of the Baltic with Prussian blood. The soldiers cry to him ‘Forwards!’ and the dead of 1870 promise him apotheosis! Alsace and Lorraine entreat him to unite them with the Motherland! With a stroke of thy sword awake the red glow of the new dawn! Point to our colours the road that leads to the Rhine! Appear! We await thee, General of the Revenge!”

In January, 1887, when the position of the War Minister was shaken by the attitude of the Parliament in presence of the enormous demands for the Army, Rochefort ventured on an article, in which he quite openly threatened Revolution. “On the day Boulanger is overthrown”, he wrote, “Paris will rise as one man: and the Army will not be on the side of the Government.”

In the early months of the year 1887 Boulangism took its first flight into the region of *haute politique*. It was in the Boulangist Press that the proposal of a Franco-Russian Alliance was first broached. It had a lively echo in Russia. A deputation of Russian patriots appeared in Paris, and presented the General with a Sword of Honour, on the blade of which were engraved the words: “Qui vive?”

<sup>2</sup> Out of the deep abyss, wherein our pride lies low,  
Lead us along the path our legions yearn to go!  
Give us our honour back! Give us Alsace-Lorraine!  
Give us the ravished pair of provinces again!

Thou shalt be then our All, the Sun of that bright morning,  
Of which old Rhine aflame one day will see the dawning!  
Thou shalt be more than King or God to us! In thee,  
Oh General Revenge! France, France Herself we see!

La France et Boulanger!"<sup>1</sup> and on the other side in Russian: "Venture! God protects the brave!" On the hilt was: "Au plus digne, 1887. La Russie."<sup>2</sup>

Is it reasonable to accuse Bismarck because finding from his perusal of the French Press and from eye-witnesses' reports<sup>3</sup> that the French people had given itself up to these paroxysms of patriotism, he arrived at the conclusion that permanent peace with such a people was impossible—is it reasonable, I repeat, to accuse him of unjustified suspicions, because he would not permit himself to be disabused of the belief that France would fall on Germany as soon as she could find the support of an ally for the purpose? Is it credible that such mistrust was merely assumed in order to make pretexts for a preventive war?

Is it not rather intelligible and natural that Bismarck should not have allowed his political decisions to be influenced by assurances of peaceful intentions emanating from a Premier in whose Cabinet was included a War Minister of this kind, and that he should reply to the enormous increase in the Army, which Boulanger demanded from the French Chamber, with the agitation of the Septennate elections? Is it not a proof of the most dispassionate moderation that, in spite of the popular movement in Paris, he should have continued to give the French assurances of his desire to maintain the friendly relations which had existed down to the year 1885?

That he did not desire to make the orgies of French Chauvinism the pretext for a German attack, is shown by a letter which he caused to be sent to Vienna by his son, Herbert, on 16 February, 1887, that is to say when the Boulangist movement was at its height. Vienna was

<sup>1</sup> "Who goes there?" "France and Boulanger!"

<sup>2</sup> To the most worthy, 1887. Russia.

<sup>3</sup> See in particular the reports of the German Military Attaché von Villaume: F.O. Papers, Vol. IV, pages 127, *seqq.*, Nos. 1,223, 1,224, 1,228, 1,232.

alarmed by the Paris reports, and apprehensive of the Chancellor's patience giving way. The Russian Ambassador in Vienna, Prince Lobanow, had told the German Ambassador, Prince Reuss VII, that in St. Petersburg war between Germany and France was regarded as inevitable. I propose to cite here the most important passage of this letter, because it is so extremely characteristic of Bismarck's views on preventive wars.<sup>1</sup>

“The Chancellor described as perfectly correct Your Excellency's action in informing your Russian colleague that we would never wage a war on the ground that it was bound to come sooner or later. No man can forestall divine providence to such an extent as to be able to say with absolute certainty that a war is bound to come: all kinds of incidents may supervene in the course of time to prevent the outbreak of a Franco-German war. I need only recall the period from 1815 to 1870, in which we lived with France in unbroken peace, although the longing for ‘revenge for Waterloo’ was undoubtedly very active at the beginning and in the middle of this period. It is also an historical fact that the relations between France and our ally at Waterloo, Great Britain, were so strained throughout the reign of Louis Philippe that a war between these two Powers was thought probable every year that regime lasted. And yet there was no war; and the changes and chances of the political kaleidoscope actually culminated in the *entente cordiale* between England and France of the ‘fifties.’”

Bismarck had made public announcement of this peaceful attitude a month before, in his speech of 11 January, 1887, in the Reichstag on the Army Bill. “We will never attack France”, he said on that occasion, “under any circumstances”; and he went so far as to assert his firm

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IV, page 172, No. 1,249.

confidence in the existing Government in France, that is in the Government to which Boulanger belonged. He added, however, that the historic conflict, which for three centuries past had been proceeding between Germany and France, was not at an end yet, and that we must be prepared for it to be continued from the French side. His actual words were : " It is my conviction that we have reason to fear war as the result of an attack by France : whether in ten days or in ten years is a question which I am not in a position to answer : the answer is dependent on the life of the present Government in France. It is any day possible that a Government will come into power in France, whose whole policy it will be to live on the *feu sacré* which is now so carefully covered over with cinders. No peaceful assurances, no speeches or utterances will avail completely to allay my apprehensions on this account." The addition of these words was assuredly the very least that he could say in view of the conditions which the enthusiasm for Boulanger had brought to the surface in France.

These peaceful utterances were answered by the French Minister of War with the announcement that he proposed to order the trial mobilization of an entire Army Corps.

While the tension aroused by the Chauvinist agitation in France was at its height, there came the incident of the arrest of the Police Commissioner Schnäbele of Pagny, with which the crisis of the year 1887 reached its culminating point. The incident is of course continually brought forward as a proof that Bismarck desired war. The report of the French Senatorial Commission, although its authors were acquainted with the essential documents of the case, contains the unintelligible exclamation : " What then did the Chancellor expect as a result of this arrest, if it was not war ? Can it be believed that he would have allowed incidents of this kind to take their course, if he had really been as anxious to maintain peace as he asserted ? It is enough in conclusion merely to ask these questions." These rhetorical questions of MM. Bourgeois and Pagès

can be answered without difficulty from the published Papers of the German Foreign Office.

An agent of the name of Tobias Klein living in Strassburg was arrested on 11 February, 1887, for high treason. In his deposition he incriminated the French Police Commissioner, Schnäbele, of Pagny, to such an extent that the magistrate dealing with the case considered it urgently necessary to issue a warrant for Schnäbele's arrest, if he should come again to German soil. The Chancellor was informed of this step on the part of the magistrate by the Secretary of State in the Ministry of Justice, Dr. Schelling. The Secretary of State declared that he did not regard himself as justified in interfering with the step taken by the magistrate. Bismarck answered on 12 March that, from the political standpoint, he saw no objection to the arrest of Schnäbele, if found again on German soil.<sup>1</sup> The rhetorical questions of the Senatorial Report and the numerous other French accounts of the Schnäbele Affair represent Bismarck as having made this statement with the intention of exciting such a storm in France by the arrest of Schnäbele as to force the French Government to yield to the pressure of popular feeling and declare war.

Just two months before, the Chancellor had declared to the whole world, in the speech of 11 January which has been quoted, that under no circumstances would he attack France. He had indicated in a number of instructions to the representatives of the Reich in foreign countries that a war between France and Germany would be with the highest degree unwelcome to him. He had displayed extreme patience in the face of unparalleled provocations by a member of the French Government. But even in the mild German Chancellor fear of the simmering French psychology could not go so far as to induce him to suspend, on political grounds, a judicial inquiry involving the arrest of a French official engaged in espionage on German soil. If Bismarck had replied to Secretary of State Schelling

<sup>1</sup> See F.O. Papers, Vol. VI, pages 182-9, Nos. 1,257-66.



that Schnäbele was not to be arrested on any account, he would have been guilty not merely of executive interference in a pending judicial proceeding: he would also have been proclaiming that Germany had been so alarmed by the orgies of French Chauvinism of the past two years, which (as we have seen) had just at this moment reached their zenith, that the German Government had no longer the courage to stop the operations of French spies on German territory and call them to account, if such spies were French officials: although as a fact the official character of the spy was not a mitigating, but rather an aggravating, circumstance. It is also quite certain that any French Minister, finding himself in the same position of having to deal with a report of the Minister of Justice, would have acted in precisely the same manner as Prince Bismarck acted on 11 March, 1887.

Police Commissioner Schnäbele was accordingly arrested on 20 April as soon as he came again on German soil. There was strong reason to believe that he was the centre of French espionage in Alsace-Lorraine. Complete proof of his guilt was discovered, and it was clear that the arrest was justified.

Bismarck writes on the matter on 28 April to the French Ambassador in Berlin, M. Herbette:<sup>1</sup> "The judicial proceedings against Schnäbele are in connection with a charge of high treason committed on German territory, and are based on complete proofs of his guilt, consisting of confessions of the German national, Klein, accused of the same offence, and also of letters of Klein posted in Metz, the authenticity of which is admitted by Schnäbele. In view of the guilt proved (which has subsequently been admitted by Schnäbele himself) the German Court gave orders for Schnäbele's arrest. The arrest was effected on 20 April on the occasion of a meeting on German soil which had been previously arranged between Schnäbele and the German Police Commissioner, Gautsch: there was

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. VI, page 187, No. 1,264.

no crossing of the French frontier." This letter, which, with the documentary evidence of Schnäbele's guilt, was addressed to Herbette, shows that any order on the part of the Chancellor to prevent the arrest would have been an unparalleled neglect of duty. It is therefore a calumny, which is refuted not only by the Chancellor's public assurances of his love of peace but also by the clearest internal evidence, that Bismarck did not prevent the arrest of Schnäbele because he wished to provoke a French declaration of war. It would have been, on the contrary, clear proof of the bellicose intentions of the French people, if war had followed as a result of the arrest.

A mistake had, however, been committed by a subordinate authority in the matter of the arrest, without of course the cognizance of the German Chancellor. It was in consequence of an invitation from a German Police official that Schnäbele came on German soil on 20 April. As soon as the proofs of this were shown to Bismarck, he ordered the release of the accused French official without any delay, although it was not clear that the invitation to Schnäbele by the German Police Commissioner, Gautsch, in Ars, was sent with the object of effecting his arrest. Bismarck gave the following reasons for his decision to the French Ambassador in the letter of 28 April quoted above: "If nevertheless the undersigned conceived it to be his duty to petition his most gracious Sovereign the Emperor for the release of Schnäbele, he was actuated in taking this step by the consideration of the principle of international law that, when frontiers are crossed in consequence of official understandings between the functionaries of neighbouring States, there is always present a tacit guarantee of safe-conduct. It is not credible that the official, Gautsch, invited Schnäbele to an interview with the design of facilitating his arrest: but there is the evidence of letters to prove that Schnäbele was present at the place of his arrest in consequence of an understanding with the former German official for the transaction of official business

concerning them both. If frontier officials on such occasions were exposed to the danger of arrest on warrants issued by the Courts of the neighbouring State, the precautions which it would be necessary to take would not conduce to facilitating frontier business in the spirit and tradition of modern international relations. The undersigned accordingly takes the view that such official meetings should be regarded as implying always a guarantee of safe-conduct."

Is a man, who thus candidly writes of the violation of the principle of safe-conduct—although no safe-conduct was guaranteed in the case in question—and who bases his action solely on grounds of expediency and the practical necessities of international frontier relations, to be supposed to have provoked consciously the entire affair with the object of precipitating a war with France? <sup>1</sup>

To-day there should not be a single individual in France to answer this question in the negative, since the Schnäbele case displays a resemblance with the case of General von Nathusius, which positively cries aloud. General von Nathusius had applied for leave to enter French territory in order to visit the graves of his relations. He received a French *visa* to his passport for the purpose. When a German, who has been condemned by a French Court, receives a permit to enter France in response to an applica-

<sup>1</sup> When the German Chargé d'Affaires, Count Leyden—during the critical days of the incident Count Münster was not in Paris—reported to Bismarck on 24 April that the explanation given by the Chancellor of Schnäbele's arrest had allayed the marked initial excitement of the public and the apprehensions of the French Minister, Flourens, Bismarck replied on the same day instructing Count Leyden to take an opportunity of informing the French that the German Government had no connection with the matter, as the whole incident was due to the initiative of the Courts in connection with a judicial inquiry, and that he would much regret and disapprove of any excesses, should such have occurred. This telegram surely proves that Bismarck gladly welcomed the relaxation of tension which his first explanations had occasioned, and designed by this fresh statement completely to allay the public excitement. F.O. Papers, Vol. VI, page 183, No. 1,260.

tion such as that put forward in this case by General von Nathusius, such a permit amounts to an assurance of safe-conduct. In spite of it General von Nathusius was arrested. The German Government did not fail to call the attention of the French Government to this breach of agreement, but did not so much as receive an answer. General von Nathusius was subjected to judicial proceedings, which were described even in countries closely allied with France as a farce, and to a severe sentence of penal servitude for a crime which he had quite certainly not committed. He denied his guilt. Schnäbele admitted his. Schnäbele was immediately released, when it appeared that in accordance with the spirit of a principle of international law a violation of safe-conduct was involved. For this release the man, whom his accusers charge with having been animated throughout by the desire for war with France, was responsible; and he furnished the fullest explanations to the other side in connection with the case. General von Nathusius had received explicit safe-conduct—for what else is a *visa* on a passport?—and his safe-conduct was violated: but it never occurred to any French Minister to make admission of a violation of international law, and to release the accused person, as Bismarck had done. The French Ministers did not so much as deign to discuss the matter. The pardon extended to the General was under these circumstances a confirmation of the validity of the French proceedings, and nothing else.

Bismarck's attitude throughout the Schnäbele case was always correct, and constitutes one proof more of the truth of the public assurance which he had given of his love of peace.

When MM. Bourgeois and Pagès assert that very little was wanting to produce a war as a result of the Schnäbele Affair, they may be right. But if they are so, the reason is to be sought in the fact that a man like General Boulanger held the post of War Minister in France, and not in the fact that Prince Bismarck held the post of Chancellor of

the German Reich. War was prevented, not by the tact of the French Foreign Minister and the love of peace of President Grévy, but by Prince Bismarck's release of the French frontier official. Had Bismarck not so acted, the love of peace of Flourens and Grévy, the sincerity of which Bismarck did not doubt, and which indeed after the publication of the Foreign Office Papers is no longer open to question, would not have sufficed to prevent war, since the "General of Revenge", whom President Grévy himself, after he had ceased to hold office, described to Count Münster as "*cet animal de Général démagogue*",<sup>1</sup> would have had so strong a current of popular feeling behind him that he would have been able to put his long cherished designs into effect. M. Goblet, Premier of the French Cabinet, when on 1 May the Ambassador Herbette came to Paris and was received by Grévy and Flourens with open arms, went so far as to say: "The incident is at an end; but it would perhaps have been better to make an end once for all by war of these '*querelles d'Allemands*'." The utterance in question is known from the report of MM. Bourgeois and Pagès, that is to say from a source beyond suspicion. It is taken from a marginal note of the Ambassador Herbette on the papers of the Schnäbele Affair.<sup>2</sup> It was therefore the French Premier, and not the German Chancellor, who then raised the issue, and spoke quite frankly on the subject, of a preventive war.

In spite of the peaceful settlement of the Schnäbele incident, for which Prince Bismarck was primarily responsible, General Boulanger two weeks later applied to the French Chamber for a vote of five million francs for the trial mobilization of an Army Corps, although everyone was well aware in France that so unusual a step would again cause great uneasiness in Germany. The declarations, which Flourens thought it necessary to make on 11 May in a conversation with Count Münster, leave no

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. VI, page 204.

<sup>2</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 229.

doubt that the French Ministry was well aware of the perilous character of this step, with which all the Ministers, except the Foreign Minister, were in agreement.<sup>1</sup> In spite of this Boulanger was empowered to go forward with his application for the vote.

Eight days later the Goblet Ministry fell, and the Rouvier Cabinet was formed, in which Boulanger had no post.

The Report of the French Senatorial Commission asserts that, in spite of the elimination of General Boulanger, "the affair continued to develop as though the Schnäbele case had given the German Government new grounds for mistrust".<sup>2</sup> The report offers no proof of this assertion. On the contrary it admits that at this period the first preliminary indications of the *rapprochement* between France and Russia were apparent, which led to the Franco-Russian Alliance after Bismarck's fall, that is to say that an event was already under way which would give Germany every reason to be alarmed in the highest degree.

The authors of the Senatorial Commission's Report have not been able to find any material in support of the War Guilt Lie in the French official papers dealing with the last year of the reign of the Emperor William I. I have not, therefore, to concern myself with the events of this period, important as they were in the development of the international situation.

Anyone who reads the French newspapers from May to July, 1887, will find them filled with the bitterest attacks

<sup>1</sup> Count Münster reports on the same day: "Yesterday, when I discussed the Zanzibar Treaty with the Minister, he remarked that I must have seen from the Press that General Boulanger had laid his plan for the mobilization of an Army Corps before the Cabinet, and had unhappily been authorized to introduce it in the Chamber. He (M. Flourens) had protested to the best of his ability against the proposed step: he considered the moment highly inopportune, and the step itself dangerous. He found reassurance in the firm conviction, which he had, that the Parliament would not pass the Bill." F.O. Papers, Vol. VI, page 189, No. 1,265.

<sup>2</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 230.

on Germany, although that which was happening in Germany was only what had already happened in France, and was amply justified by the storm-clouds menacing from the East, namely an increase in Germany's military force. <sup>1</sup>

That this increase in Germany's military force was not due to designs of attack is shown clearly by instructions which Prince Bismarck sent through Count Rantzau from Varzin to the German Ambassador in Paris on 9 July, 1887. In this letter he desires Count Münster to say and do nothing about the French mobilization plan, and he adds to this instruction the following observations: "If we really desired to fall on France, it would be a particularly favourable moment to do so, when the French are allowing themselves the luxury of a partial mobilization, because that would inevitably complicate the difficulties of the general mobilization. But no attack will ever be made on France with the assent of the Chancellor: the Chancellor is for awaiting attack from the French side under any circumstances, and against allowing ourselves to weaken in this attitude by any provocations, irrespective of whether our attitude thereby enhances the Germanophobia of the French, already verging on the insane, or not." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter VII—"The Competition in Armaments".

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. VI, page 201, No. 1,273.

## PART TWO

GERMANY'S POLICY OF PEACE  
FROM THE ASCENSION OF WILLIAM II  
TO THE YEAR 1904





## CHAPTER IV

### TRIPLE ALLIANCE—DUAL ALLIANCE—SHIMONOSEKI

TEN days after his accession my father delivered to the Reichstag his first Speech from the Throne. The passage which referred to foreign policy indicates what remained the attitude of his rule from that day to the fateful evening of 31 July, 1914, when, from the balcony of the Castle in Berlin he uttered the words "The sword has been forced into our hands". The passage in question is as follows: "In the field of foreign policy I am determined to keep peace with everyone, so far as in me lies. My affection for the German army and the position which I hold in regard to it will never lead me into the temptation of tampering with the benefits which peace confers on my country, unless war is forced upon us by an attack on the Reich or on its allies. Our army is there to ensure for us the maintenance of peace and, if in despite of us it is broken, to win it for us again with honour. That task it will be able, with God's help, to accomplish thanks to the strength it has received by the Army Law which you have just unanimously voted. To employ this strength for wars of aggression is far from my heart. Germany needs no new military glory or conquests of any kind, since she has won for herself at last the right to existence as a united and independent nation."

These words are the expression of the same sincere will to peace which, as I have endeavoured to show in the first

part of this book, dominated two decades, now almost at their end, during which my great-grandfather and his great Chancellor with unswerving consistency made peace the basis of Germany's relations with the other Powers. Nothing else indeed was to be expected ; for this Speech from the Throne bore the counter-signature of the same Chancellor who had been responsible for German policy throughout the reign of the Emperor William I.

MM. Bourgeois and Pagès expressly state that the policy of my father never differed fundamentally from that of Prince Bismarck. Such an assertion in their mouths means, it is true, the opposite of what I understand by it, when I say that Bismarck's policy was continued by my father. At the head of the passage in their book with which they begin their criticism of the policy of William II, they have the following words : " After the long reign of William I the impression was common in Germany and Europe that the appearance on the scene of a young, active and ambitious Emperor marked the beginning of a new era : and the powerful personality of William II was in fact an element of no small importance in the development of German policy. But it is nevertheless not to be supposed that the policy of William II ever differed in principle appreciably from that of Bismarck. That policy was too deeply rooted in the century-old tradition of the Hohenzollerns, particularly Frederick II, for the personality of an Emperor to be able noticeably to influence it. There were times under William II when German policy made new gestures to the world or wore a new guise ; but the spirit of it was not changed. At the outset, moreover, Bismarck remained for two years at the helm. And the events of these two years appeared to have consolidated his work, the attainment of German hegemony in Europe."

In proof of their assertions that Bismarck's work, the attainment of German hegemony in Europe, was consolidated during the first two years of my father's reign,

MM. Bourgeois and Pagès argue that the renewal, and in particular the extension, of the Triple Alliance Treaties in February, 1887, and the simultaneous *rapprochement* of Germany and England, had established Germany firmly in a dominant position in Europe. They write: "If ever there was a policy of encirclement, it was that to which Bismarck gave effect against France, when he threatened her even in the Mediterranean with the menace of joint action by the Italian and British fleets."

In considering this charge it appears to me essential to be clear what the Powers, who were allied against us in the war, understand by the expression "hegemony." In the question of War Guilt it plays a decisive rôle, since our accusers assert that the Emperor provoked the war of 1914 in order to establish Germany's hegemony in Europe for all time. In the censorious sense in which the expression is used in the allied explanation of Art. 231, and in the many speeches of British, French, Russian and even Italian Ministers during the war, hegemony can only mean the concentration of such power in the Government of a single State that all the other States together are unable to stand up against it, and must comply with its wishes, however harmful such wishes may be for them or for particular States amongst them.

Such an hegemony has been exercised by one State alone since the beginning of the nineteenth century, and that for the short period of a single decade only. That State was the same that is now the most passionately indignant at the hegemonist ambitions of Germany. It was France in the time of the first Napoleon. Napoleon set up and put down kings as he pleased, and succeeded in bringing the peoples of Europe (with the exception of England and Russia, whose overthrow he was unable to accomplish), between the years 1803 and 1813, into a position of exclusive subservience to French interests. They were in fact like slaves deprived of any power of resistance.

Since that time there has been no hegemony in Europe.

In its place there has been a constant equilibrium of power between the European peoples ; and it was the maintenance of this equilibrium which was continuously the basic idea of German policy, ever since Germany entered the ranks of the great Powers as a unified State. The Alliance policy of Bismarck and of my father alike were devoted to this object ; and when war came, it was only because the policy of the balance of power and the maintenance of the *status quo*, which can scarcely ever be modified without war, had ceased to be in accordance with the desires of either England, France or Russia, or, in the end, of Italy. All the Great Powers of Europe except Germany had desires which could only be satisfied by war.

The conception of hegemony and that of the balance of power are mutually exclusive ; and this consideration alone is sufficient to invalidate the charge against Germany of having aimed at hegemony in Europe.

The supplement to the Triple Alliance Treaty of 1882, which was concluded on 20 February, 1887, is cited in the Report of the French Senatorial Commission as documentary proof of Germany's designs. In fact it confirms my assertion that Germany's only desire was the maintenance of the *status quo*, that is to say of peace, since it was directed against those Powers which were anxious to upset the unstable balance of European relations.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The two articles of the Supplementary Treaty of 20 February, 1887, which are pertinent in this connection, run as follows :

" Article III.—Should France attempt to extend her occupation or protectorate or sovereignty in any form in North Africa, and should Italy in consequence feel herself compelled for the maintenance of her position in the Mediterranean to take action herself in this respect, or to have recourse to extreme measures on French territory in Europe, the state of war resulting between Italy and France would thereupon constitute the *casus fœderis* with all the consequences for which provision is made by Articles II and V of the above-named Treaty of 20 May, 1882, at the demand of Italy, for the two Powers conjointly, as though such a possibility had been expressly contemplated in the said Treaty.

" Article IV.—Should the vicissitudes of such a joint war against

This supplement to the Triple Alliance Treaty, the object of which is alleged to have been the encirclement of France, was concluded, not as a guarantee of the security of German possessions or for the sake of German interests at all, but in the interests of Italy ; which alone is sufficient to deprive the charge in the French Report of all point.<sup>1</sup> It increased Germany's obligations : it did not increase her rights : and Bismarck, who had consistently endeavoured to avoid any extension of German obligations under the Alliance to the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Mediterranean, only agreed to it because the renewal of the Triple Alliance was not possible without it. Count Robilant, the Italian Foreign Minister, had told him that

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France lead Italy, with a view to securing the frontiers of the Italian kingdom and the position of Italy on the seas, as also with a view to the attainment of permanent peace, to seek for territorial security from France, Germany will place no obstacle in her way, and will endeavour as required and as the circumstances allow to facilitate the attainment of such objects."

<sup>1</sup> The basic documentary authority for the attribution to Italy of the initiative in the conclusion of the Supplementary Treaty is the despatch of the German Ambassador, Herr von Keudell, to Prince Bismarck of 5 October, 1886, reporting a conversation with the Italian Foreign Minister, Count Robilant. In the course of this conversation Herr von Keudell inquired on behalf of Bismarck whether the Italian Government was disposed to renew the Alliance Treaty with the two Central Powers—Germany and Austria—on the same basis as before. Count Robilant replied that it was important for him to ascertain whether His Serene Highness [Bismarck] was disposed to admit as a subject of negotiation the discussion of what for Italy were a primary interest—her Mediterranean interests. Should the answer be in the affirmative, the principal objective of Italy would be the maintenance of the *status quo* in Tripoli. He explained at length that a storm of indignation would be directed in Italy against the Central Powers, if France were to carry out a successful *coup de main* in Tripoli. He hinted that, if Germany did not undertake to include the Mediterranean interests of Italy in the Triple Alliance, "the effect would be to drive, not himself (for he himself was for the maintenance of the Triple Alliance in any circumstances), but any and every other Italian Government into the arms of France". F.O. Papers, Vol. IV, page 186, No. 823.

France had made the most enticing offers to secure Italy as an ally.<sup>1</sup>

Germany's action therefore, in binding herself under the Supplementary Treaty of 20 February to stand by Italy in the event of a war arising out of French intervention in Italy's sphere of interests in the Mediterranean, and, in case of victory, not to oppose Italian wishes for territorial extensions to protect her Mediterranean frontiers, is itself a proof that Germany had no hegemony in Europe. Far from being able to compel her Ally to cross the Alps to prolong the Treaties which protected her own frontiers, she was compelled, much against her will, to make concessions, which in their sequel could at most lead to an extension of her Ally's territory, and could in no case mean an increase of her own strength. The authors of the French Senatorial Report are therefore directing their accusation against the wrong party, when they accuse Germany of the design, by means of the Supplementary Treaty, to encircle France. It was Italy which pressed for this encirclement; and it was in the interests of Italy alone that the Supplementary Treaty was concluded. The Supplementary Treaty served no interests of Germany, and the German position in Europe would have been equally assured by the renewal of the Treaty of 1882 without additions of any kind. The "encirclement" of France was due to the initiative of Italy, who fought in the war on the side of France and now associates herself with France in the charges of the Note of 16 June, 1919.

<sup>1</sup> Ten days after the above-mentioned conversation with Keudell, Count Robilant communicated to Prince Bismarck in strict confidence a despatch of the Italian Ambassador in Paris, Ressimann, reporting a conversation with Freycinet, in which the French Premier endeavoured to induce Italy to conclude a Treaty of Alliance by promises of the most lavish character. Count Launay, the Italian Ambassador in Berlin, in the conversation in which he carried out Robilant's instructions, remarked: "Freycinet is playing the part of the Tempter. He takes Count Robilant to the top of an exceeding high mountain and says to him. 'All this shall be thine.'" F.O. Papers, Vol. IV, pages 189-92, No. 825.

In this connection I may refer to a consideration, which has not (so far as I am aware) been put forward as it might have been in the War Guilt question.

If Germany, as the Note of 16 June, 1919, asserts, had been preparing war for decades, and asserting a claim to European hegemony, then the place of Italy at any rate is not on the accuser's bench but side by side with her in the dock. Throughout the period covered by this charge, Italy was the ally of Germany, and had renewed so lately as 1912 the Treaty which for thirty years had been the basis of the policy by which, it is alleged, we were seeking to obtain for ourselves the hegemony of the world. For thirty years Italy, of her own free will, assumed the obligation to guarantee with arms the security of this "people swollen with lust for tyranny", and with cannon and rifles to prevent the righting of "the great wrong which has poisoned the peace of Europe for fifty years". If now she does not stand with Germany in the dock, for the reason that after a year of hesitation she finally came down on the side of Germany's enemies, and now joins with them in bringing against Germany accusations which cover the period of her alliance with the Central Powers, what is that but one more proof of the fact that all these accusations were concocted after the event, in order to evolve some kind of justification for the monstrous peace of dictation which was imposed at Versailles? Is it conceivable that the successive Italian Governments, which followed one another during the thirty years of alliance, should have noticed nothing of the German "lust for tyranny", if this lust was really the determining factor of our policy? Sidney Sonnino himself, the Italian Minister (that is) who finally brought Italy into the war, cannot have believed in the criminal responsibility of Germany: or, if he did, the proposals which he made to the Austrian Government on 8 April, 1915, nearly a year after the outbreak of the war, would be quite unintelligible. In these proposals Italy declared herself in readiness to remain neutral for the whole duration of the war if Austria would



cede South Tyrol to her, not to the Brenner, but only as far as Bozen, and would make a Free State of Trieste.<sup>1</sup> I cannot conceive that Italy would have made such proposals, if she had been persuaded of Germany's responsibility for the war in the sense of the Treaty of Versailles and the Covering Note of 16 June. Otherwise, had Austria accepted her terms on the spot, Italy by undertaking—at a price—to remain neutral would have been assuming part responsibility for “the greatest crime against humanity”.<sup>2</sup> For these reasons Italy should be the first Power to side with us in our struggle against the War Guilt Lie. If in that struggle she is remaining—at any rate officially—on the side of our enemies, she cannot avoid incurring a share of the guilt.

The allegation that the Emperor, when in the opening years of his reign he concluded the Supplementary Treaties of 1887, was pursuing a policy of isolating France, stands refuted by the evidence given above that the Treaties in question were due to Italian initiative, and could not therefore have been due to German designs of encirclement.

<sup>1</sup> The draft Agreement embodying these terms is contained in the Note which Sonnino sent to the Duca d'Avarna, the Italian Ambassador in Vienna, on 8 April, 1915. The Note begins as follows: “To comply with the wish expressed to you by Baron Burian, I indicate below the terms which the Royal Italian Government regards as indispensable to create normal and permanent conditions of mutual cordiality between the two States, and to facilitate future co-operation for common aims of general policy.” And Article X of the draft Agreement runs: “Italy undertakes throughout the entire duration of this war to preserve complete neutrality in relation to Austria-Hungary and Germany.” Italian Green Book No. 64.

<sup>2</sup> On 3 August, 1914, that is to say, after the outbreak of the war, the King of Italy told the German Military Attaché and A.D.C. to the Emperor, Lieutenant-Colonel von Kleist, who approached him by order of the Emperor with the request for immediate mobilization of the Army and Navy and for Allied co-operation, that “he personally was with his whole heart on the side of Germany, and until a few weeks ago had never questioned that in the event of war Italy would be found loyally by the side of her Allies”. See *Deutsche Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch* (German documentary evidence on the outbreak of war) edited by Count Max Montgelas and Professor Walter Schücking, Vol. IV, page 23, No. 771.

The baselessness of the allegation is shown equally by the many attempts which were made by my father to promote better relations between Germany and France.

On the courtesies shown to the French by the Emperor, of which there was no lack in the early years of his reign, it is not necessary to lay too much stress, as such attentions were of course cheap for Germany ; but at any rate it is impossible to associate them with war aims, or preparations for war, or a design to isolate France and establish German hegemony in Europe. They show at any rate the efforts of Germany to get rid of that "atmosphere of revenge" which was perpetually kept alive by the *Ligue des Patriotes*, and to strengthen the factors making for peace in Europe by the promotion of just such a spirit of "moral disarmament" as France is at present purposely making impossible by the policy she has pursued towards Germany since the Peace of Versailles. Such efforts in the direction of better relations were the visit of the Empress Frederick to Paris in February, 1891, the wreaths sent by the Emperor on the death of Meissonier and MacMahon, the warm message of sympathy after the assassination of President Carnot, and the pardon extended on the day of the murdered President's funeral to two French naval officers convicted of espionage. It is intelligible that, when these attempts at *rapprochement* twenty years after the Peace of Frankfort not only failed to find an echo on the other side, but were even the occasion for new ebullitions of hatred in the French Press, as in the case of my grandmother's visit to Paris,<sup>1</sup> and when it was thus clear that the spirit of revenge was still extremely alive, mistrust of French intentions won the day with my father, and found

<sup>1</sup> The Empress Frederick stayed in Paris from 18 to 26 February. She confined herself during this visit to demonstrating her interest in French art, and avoided all political utterances. She also declined to receive members of the House of Orleans. In spite of this retirement M. Déroulède and his adherents succeeded in making an act of friendliness, designed to facilitate the participation of French artists in the Berlin Exhibition, into the occasion for a storm in the French Press, so that Prince Münster was

vent in utterances which were liable to be misunderstood.<sup>1</sup> My father's mistrust however had no influence on German policy.<sup>2</sup> General von Caprivi had no more belief in preventive wars than Bismarck, and he was the first to initiate negotiations at all points where an understanding with France was possible.

more than relieved when he had brought my grandmother in safety on board the ship which was to take her from Calais. F.O. Papers, Vol. VII, page 279, No. 1,551.

How untrue it was that France was encircled at this time is shown by the fact that in Russia, where the German approaches to France had been watched with concealed annoyance, the liveliest satisfaction was expressed at the success of the French Chauvinists. "Not a single newspaper", writes the German Military Attaché, von Villaume, from St. Petersburg, "had a word of disapproval for the tactless demonstration of the Chauvinists. . . . All blame Germany for what occurred". The *Grazhdanin* wrote: "The conqueror who ventures, after defeat, ruin and insult of a weaker neighbour, to make himself at home without further ado in the city he has destroyed, must not expect his appearance to be welcome". F.O. Papers, Vol. VII, page 196, No. 1,439.

In England the attitude of the French Press was condemned in the strongest terms. The *Standard* wrote that it had helped to clear the situation and to show the world once more that the French longing for "*revanche*" had not disappeared, but was still the same regrettable factor making for the disturbance of European peace. See Report of the Ambassador, Count Hatzfeld, of 27 February, 1891. F.O. Papers, Vol. VII, page 283, No. 1,553.

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor's mistrust, however, found vent only in marginal notes on the despatches of Count Münster, which he found too optimistic, and was not publicly expressed. It was strengthened by information, which he received in Darmstadt from Major von Huene, formerly Military Attaché in Paris. An American industrialist and an American officer had told the Attaché that it was being asserted in French military and naval circles that there would be war with Germany in the fall. F.O. Papers, Vol. VII, page 295, No. 1,565 and page 299, No. 1,567.

<sup>2</sup> The wish aroused in my father (as a result of the simultaneous arrival of an optimistic despatch from Count Münster and reports from other sources to an opposite effect which he considered more reliable) to replace Münster by General Count Wedel met with opposition in the Foreign Office, and my father did not press his suggestion. F.O. Papers, Vol. VII, page 296, No. 1,566.

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Such an opportunity for negotiations arose in the field of colonial policy in the autumn of 1893. Caprivi, who had already abolished passport restrictions in Alsace-Lorraine in response to a request of Ribot's in September, 1891, took advantage of this opportunity, in spite of a new wave of Chauvinism which burst over France in connection with the visit of the French Fleet to Kronstadt, and in spite of the increasingly cordial friendship between Russia and France.

In September, 1892, the Colonial Department of the Foreign Office in a "Memorandum on the security of the Hinterland of Cameroon" had suggested, in opposition to French claims in this region, the sending of a German scientific expedition to the spot. Caprivi disagreed in the following words: "So long as we have still the prospect of a settlement for Alsace-Lorraine to face, we shall be well advised to avoid situations which, for the sake of doubtful colonial possessions, may lead to complications with France, in which the attitude of our Allies and also of England would at any rate be uncertain. . . . In the present case we shall do well to avoid bargaining with France, to refrain from reckoning on the employment of extreme measures, and to bring our aims into harmony with the means at present at our disposal in the colonial field."<sup>1</sup>

The matter had been the subject of negotiations already in 1890, but they had not led to any result, and had added to the points of friction between Germany and France. On 15 July, 1893, the Secretary of State, Baron von Marschall, returned to the matter. He invited the French Ambassador, M. Herbette, to resume negotiations, and handed him a memorandum outlining Germany's demands to the east of Cameroon.<sup>2</sup> It was not until 15 March, 1894, that the negotiations, for which the Director of the French Colonial Department visited Berlin in December, ended in an agreement.

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. VII, page 329, No. 1,589.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. VII, page 335, No. 1,598.

In this agreement Germany was by no means successful in carrying all her points. In the division between the spheres of influence she left the northern part of the Hinterland of Cameroon, as far as the line of the Shari, to French influence, so that the road to Bahr el Ghazal and Fashoda was left open to France.

The poverty of documentary proof at the disposal of our accusers in support of their charge of German ambitions for hegemony is shown by the fact that they are reduced to citing even these negotiations, which ended in a sense favourable to France and reduced the number of points of difference between the two countries, as a proof of the artfulness of German policy. MM. Bourgeois and Pagès seriously suggest that the negotiations were initiated by Germany in order to create conflict between England and France. They find justification for this suggestion in the fact that on 15 November, 1893, before the Franco-German negotiations were completed, a Treaty had been concluded in which England left to Germany the entire Hinterland of Cameroon as far as the fifteenth meridian, that is from the Southern boundary to Lake Chad, while England's rights to the regions east of Lake Chad as far as the Nile were recognized.<sup>1</sup>

Germany's accusers go so far as to express the suspicion that Germany only abandoned Colonial territory, to which she attached great importance, in France's favour, because the French desire for expansion was calculated to provoke an Anglo-French conflict. If we had complied with the English wishes at the time and, instead of acceding to the French claims, had pressed our original demands and cut off the French from access to the Nile by the interposition of German territory, we should certainly have been accused of hegemonistic ambitions. The same accusation is now brought against us because we did not do this, and because we complied with French wishes instead of English wishes. The incendiary himself blames us because we did not

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès *op. cit.*, page 245.

foresee his evil intention, and were not quick enough to prevent him from his work of arson in Africa !

How difficult must be the task of our accusers, when they have to work with such tools !

It is not to be denied in this connection that Germany did nothing to promote a settlement of the differences between France and England: she had good reason not to desire any too cordial a *rapprochement* between the two Western Powers. But Germany's action in this direction was calculated rather to diminish than to increase the possibilities of war. The situation in the world in the summer of 1914 is there to prove to the horror of humanity that the adhesion of Great Britain to the Russo-French Alliance was bound to transform Europe into a powder magazine, where every barrel of powder was at the mercy of a match.

For these reasons it is senseless to make it a charge against us that we did not welcome a *rapprochement* between England and France because it was our desire to dominate Europe. At any rate none of the Powers who allied themselves together against us is entitled to bring such a charge, because the policy of them all was exclusively devoted to preventing the formation of alliances directed against themselves. That is no charge against them. But we too are entitled to claim that we should not be accused of hegemonistic ambitions, because we endeavoured by every peaceable means at our disposal to prevent the union of those States which were not satisfied with the *status quo* in Europe with the State that ruled the seas. It is precisely because we were not as successful in the twentieth century in averting this disaster as we had been in the nineteenth century, that the world war became possible.

France has of all the Allies the least right to charge us, as the Covering Note of 16 June, 1919, and the French Senatorial Commission after it does, with having attempted to sow hostility between the European powers, in view of the continually renewed attempts to detach Italy from

the Triple Alliance. At the very time when the billows of Chauvinism were rolling high in Paris after the visit of the Empress Frederick, and Count Münster, in the report which the Emperor found so optimistic, was conveying to the Foreign Office the assurances of M. de Freycinet's love of peace, France was engaged on a particularly flagrant attempt in Rome to undermine the Triple Alliance. The attempt failed, thanks to the chivalrous attitude of King Humbert and the Marchese di Rudini, but was not the less censurable on that account. It was a formal attempt to bribe Italy to betray her Ally. Berlin learnt of the French action some ten days after it had failed from a report which the German Military Attaché in Rome, Lieut.-Col. von Engelbrecht, sent to the Emperor. The report was based on information given to the Attaché by King Humbert himself, with the assent of the Marchese di Rudini, a sincere friend of Germany and a nobleman in the best sense of the word.<sup>1</sup>

The French action, which first became known owing to the publication of the Foreign Office Papers, appears to me to afford such a crushing refutation of the right of France to make charges so grave as those the French Government makes against the "secretiveness and mischief-making character" of German policy, that I propose to reprint the report in full.

"ROME, 28 April, 1891.

"The French Ambassador, M. Billot, who did not attend the funeral of the late Prince Napoleon, asked for an audience a few days later in order to convey to His Majesty the sympathy of the French Republic.<sup>2</sup>

"M. Billot thought it appropriate on this occasion to suggest the publication of the Treaty between

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. VII, page 91, No. 1,418.

<sup>2</sup> Prince Jerome Napoleon, whose wife was the Princess Clotilda of Savoy, had died on 18 March, 1891, in Rome.

Italy and Germany, and to press the suggestion in a very decided manner.

“The conversation at the audience took the following turn:

“M. Billot turned the conversation to the relations of the two countries, and expressed his regret that it had not yet been possible to give to them a form corresponding to the interests of both States. It rested with the King alone to introduce a more beneficent state of things. At this point M. Billot asked the King to publish the Treaty with Germany. It was not possible for France otherwise to go further in the way of meeting Italy.

“The King answered that the publication of a treaty required the assent of both Contracting Parties: and suggested that the French should put forward the same wish in Berlin. M. Billot replied by referring to the difficult position of France. France could not be expected to place her resources at the disposal of a country which she knew would be her enemy in the event of war.

“The King's reply that France need have no fears of a war of aggression either from Italy or from Germany, and that the Treaty aimed solely at the maintenance of peace, did not succeed in removing the suspicions of the Ambassador. He became more insistent, and could no longer preserve the calm which he had hitherto displayed. He permitted himself to let fall the remark that it was difficult to understand how men could be found to enter a Government without knowledge of their treaty commitments. He (M. Billot) would never enter a Government on such terms.

“The King said that the treaties had been concluded by himself: no one required to know of them except the Foreign Minister: no one had been informed of their contents except Mancini, Robilant, Crispi and



Rudini. M. Billot continuing to insist, the King declared that he could not follow the Ambassador in his suggestion of making publication of the Treaty the object of a bargain : it was a matter in his eyes of dignity : he could only regret that his Sovereign assurance as to the nature of the Treaty had not been able to help dissipate the Ambassador's inaccurate conception of that instrument, and (putting an end to the conversation) he suggested that M. Billot should address himself to the Marchese di Rudini, who had received his instructions.<sup>1</sup> A few days later the Marchese di Rudini saw M. Billot, and did not fail to express his astonishment at the manner in which the Ambassador had handled the matter with the King.

“They had thus failed to get information as to the Treaty in this way. They now tried another.

“It may have been some 10 days later that Signor Padova, Rothschild's agent in Italy, called on the Foreign Minister.

“He was the bearer of a letter from Rothschild, in which the latter, with the express assent of the French Foreign Minister, M. Ribot, offered the Italian Government such pecuniary accommodation as it might require, without prejudice to Italy's continued adherence to the German Alliance. On the other hand, Italy was requested to make a written statement, which if necessary could be treated as secret, as to the terms and conditions on which she would join in a war of Germany against France.

“The Marchese di Rudini replied to Signor Padova that he was sorry to see an Italian before him, who could suggest to the Government of his country so unworthy an action. Signor Padova feigned indignation at this ‘unmerited’ attack, and said that he

<sup>1</sup> This conversation recalls in a remarkable manner the scene between King William I and Benedetti at Ems in July, 1870.

conceived himself to have acted as an Italian patriot in endeavouring to free his country from the difficult position in which she was placed. The Marquis thereupon cut the interview short with the remark that any discussion of the matter was useless with one whose attitude was so incorrect, and begged Signor Padova never again to approach him on the subject.

“In reporting this incident to the King, the Minister added that in the first moment he had been sorely tempted to take the dirty Hebrew by the neck and to kick him out of the room : but he had controlled his indignation, and said to himself that such conduct would not have befitted a Marchese di Rudini. It made his gorge rise to be brought in contact with such dirtiness ; and for this reason he had also been unwilling to let the Italian representatives in other countries know how he had been approached.

“In reply to the direct question whether the incident might be communicated to me, the Minister had no objection : and since the incident and the conversation with the King may be of value in estimating the personalities of the Foreign Ministers on the Tiber and on the Seine respectively, I have ventured with my humble obedience to make my report to Your Majesty on the matter.

“(Signed) von Engelbrecht.”

The Marchese di Rudini thought fit to make the instrument of French policy the subject of his contempt. At the bottom of his heart he must certainly have had the same feeling against the person who gave the instructions from the banks of the Seine.

It ill becomes a country whose Government employs such methods to create dissension between Allies whose only aim was to uphold the *status quo* in Europe against

Powers who were working restlessly to change it, to bring charges against Germany.

Rarely has anyone thrown stones from a glass house so brittle as that from which the French fling their charges at Germany of having sown seeds of dissension to provoke world war.

These same persons, who regard it as the good right of France to have worked for the dissolution of the Triple Alliance by means so contemptible, find the German design to break up the Franco-Russian Alliance behind the attitude of Germany in the Sino-Japanese war, and in this hypothesis find welcome material for the structure of their War Guilt Lie erection.

MM. Bourgeois and Pagès formulate their verdict on the policy of Germany before and after the Peace of Shimonoseki in the following words: "At the same time [during the Sino-Japanese conflict] Germany assumes the rôle of protector of the peace in order to retain complete freedom of action outside Europe. But in reserving her freedom of action for the future her design is to make peace dependent solely and entirely upon herself. Peace is for her merely the guarantee of German hegemony. She does not allow other Alliances than those of Germany to exist, because a day might come when such alliances might be used to protect the peace against Germany herself at the cost of her own ambitious plans. Hence the efforts made to break up the Franco-Russian Alliance, for all its peaceable character, and the exploitation of any and every opportunity which presented itself to create suspicion in the mind of one of the two Allies against the other."<sup>1</sup>

This verdict inverts the truth, when it describes the policy of Germany, that is to say the policy of the Triple Alliance—once again ignoring Italy, the Entente's subsequent Ally, to whom the accusation equally applies—as actuated by ambition, while the policy of the Dual Alliance

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès *op. cit.*, page 260.

is described as actuated by love of peace. The converse was the case. MM. Bourgeois and Pagès, moreover, can cite no single ambitious aim to which the policy of the Triple Alliance was directed. Here again they operate only with the vague and indefinite conception of “hegemonistic designs”.

Germany was a satisfied State. At the very time to which the French Senatorial Report refers, the year 1895, an unparalleled industrial expansion (as the Report itself states) was in full swing in Germany. That expansion, due to the superiority of German workers, of German industrial methods and German technique, could only be achieved by peaceful means. Any war was bound to arrest it. Germany had, therefore, the most pressing interest in the maintenance of peace; and the Senatorial Report is unable to give any grounds on which she might be said to have an interest in disturbance of the peace.

The Powers of the Dual Alliance, on the other hand, had two ambitious aims to which their policy was directed for decades, which could not be attained without war, the recovery of Alsace-Lorraine and the possession of Constantinople; while England, which for the present still occupied an intermediate position between the two groups of Powers, saw in Germany a powerful rival in the markets of the world, and viewed her peaceful rise with suspicion and alarm. Thus it was not the Triple Alliance, but the Dual Alliance, that threatened the peace of Europe. And the Power which endeavoured to divert this Dual Alliance from the pursuit of aims based not on the maintenance, but on the modification, of the *status quo* and attainable only by violent means, which endeavoured to combine in common action the two groups of Alliances against the emergence of a new Power, was the true guardian of peace in Europe. It was this design of combining the two Alliances which was the driving power behind the German policy in the Sino-Japanese conflict.

It is not my task to consider whether this policy was

calculated to promote German interests or not. This much is beyond all question, and is irrefutably shown by the Papers of the Foreign Office, that it was a policy aiming before everything, not at the disturbance, but at the maintenance of the peace of Europe.

Again and again in the instructions which the German Foreign Secretary, Baron von Marschall, and the Chancellor, Prince Hohenlohe, sent to the German representatives abroad, this fundamental aim is voiced. The fear is expressed that the victory of Japan over China, the settlement of Japan on the East Asiatic Coast and the disruption of the mighty Chinese Empire, may lead to European conflicts, because there will then be an "inheritance" to divide, which, in view of the powerful economic interests of all the European Great Powers in Eastern Asia, will not be left to the rising yellow Power of the Pacific Islands to exploit alone. On these grounds, it is argued, the attempt should be made to rescue China from her victorious kinsman, to prevent conflict arising between her heirs.

But in this effort Germany was far from playing the leading rôle. Here, as elsewhere, her demand was not for hegemony in the solution of the problem, but only the recognition of her equal right to consideration. If the programme outlined above was to fail, and the establishment of Japan on the Chinese Coast was to become inevitable, with as a corollary, England and France, asserting claims to Chinese ports, Germany did not wish to come away empty-handed. The first suggestion, however, of intervention in the Sino-Japanese conflict came, not from Germany, but from England, that is to say from the Power which, later alone amongst the European Great Powers, withdrew at the critical moment from common action against Japan. As early as 6 October, 1894, Great Britain called on Germany to join in common action by European warships in Chinese waters.<sup>1</sup> Baron Marschall replied to the British Ambassador that Germany could only take part in such

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 242, No. 2,214.

common action, if it was designed exclusively to protect foreigners. On the following day England proposed, simultaneously in Berlin, Paris, St. Petersburg and Washington, joint intervention between Japan and China on the basis of the independence of Corea (the maintenance of which had been the occasion of the outbreak of the war) and the payment of a war indemnity by China to Japan.<sup>1</sup> Baron Marschall replied to this suggestion with a refusal. From the words used by him on this occasion it appears clearly that Germany had no desire to play a leading rôle in this question, as she must have desired to do if the charges brought against German policy in the above-quoted passage of the Senatorial Report were justified. Marschall said that he would wish to learn the attitude of the most interested Power, that is to say Russia, to the proposed intervention. The British Ambassador replying that he was without information on the subject, Marschall stated that he considered intervention premature.<sup>2</sup>

The reserved attitude of Germany on this occasion was without doubt a contributory factor in inducing Lord Rosebery a few days later, on 12 October, to drop for the present the idea of intervention.<sup>3</sup> Baron Marschall further rejected a request for intervention addressed by China to Germany in November, on the ground that there appeared to be no prospect of Japan's acceptance of the Chinese proposals, which were the same as had been made by England a month before.<sup>4</sup> A suggestion made by the German Emperor a few days later to Prince Hohenlohe, who had just been made Chancellor, for an understanding with Japan on the basis of Germany being free to settle in Formosa if England and France should claim Chinese ports for themselves,<sup>5</sup> was based on inaccurate information

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 243, No. 2,215.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 243, No. 2,216, of 9 October, 1894.

<sup>3</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 244, No. 2,217, footnote.

<sup>4</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 245, No. 2,218.

<sup>5</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 245, No. 2,219, of 17 November, 1894.

that had reached the Emperor : it was rejected by the German Foreign Office principally on the ground that "any claims of this sort put forward by Germany at the present moment would excite mistrust on the part of all the Powers, and would gravely compromise our policy".<sup>1</sup> The Emperor deferred to these objections of his Ministers. Lord Kimberley, the British Foreign Minister, then informed the German Ambassador, Count Hatzfeld, that Russia was pressing urgently for an exchange of views on the situation created by the impending peace negotiations in the Far East, and expressed the insistent wish that Germany would emerge from her reserve and protect her own large interests in Eastern Asia.<sup>2</sup> Count Hatzfeld thereupon received instructions on 1 March to say that Germany's commercial relations had not suffered by the hostilities to such an extent that she could defend before public opinion an armed intervention, with all the incalculable consequences attached, on this ground alone.<sup>3</sup> It was not until 3 March, when China urgently renewed her request to the Powers to take action with Japan in order to avert the menace to China's continued existence, which the Japanese Peace terms represented, that Baron Marschall drew attention, in the most tactful form, in Tokio to the fact that the European Great Powers had been invited by China to intervene, and that it was therefore in the interest of Japan not to exaggerate her peace demands, lest it should be difficult to avoid the intervention for which China pressed. This step also was in the closest connection with the fundamental idea of German policy indicated above, to maintain the integrity of China as far as possible, in order to prevent the peace of Europe being disturbed by Japanese desires for expansion. In an extensive Direct Report,

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 247, No. 2,220.

<sup>2</sup> German exports to China had a value, according to the German statistics, of 400 million marks, but were probably much greater, since German goods were in many cases carried to China in British bottoms.

<sup>3</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 251, footnote.

which Prince Hohenlohe drew up on 9 March<sup>1</sup>, on the occasion of a telegram sent on 9 March by the Emperor of China to the German Emperor, the German policy on the Far Eastern Question which we have noted up till now is indicated and elaborated in detail. It is clear that this document, intended only for the Emperor's eye, cannot contain any but the real motives of German policy. It appears from it plainly that there were no hegemonistic aims behind this policy, that the Wilhelmstrasse was well aware that its interests in the Far East were less than those of Russia, England and France, and that it must for this reason adopt a line of the utmost reserve. "By taking part in an Anglo-Russian intervention designed merely to establish peace", Prince Hohenlohe writes, "we should be working primarily for the two States in question, probably at the expense of considerable sacrifices for ourselves; for it is obvious that in the presence of a victorious Japan only armed intervention, or at any rate the display of clearly superior force in the theatre of war, can have any prospect of success."

If in this Report Prince Hohenlohe also, as was natural, raised the question of Germany's attitude in the event of readjustments of the position of the European Great Powers in the Far East, he was so far from being actuated by hegemonistic designs that he strongly deprecated giving the signal for any such readjustments. He writes: "Naturally it cannot be for Germany, as the proportionately least interested Power, to come forward with claims of this character, and so in a sense to give the signal for a first partition of the Chinese Empire. We must rather wait until other Powers set to work to put such designs into practice."

It is hardly possible to show greater decision in rejecting a course of action than Prince Hohenlohe does when, in this Direct Report to the Emperor, he disclaims any policy with so much as the appearance of hegemonistic aims. And

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 253, No. 2,227.



my father declared expressly his agreement with the main lines of the Report in his final marginal note.

The Report of the French Senatorial Commission clashes with the picture which I have endeavoured to give of the attitude of Germany—a picture substantiated by the Foreign Office Papers—when it asserts that Germany urged Russia to inaugurate the intervention which, it will be recollected, took place after the severe terms of Japan became known.<sup>1</sup> In this assertion the Report relies on a statement by M. de Mohrenheim, the Russian Ambassador in Paris, who was endeavouring to undermine the position of Count Münster by low intrigues.<sup>2</sup> Mohrenheim is said to have told the French Minister, Hanotaux, on 7 April that Germany had addressed a request to Russia for inclusion in the action of the three Powers (England, France and Russia were at this time still the only Powers involved) in Eastern Asia (*d'être initiée à l'action des trois puissances*), and was eager to participate. If this is so, Mohrenheim was either not telling the truth, or was inaccurately informed by his Government. All that Germany had done was to inform St. Petersburg on 23 March that she was following with lively interest the developments in the Far East, and that she viewed with approval the action of Prince Lobanow in declining to interfere in the military operations of the two belligerent Powers, while at the same time declaring his readiness to exert his influence in the diplomatic sphere in the interests of a rapid conclusion of peace. At the same time Germany stated that she was ready to exchange views with Russia, since her interests did not conflict with those of her Eastern neighbour.<sup>3</sup> There is a difference between requesting to be included

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, page 251.

<sup>2</sup> Mohrenheim had reported to his Government that Count Münster was pursuing a Russophobe policy in Paris, and this report was communicated to the German Chargé d'Affaires in St. Petersburg. F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 406, No. 2,349.

<sup>3</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 258, No. 2,228.

in negotiations and stating one's readiness to exchange views.

The suggestion for joint intervention, after the failure of the English *démarche* in October, 1894, came from Russia, after Japan, at the insistent request of England, had at last on 2 April, 1895, made known her demands. These demands for the cession of Formosa, the Pescadores and the Peninsula of Liaotung with Port Arthur (which, transformed into an Asiatic Gibraltar threatened to reduce Northern China, including Peking, to the status of a Japanese Protectorate) aroused great qualms in Berlin on the ground that it might in its consequences endanger the peace of Europe.<sup>1</sup> St. Petersburg was of the same opinion; and Russia accordingly on 8 April suggested, in Berlin, Paris and London, that Japan should be given to understand, in friendly form, that the European Powers took the view "that the annexation of Port Arthur was a permanent obstacle to the establishment of good relations between China and Japan, and a standing menace to the peace of Eastern Asia".<sup>2</sup>

It was not until she had received this appeal, and had further obtained the views of Herr von Brandt, the German Minister in China for many years past,<sup>3</sup> that Germany was induced to take part in the intervention which called a halt to Japan, after she had already concluded the Peace of Shimonoseki.

There can be no doubt that in this decision interest in the maintenance of the integrity of China, and anxiety as to the repercussions of readjustments of power in the Far East on the peace of Europe, were the primary motives. But it is also certain that it was hoped, by joint action with Russia and France, to promote a reconciliation of the differences between the Triple and the Dual Alliances. Herr von Brandt says expressly in the Memorandum,

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 261, Nos. 2,232-33 of 4 April.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 265, No. 2,237.

<sup>3</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 265, No. 2,238.

which (it seems) was the deciding factor in inducing the German Government to take this pregnant decision : " the political aspect of the matter should, however, be more important ; for co-operation with Russia on this Asiatic question cannot but influence in, a manner the importance of which is not to be belittled, the attitude of Russia towards us in Europe as well." <sup>1</sup> I am not concerned to inquire at this point why this hope was never realized. But that Germany, in her adhesion to the common action against Japan, was not influenced by any hegemonistic designs, but on the contrary was eager to use it as a means of reducing European tension, is not to be contested. The truth, as has been said, is inverted by the French Senatorial Commission's Report when it asserts the contrary. And such inversion of the truth is the more unpardonable in that those who are responsible for it again and again repeat, in explanation of the difficult position in which France found herself owing to the adhesion of Germany to the Russian proposal of intervention, how painful it was for the French Republic to find itself associated with Germany in a diplomatic *démarche*. Does it not read like an involuntary admission of the aggressive character which the Dual Alliance had in French eyes, when the authors of the Report write : " If France joined in the common action in order not to offend the Tsar, she thereby weakened her alliance with Russia as much as if she had declined to co-operate, in that she admitted Germany as a third party to the Alliance : she agreed thereby in a certain degree to the blunting of the point of the Alliance." <sup>2</sup>

I ask : who was the best friend of Peace ? Was it the Power, which without *arrière-pensée* associated itself with its adversary in common action for the avoidance of alterations in the balance of power, while it at the same time hoped to promote a relaxation of European tension ?

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 266.

<sup>2</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, page 252.

Or was it the Power which regarded the invitation to such common action with its adversary as a disturbing factor in its policy, and resolved on it only with the greatest reluctance, because its interest was to prevent any relaxation of European tension ?

It was not Germany's fault that England, to the general surprise, decided at the last hour (at a Cabinet meeting held on 8 April) for isolation, asserting " that the interests of England in Eastern Asia are not affected by the conditions of the Peace to such an extent as to justify intervention ".<sup>1</sup> It was the more surprising in that the initiative to intervention in Eastern Asia had come originally from England. It would have been preferable in the eyes alike of Paris and of Berlin, if England had joined " the Triple Alliance in Eastern Asia ".

How false is the assertion that Germany here again assumed the lead in Europe is shown by the fact that, in the course of the negotiations with Japan which followed on the intervention of the European Powers, she intervened entirely without success to prevent any weakening of the peace proposals in favour of China,<sup>2</sup> and was

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 266, No. 2,239.

<sup>2</sup> Japan having declared on 6 May that, on the friendly advice of Germany, France and Russia, she had decided to forego the permanent annexation of the Liaotung Peninsula, including Port Arthur, the German Government contended that the compensation payment of 50 million taels demanded by Japan in return for evacuation should not be reduced, and that evacuation should not take place until China should have paid the amount and the first instalment of the war indemnity as well. In the course of the discussion there was indeed serious conflict between the German Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Prince Radolin, and the Russian Foreign Minister, Prince Lobanow. The German Government did not succeed in carrying its point in favour of Japan. (F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, pages 307-25, Nos. 2,285-2,304.) It is further particularly noticeable that on the question of the evacuation the Emperor made the attitude of Germany dependent entirely on that of France. On 31 August he telegraphed to the Chancellor as follows: " As regards Liaotung, we should act (I think) as follows: our Chargé d'Affaires in Paris should first be informed of Prince Radolin's views, and should be instructed to ascertain beyond all doubt or question what attitude Hanotaux will eventually take up in regard to the Russian demand.

stealthily excluded from participation in the loan which Russia and France accorded to China to enable her to pay the war indemnity.<sup>1</sup> Had Germany really been the leading Power in Europe, such exclusion would never have been possible. Germany was not even allowed equal consideration with the other Powers in the settlement of the loan question.

In the Far Eastern crisis of the year 1895 therefore, as in other cases, German policy was directed to the elimination of points of difference between the European Powers and to the maintenance of the world's peace. And here again—and precisely because she permitted herself to be guided too exclusively by her love of peace without regard to subsequent repercussions—she contributed to the growth of that unfavourable constellation of political factors which eventually brought down upon her head the catastrophe.

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Until the answer arrives from Paris, I should propose to discuss the question with Russia in a dilatory manner. If France drops her objections, we can then go ahead with her, and must endeavour to mediate with Japan, allaying the latter's opposition." F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 322, No. 2,299.

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 305, No. 2,283. In the face of this affront also Germany maintained the utmost reserve. The Under Secretary of State, Baron von Rotenhan, telegraphed on 6 July to Prince Radolin: "The latest information here leaves no doubt that the Franco-Russian Loan to China is a *fait accompli*, and we must reckon in future with the fact. It does not appear to us desirable at present to give visible expression of annoyance at Russia's action in promoting this incident. We shall be better advised for the present to leave M. Witte's move unnoticed, to confine its consequences to the purely financial field, and to allow no change to occur in our relations with Russia."

## CHAPTER V

### “WELTPOLITIK”

IT is a widely-held view that Germany did not begin to pursue extra-European aims before the time of Prince Bülow's assumption of the control of German foreign policy. Prince Bülow himself, in his *Imperial Germany*, asserts that Germany, under the guidance of the Emperor William II and in his own Chancellorship, departed from the purely European policy of the first Chancellor; but he hastens to add that the world tasks of the twentieth century were, properly speaking, the continuation of the work Bismarck completed in the field of Continental policy.<sup>1</sup> In reality it was the first Colonial acquisitions in East and South Africa which brought us inevitably into the current of world policy. The first considerable display of German activity in the field of *Weltpolitik* was the Congo Conference, convoked, as I have described in Chapter II, by Bismarck to reconcile the conflicting aims of European States in this field. It was *Weltpolitik* too, when Germany joined in the “East Asiatic Triple Alliance”, of the origins of which I have spoken in the preceding chapter.

Can one reproach Prince Bismarck and his successors, can one reproach the Emperor William II, as MM. Bourgeois and Pagès do, and many others with them, because Germany under their guidance entered on this course of world policy? The answer is “No!”: and it would be

<sup>1</sup> Prince Bülow, *Imperial Germany*, page 11.

so, even if it were shown that those responsible for German policy had extended Germany's influence beyond the limits of the European continent, in order to increase the wealth and magnify the strength of their country. At all times and in all countries the highest honours have been paid, and the greatest value attached, to those statesmen and rulers who have done most to develop and confirm the wealth and strength of their native lands. Even the wave of pacifist currents, which has been let loose by the world war, has not made any alteration in this respect. The strengthening and the extension of their countries' influence in the world is still admittedly the chief object of the reflections of the statesmen of all the Great Powers. Indeed the number of countries whose rulers make such considerations the criterion of their policy has been increased by one or two, owing to the creation of the new States of the year 1919. For centuries all the Great Powers which allied themselves together to destroy us have regarded it as their chief task to increase their wealth and their strength: their history is the history of the pursuit of these aims. No single one of them would be entitled to reproach Germany with pursuing a world policy for the increase of her wealth and strength, even if the pursuit of these aims had been the sole and exclusive motive of such policy.

Obvious as this is, it must be stated; for the charges, which have been made in support of the hypothesis of German responsibility for the war in the sense of the Peace of Versailles, presuppose in effect that the Germans alone amongst the peoples of the earth should not be allowed this self-evident right. Germany was the last European State to become a Great Power; therefore she was not to have equal treatment. The "newcomer" must do without such things. The other States can extend their dominion over a fifth of the globe, like England, or seek to obtain an influence in every continent, like France, and yet are free from "hegemonistic ambitions". Germany,

on the other hand, is condemned—after the event—because she endeavoured to secure a share, and a very modest share, of oversea possessions and to obtain economic influence in extra-European lands.

The injustice of this reproach reaches its culminating point when the respective motives of Germany and her accusers are compared. The world policy of the latter was actuated solely by ambitions of conquest; whereas Germany's world policy was a vital necessity, owing to the increase of her population. All the other Colonial Powers acquired their oversea possessions by long and sanguinary wars: Germany alone acquired hers by peaceful means.

France, comparatively thinly populated and for many decades suffering from a declining birth-rate, created for herself gigantic oversea possessions by the ruthless application (in certain cases) of violent measures, without any imperative necessity for such possessions to feed her population. The great Russian Empire had natural riches in its soil so inexhaustible that it could have supported without any extension of territory twice its existing population; and yet it sought to expand its East Asiatic possessions to the shores of the Pacific, and to annex that ancient key-city Byzantium-Constantinople, of which Napoleon said that the mastery of the world was bound up with its possession. The British Isles too, before their agriculture was killed by Free Trade, were rich enough in treasures of the soil to support the population inhabiting them; and, although, after the destruction of British agriculture, the opening up of extra-British sources of food supply was desirable, the forcible annihilation of all other naval Powers, by which England secured for herself the mastery of the seas and the extension of her dominion over a fifth part of our planet, are not to be explained by necessities of food supply, but only by lust of domination and desire of conquest.

Germany on the other hand was forced by vital necessities and after long hesitation into the paths of world



policy. The increase in her population after the founding of the Reich was so great that she had to create industry in order to be able to export goods, if she was not to export men; while, to pay for the necessary foodstuffs with which to feed her population, she had to find markets for her goods. Hegemonistic ambitions and desire of conquest played no part in her decision : and, in contradistinction to the countries of her accusers, she was at pains to avoid injuring any vital interest of the peoples who had already divided between themselves almost the whole of the earth, when she made the transition from continental to world policy. It was not desire of conquest or ambition to dominate the world, but the conditions of existence imposed by nature on the German people, which forced her rulers to extend their gaze beyond the boundaries of Europe. Prince Bülow is entirely right when he expresses this idea in the following words: "The course of events has long driven German policy out from the narrow confines of Europe into the wider world. It was not ambitious restlessness which urged us to imitate the Great Powers that had long ago embarked on world politics. The strength of the nation, rejuvenated by the political reorganization, as it grew, burst the bounds of its old home, and its policy was dictated by the new interests and needs. In proportion as our national life has become world-wide, the policy of the German Empire has become a world policy."<sup>1</sup>

In this connection I may recommend to the notice of our accusers a fact which they overlook in their search for the motives of that world policy of Germany, which began under Bismarck and was further developed under the Emperor William II. It was precisely those sections of the German people, who are always taken by our accusers to be the representative of militarist ideas and hegemonistic ambitions, the Prussian Conservatives, who chiefly opposed the accession of Germany to the ranks of Powers

<sup>1</sup> Prince Bülow, *Imperial Germany*, page 12.

with world interests. It was rather from the ranks of German Liberalism that the movement drew its chief strength. The idea indeed of colonial policy, which was, and could only be, the starting point of world policy, found warm supporters even among the Social-Democrats.<sup>1</sup>

The German fleet, which was built in the belief that a fleet was the indispensable instrument of world policy, owes its creation and extension far more to German Liberalism than to Prussian "Junkerdom", which only followed Grand Admiral Tirpitz unwillingly along the path which

<sup>1</sup> It was principally the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* which contended for a vigorous policy in the colonial sphere. In this Socialist periodical the members of the Social-Democratic party, Maurenbrecher, Quessel, Schippel and Gerhard Hildebrand, used to write articles on this theme. The last named also argued for the acquisition of colonies, in his book *Die Erschütterung der Industriegherrschaft und der Industriesozialismus* (The shattering of the predominance of industry and industrial Socialism.) Not only the theorists of Socialism, but also leading Social-Democratic parliamentarians asserted the necessity of colonial possessions for Germany. In that indeed they might quote the authority of Bebel who, according to the *Vorwärts*, said in the Reichstag on 28 August, 1907: "Colonial policy is not in itself a crime. All depends on the manner in which such policy is conducted. Properly conducted, it can be a mission of civilization." And the Deputy Huë, the Socialist representative of the German miners in the Reichstag and in the Prussian Diet, spoke as follows at the Westphalian Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party in November, 1911: "I can quote the authority, not merely of Maurenbrecher and Hildebrand but also of Bebel, when I say that we Social-Democrats are not opponents in principle of colonial policy. We consider it quite essential for new markets and new sources of raw materials to be opened up for industry, and for backward lands to be associated with the general civilization of the world" (*Vossische Zeitung* of 10 November, 1911.) Another member of the Social-Democrat Party, Quessel, speaking on 20 September, 1912, at the Chemnitz Congress of the party, said: "I take the view that a civilizing colonial policy, such as Comrade Bebel formerly adumbrated in the Reichstag amid the applause of the party, is a necessity for us." Even Noske argued so late as March, 1918, that there should be no peace which deprived us of our colonial possessions: he had already said in the Reichstag in May, 1914, that the proposal to hand over the colonies to others or to leave them to themselves had never been put forward by the Social-Democrats.

he had set. The first German fleet as it left the ship-yards was essentially a creation of German Liberalism, for which it stood as a symbol. This consideration alone should suffice to convince Germany's accusers, who always maintain that the responsibility for the war is attributable primarily to Prussian militarism, that Germany's world policy did not have its origin in hegemonistic ambitions, but was a necessity of German political evolution.

It is a possibility of course that, even though the transition of Germany to world policy had *motives* quite different from those which the opposing counsel of the Entente suggest in the case that we are fighting over the War Guilt Lie, *methods* were employed in the execution of that policy which ignored the danger of international conflagration. In fact the accusing document which goes most closely into the origins of the war, that is to say the Senatorial Report from which so many quotations have already been made, endeavours to fasten this reproach upon the methods of German world policy.

The facts, however, are otherwise. The methods of German policy under the Chancellors Hohenlohe and Bülow, which Germany's accusers condemn as "crafty and false", "fickle and aimed to sow mistrust", and "pursuing designs of world primacy", were dominated by the fundamental endeavour to prevent the world policy, which was forced into our hands by the growth of our population in the first instance and by the progressive industrialization in the second instance, from becoming the occasion of European conflicts. If these methods led in the end to the isolation of the Central Powers, and if in 1914 a situation had been created which concealed in itself the dangers of war, we Germans perhaps are entitled to make that a reproach against our rulers; not so our enemies who, in complete misapprehension of our peaceful aims, skilfully and consciously exploited against us our policy, born of the "nightmare of alliances", in their endeavour to create

a European atmosphere favourable to their aims but . . . pregnant with war.

No one moreover can say—and this incidentally is my reply to the numerous critics of the policy of the age of William II—whether like dangers of war would not have arisen, even with the adoption of other methods on our part. We were faced by two Powers who were not satisfied with the *status quo* in Europe, and had the greatest interest in altering it. When the historian becomes the prophet in retrospect, he is too apt to forget that the intertwining of causes and effects is enormously complicated and that it is for this reason scarcely ever possible to say what would have happened, if in a given political situation another measure had been adopted in place of that which actually was adopted.

But the question whether our policy was or was not mistaken—I cannot too often repeat—is not here in discussion. Our enemies have arraigned us before the judgment seat of the world, not because of our mistakes, least of all those by which they profited, but because of the "boundless ambitions for hegemony", by which they say our policy was guided "without regard for the peace of the world". It is this wittingly false statement which I am concerned to refute; and to do so I have only to show that the methods we followed in the pursuit of our world policy were not dominated by such aims, but by exactly opposite aims.

If I am successful in showing this, the assertion of our War Guilt stands revealed as a lie.

The guiding idea which dominated German policy since the time when, under the compulsion of necessity and not of her own initiative, Germany turned her attention to extra-European aims, is most clearly expressed in a Minute written on 30 December, 1895, four days before the sending of the Kruger Telegram, by Herr von Holstein, the secret councillor of all the Chancellors from the fall of Bismarck until he himself left the Foreign Office. The

guiding lines laid down in this Minute owe their origin indeed to the position created, at the moment they were written, by the tension between Germany and England. But they were intended to hold good equally for Germany's future policy, so long as no new events should occur to destroy the premisses on which they were based. The entry of Germany into the field of world policy involved indeed the necessity of continually reckoning in the future on Anglo-German crises similar to that evoked on this occasion by the Jameson Raid into the Transvaal.

I propose to reproduce the integral text of this document, not only because it explains many a step of German diplomacy which is otherwise hard to understand, but also because its style is eminently characteristic of the man who for more than twenty years played so important a part in the foreign policy of Germany without ever occupying a position of decisive responsibility.

The reader must always remember that the Minute was written with reference to a particular situation.

“England”, Herr von Holstein writes,<sup>1</sup> “mocks Italy also, because she is convinced that Italy must fall into line as soon as England desires. If Italy goes over alone to the Franco-Russians, as Blanc has threatened,<sup>2</sup> she is dependent on their favours, because she is alone and weak. But what if Germany, after the experiences made with the Transvaal, Volta frontier, etc., were to go over with her to the Franco-Russian side?”

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XI, page 67, No. 2,640.

<sup>2</sup> On 29 October, 1895, Herr von Bülow had reported from Rome a conversation with Baron Blanc, the Italian Foreign Minister, in which the latter said that neighbourly relations between Italy and France were impossible, so long as Italy belonged to the Triple Alliance. The aim of French policy in regard to Italy was to force Italy out of the Triple Alliance. The French opposition was too strong for Italy permanently to be able to hold out against it, unless Germany and England stood united behind her. F.O. Papers, Vol. XI, page 287.

“ In the first place, Austria would then have to come too; for she cannot remain alone, and a separate agreement with the Franco-Russians is under present circumstances unthinkable. What could the Franco-Russians promise Austria in return? Parts of Germany, or Italy? The Franco-Russians will not think of such a thing, if they find Italy and Germany declaring their readiness to work for specifically defined Franco-Russian aims. In other words, Austria simply remains in the Triple Alliance, even though Germany and Italy ally themselves *temporairement* with the Franco-Russians for particular concrete objects.

“ Could France perhaps be won over by the Congo State? The return for the Congo would be recognition of the Ucciali Treaty<sup>1</sup> and a few African concessions to Germany. The way in which Cromer talked to Heyking of the superfluous existence of the Congo<sup>2</sup> justifies the inference that he would be ready at the appropriate moment to swallow or partition it. For Russia, Corea. Japan—assuming she is prepared to fight for Corea—would hardly be able to count on English support, if England then finds herself isolated. Austria who, Goluchowsky asserts, wants nothing but the *status quo* in the Balkans might receive assurances from Russia to this effect, and perhaps a promise of something more in the future,

<sup>1</sup> By the Treaty of Ucciali of 2 May, 1889, the Negus Menelik of Abyssinia confirmed Italy in the possession of Massowah, and entrusted her with the representation of Abyssinia in all matters of foreign policy. Neither Russia nor France had recognized the Treaty. F.O. Papers, Vol. VIII, page 343, foot-note.

<sup>2</sup> Heyking's Report on these remarks of Lord Cromer is not printed in the F.O. Papers, and is mentioned only in a Minute of Marschall to Bülow of 28 December, 1895. F.O. Papers, Vol. XI, page 223, No. 2,759. In a foot-note to this Minute the Editors say: “ Lord Cromer's remarks to the German Consul-General, Baron von Heyking, appear from the latter's Report to have taken the form of ‘ a regular denunciation of Italy’ .”

if she wants it. Germany takes Chusan,<sup>1</sup> but says nothing during the preliminary *pourparlers*, and waits until matters have gone as far as possible. (The exact moment is difficult to determine beforehand.)

“In allying itself with the Franco-Russians, the Triple Alliance would confine the understanding to particular specified objects: Congo (with subsidiary questions), Treaty of Ucciali, Corea, Austrian wishes, a Chinese coaling station for Germany with commercial concessions outside the Yellow Sea zone, not to be indicated more precisely for the present, while we are still inquiring and considering; possibly also a provision with regard to the Transvaal, where the maintenance of the *status quo* would also be in the interest of France.

“In any event India with its approaches (Egypt, Persia) would be outside the understanding. So long as England holds these possessions, she is compelled in the last resort to fall back on the Triple Alliance, unless she is prepared to withdraw without striking a blow. She will not realize the necessity until she has made the experience—which the present proposal is designed to bring home to her—that the Triple Alliance does not in all and every circumstances come into line.”

The best comment to be made on this document is that which the Editors of the F.O. Papers append in their foot-note, which is here also reproduced *verbatim* for this reason:

“The idea of a continental League against England appears for the first time in official form in the above

<sup>1</sup> Chusan is an island at the mouth of the Bay of Hongchow, South of Wusung. It had already been considered as a possible German acquisition during the Sino-Japanese War, as a result of the writings of the explorer and authority on China, Professor von Richthofen, in the years 1869 and 1870. See Marschall's Instructions to Count Hatzfeld, F.O. Papers, Vol. IX, page 249, No. 2,222.

notes of Holstein. It had been suggested to Germany, not only by the Anglo-German tension in the Transvaal Question, but also by the profound dissatisfaction of the Italian Statesmen with England in view of the latter's attitude on the Abyssinian Question,<sup>1</sup> which had induced the Italians, as early as the first half of November, to threaten a *rapprochement* with the Franco-Russian Group. In taking up the idea of a joint approach of Germany and Italy to the Franco-Russian Group, Holstein hoped on the one hand to deter Italy from prematurely leaving the Triple Alliance, while he wished on the other hand to bring home to England in the most drastic manner the value of close relations with the Triple Alliance Powers. That it was not his intention to push the idea of a Continental League to the fullest extent, or to carry it to a conclusion, is sufficiently shown by the fact that he excluded in advance from the proposed understanding with France and Russia the very question which for France was the essential question, the Egyptian problem.

“The object of Holstein's political system under the pressure of the Transvaal crisis was thus, it is seen, the maintenance of the cohesion of the Triple Alliance without side-swerves on the part of Italy, in order to keep a free hand for the Alliance to take action under Germany's leadership in the direction of bringing England back, if possible, to a policy friendly to the Triple Alliance and to Germany, and only to throw in Germany's lot with the Franco-Russian Group definitively and all along the line if England proved unwilling to fall in with the German overtures.”

Leaving on one side the details of this broadly-conceived plan, the execution of which, like that of any other diplomatic

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. VIII, Chapter 54, page 343 *et. seqq.*, and Vol. XI, Chapter 68, page 213 *et. seqq.*



action, was dependent on unforeseeable circumstances, the object of the policy here indicated was a relaxation of tension in Europe by the combination of the two opposed Groups of Powers confronting one another in Europe, that is to say, an object in the highest degree peaceful. The opposition which Germany encountered on the part of England at almost every point at which she desired to set foot outside Europe, whether in the economic or the territorial sense, imposed—or Holstein thought that it imposed—on the Continental League an anti-English tendency to be created on the basis of the relaxation of tension between the Triple and Dual Alliances. But this anti-English tendency in no sense imperilled the vital interests of England, since India, Persia and Egypt were to be left to the unrestricted exploitation of Great Britain: it was directed only against the sole domination of England throughout the globe, that is to say against precisely such hegemonistic ambitions as our accusers seek to impute to us, ambitions which at the moment when Holstein drafted his memorandum had shown themselves in that pregnant overture to the Boer War, the Jameson Raid.

The execution of this plan inevitably involved a process of tacking between the Franco-Russian Alliance and England, since it was designed to prevent if possible any breach of the proposed Continental League with England and to promote the association of England with the European Continent. In other words, it was an attempt to assure the peace of the world while taking account of political realities, that is to say of the existing relations of power. It is this process of tacking which is designated in the publication of our enemies as a proof of German craftiness and dishonourable conduct and as an ebullition of designs of world hegemony: in reality the design, in which the German plan was rooted, was the intention never to allow the divergence between the Continental Powers and England to become so great as to make conflict possible.

This design was behind the idea actuating the Emperor when, two months after the sending of the Kruger Telegram (which had the effect of creating something like a Continental League) and on the day on which the news of Italy's defeat at Adowah reached Berlin, he raised the question in a conversation with the English Ambassador in Berlin, Sir Frank Lascelles, of an expedition to Dongola which should strengthen the position of Italy in Africa, hard hit by the failure of the Abyssinian Campaign, and at the same time ensure British predominance in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> The same motives influenced the Emperor when, in the letter which he wrote on 8 January, 1896, five days after the Kruger Telegram, to his grandmother Queen Victoria, he gave her the assurance that he never desired, in the telegram which he sent to the President of the Transvaal, to express any threat to England, but wished only to express his indignation at the action of the freebooters who had invaded the Transvaal in the midst of peace, and had themselves been disavowed by the British Government.<sup>2</sup>

The responsibility for the Anglo-German tension in the

<sup>1</sup> On the evening of 3 March, after he had expressed his sympathy to the Italian Ambassador, Count Lanza, the Emperor drove to the British Embassy and had a conversation with Sir Frank Lascelles, which lasted till midnight. The Emperor endeavoured to induce England to come to Italy's help in Abyssinia. He argued with the British Ambassador that detachment of France from the Russian Alliance was impossible, and that England could not come to an understanding with a Power which was the Ally of the enemy by whom she was confronted in every quarter of the globe. For that reason, he contended, it was a great mistake of English policy to make difficulties for Italy in Africa instead of supporting her. Franco-Russian policy was working against Italy's action in Abyssinia, with the intention of either securing a firm footing in that region for the Dual Alliance itself or of creating there a Power capable of blocking the road to India, for the British. Then was the moment, in the hour of Italy's reverse, for England to come to her aid. If it was impossible to give her military assistance from Egypt, she should at any rate support her financially. F.O. Papers, Vol. XI, pages 235-37, Nos. 2,770-71.

<sup>2</sup> See *Die Krugerdepesche, Genesis und historische Bedeutung* (The Kruger Telegram, its origin and historic significance) by Friedrich Thimme in "Europäische Gespräche" of June, 1924, page 243.

winter of 1895-1896, which culminated in the sending of the Kruger Telegram, but was not caused thereby, and which the Emperor's conversation with Sir Frank Lascelles was designed to allay and did allay, rests entirely with England and not with Germany, if the responsibility for international crisis is to be measured by the criterion which Germany's accusers apply and her advocates must accordingly apply also.

It was England which desired to disturb the *status quo* in Africa, and to modify the legal position of the Boer State which was determined by the Treaty of 27 February, 1884. That ambitious Empire-builder, Cecil Rhodes, had quite openly proclaimed his programme of absorbing the Transvaal with the design of creating a great South African Empire by the Grace of England. Germany, on the other hand, desired the maintenance of the *status quo* in Africa, because she could not tolerate injury to Germany's material interests in the Transvaal.<sup>1</sup> These interests, as Baron Marschall had already informed the British Ambassador, Sir Edward Malet, in February, 1895, made the continuance of the Transvaal as an independent State and the insuring of the *status quo* in regard to the railway lines in Delagoa Bay an object of Germany's solicitude.<sup>2</sup>

The British Government, on the other hand, not only did not trouble itself about the German warning, it watched the plans of Cecil Rhodes ripen to fruition with open satisfaction, and continually complained in Berlin that the Boers, in justifiable alarm for the security of their independence, placed their hopes on Germany and had been told that Germany would support the maintenance of the Treaty of 1884. The occasion for the Anglo-German tension was therefore the desire of England to annihilate the independence of a small and gallant people of Germanic

<sup>1</sup> 500 million marks of German money were invested in the Transvaal, and 15,000 Germans were living there. F.O. Papers, Vol. XI, page 33, No. 2,613.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XI, page 4, No. 2,577.

stock, and no hegemonistic designs of Germany. The Conference of 3 January in the Chancellor's Palace, as a result of which the Kruger Telegram was sent, had its psychological origin, not in ambitions of the Emperor for world hegemony, but in an entirely justifiable dissatisfaction at the opposition of England's jealousy to any and every activity of Germany in the field of world policy, because England was unwilling to tolerate any competitor for influence or prestige beyond the seas.

Baron Marschall had given expression to this dissatisfaction in his parting conversation with Sir Edward Malet on the latter's recall in the Autumn of 1895.<sup>1</sup> In this conversation, which led the Emperor ten days later to tell the British Military Attaché, Colonel Swaine, in very clear language what it was that he feared on the part of England,<sup>2</sup> the British Ambassador had permitted himself to use menacing language which sounded at any rate very like threats of war.<sup>3</sup> Marschall in these circumstances considered it desirable to tell the Ambassador that for five years past Germany in her relations with England had been on the defensive. "Everywhere", he said, "the slightest territorial advance on our part is looked at askance. In Witu our agreement of 1890 was infringed by the dethronement of the Sultan without any sign up till now of the redress for which we pressed: in Togoland, in the Hinterland of the Niger and elsewhere, every negotiation on our part has broken down on the English refusal to give us any sort of concession. Fear of agitation by individual interests in the British Press is clearly a more

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XI, page 5, No. 2,578.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XI, pages 6-7, No. 2,579.

<sup>3</sup> According to the notes made by the Secretary of State (Marschall), Sir Edward Malet said in the course of the conversation that "this [growth of anti-English feeling amongst the Boers, due (according to the English) to German promises to the Boers] constituted for England an intolerable state of things, and he was anxious to say quite openly that the maintenance of the German attitude to the Transvaal might lead to grave complications".

powerful factor with the British Government than the desire to secure the sympathies of Germany."

That this dissatisfaction on the part of Germany was not grounded on any unjustifiable German aspirations to power is shown by the indignation of the public opinion of the whole world in regard to England's conduct on this occasion. It was indeed presumably this unity of the public opinion of all the European countries, indignant at the British plans of conquest in South Africa, which induced Herr von Holstein to seize the opportunity to attempt a *rapprochement* between the Dual and Triple Alliances, and, by this combination of States hitherto perpetually at feud with one another, finally to make an end of the traditional policy of England, by which she had created and held her world Empire, but not to shatter that Empire in the strongholds of its power. All that was intended was to render the conquest of new territories and spheres of influence difficult for the British, in order that the scanty regions of the world which were still without a master might not pass into their powerful hands.

From the programme of Herr von Holstein, originating in the Boer struggle for independence and in the Italian rift with England, it clearly emerges that the aim of German world policy was to secure recognition to our right to equal treatment in the oversea lands, and not (as our accusers aver) to secure hegemony for Germany. That the methods recommended by Herr von Holstein in the Minute of 30 December, 1895, were not crowned with success was due principally to France, who was not to be won for such a programme because the recovery of Alsace-Lorraine was and remained the fundamental conception of her foreign policy. To this conception all the advantages offered by co-operation with Germany in the field of world policy were subordinated. The impracticability of Holstein's idea had become so clear by May, 1896, that Prince Hohenlohe, in rejecting a proposal made to him at this time (3 May, 1896), by Prince Lobanow, to make the occupation

of Suakim on the East coast of Egypt by Indian troops the subject of a common diplomatic action raising the whole question of the Suez Canal,<sup>1</sup> recorded in a Minute in support of his action the fact that the plan put forward by Holstein six months before had failed, as a consequence of French opposition. This Minute is so illustrative of the love of peace pervading our foreign policy, it throws so much light on the change in Germany's attitude which took place in the course of the year 1896, and lays bare in so revealing a manner the motives which led Germany in 1895 to take common action with France and Russia against Japan, that I propose to give it here in full. The fact that it only reproduces the substance of the statements which Prince Hohenlohe himself made to the Russian Ambassador in Berlin, when the latter brought forward the Russian demand, proves how remote our conduct was from any sort of stealth or secretiveness: for the German Chancellor was of course well aware that, in view of the friendly relations existing between Russia and France, his utterances would at once be forwarded to Paris.

Prince Hohenlohe writes: <sup>2</sup>

“ In reply to the Russian proposal, in connection with the occupation of Suakim by Indian troops, to make the Suez Canal question the subject of joint diplomatic action,<sup>3</sup> I have to-day handed to the Russian

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XI, page 187, Annex.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XI, page 188, No. 2,735. Letter to the German Ambassador in St. Petersburg.

<sup>3</sup> This attempt of Russia to secure Germany for a joint action against England at the latter's most susceptible point is passed over in silence by MM. Bourgeois and Pagès, although it must have been known to them from the French official papers at their disposal. They had every reason to pass it over, since it would have shattered the force of their argument. Their contention is that Germany wished to sow dissension between England and the Dual Alliance. If one is to argue on these lines, one might equally well conclude from the Russian action on this occasion that the Dual Alliance wished to sow dissension between England and Germany.

Chargé d' Affaires the attached *Aide-mémoire*<sup>1</sup> and have explained it to him verbally in the following sense.

“When the Imperial (German) Government last year, of its own initiative, offered its co-operation in the reduction of the Japanese peace terms, there was a disproportion, which was the subject of repeated criticism in the foreign Press, between what we were then venturing and what we were in a position to attain *directly*, that is to say in Eastern Asia. And in fact the chief motive for Germany's action is not to be sought in the Far East but in the desire of the Imperial Government to ascertain by experiment whether the idea of solving current problems by the co-operation of Germany with Russia and France, alike in the interest of the three parties concerned and for the assurance to the utmost possible extent of the world's peace, is practicable.

“The experiences which we have had since then do not favour a repetition of the experiment. We know now that French efforts are directed exclusively to exploiting the Anglo-German differences, created by the Far Eastern action of the Powers, and increased by subsequent events in the Transvaal, in the interests of a revision of the Peace of Frankfort, that is to say against Germany. The same French statesmen, who endeavoured with English help in the opening months of this year to give practical effect to the idea of the *revanche*, still occupy leading positions, and there is no reason to presume that they have changed their views. Such a change of view would only be credible, if they were prepared to give positive guarantees; and that they will certainly not be prepared to do, since in that case the practice of coquetting with the chauvinistic instincts of the French people, which has hitherto always provided French statesmen in difficult moments with their best cries, would have to cease.

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XI, page 190, Annexe.

" Prince Bismarck made an experiment similar to ours of last year when in 1885, at the request of the Ambassador, Baron de Courcel, he intervened effectively to put an end to the Franco-Chinese hostilities of that period. The German Minister, von Brandt, was instructed earnestly to urge the Government in Peking to conclude peace. The first steps towards Franco-Chinese negotiations took place in the house of the Secretary of State, Count Hatzfeld. Scarcely, however, had the Franco-Chinese Agreement been assured, thanks to our co-operation, when the Ferry Cabinet fell a victim to a storm of indignation of the Chauvinists ' because Ferry had not been ashamed to place himself in Prince Bismarck's debt', a charge from which Ferry never recovered down to the day of his death.<sup>1</sup>

" Within a space of ten years therefore two different German Governments have made two attempts to promote co-operation with France on questions unconnected with the Peace of Frankfort. The experiences we have made on each occasion are not calculated to encourage a third attempt. We are forced to draw the conclusion from what we have experienced that France subordinates all questions to the one idea of *revanche*, and that the acclamations with which the Franco-Russian celebrations in Kronstadt and Toulon were greeted on the French side were the expression only of the desire for a Franco-Russian war against Germany.<sup>2</sup> Whether the French politicians of the present day cherish the idea of attaining other political aims with the co-operation of Russia, the next few months will show. But

<sup>1</sup> Prince Hohenlohe was completely informed as to this phase of Franco-German relations, because he was at the time the German Ambassador in Paris. F.O. Papers, Vol. III, page 443, foot-note 699.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. VII, No. 1,502 *et seqq.*, and No. 1,529 *et seqq.*



already we are compelled, on calm consideration of our experiences, to admit that the mere fact of Germany's adhesion to the Franco-Russian constellation has had the effect of strengthening that current of opinion in France which presses for a solution of the African questions with, rather than against, England."

Prince Hohenlohe here overlooks the fact that the third attempt at co-operation with France had already been made by Germany during the Transvaal crisis on the basis of the Holstein programme, and that, in this case too, the French Government lost no time in placing itself at the disposal of England and informing the latter that she could count on French support in any dispute with Germany. Count Münster reported on 19 January, 1896: "As France is interested as much as, if not more than, Germany, if not in respect of the Transvaal, at any rate in respect of Lourenço Marques as being the port for exports to Madagascar, we might expect support from the French, at any rate in principle, for our policy. Instead of this, not only the independent French Press but also the semi-official organs, especially the organ of the French Foreign Office, *Le Temps*, have set themselves the task (after some days of reserve) of showing that the Transvaal should not divert attention from Alsace-Lorraine. The catch-word of *Le Temps*, in accordance with which the entire Press operates as from a preconceived design, is: 'No unnatural allowances'. Paris no doubt hoped that an Anglo-German conflict was no longer to be avoided, and perhaps even built on a revision of the Peace of Frankfort as a consequence." <sup>1</sup> This view of Count Münster is confirmed by Baron von Eckardtstein, whose notes agree entirely with Count Münster's view. Baron von Eckardtstein writes that Lord Salisbury told him, in a conversation in the year 1889 about the Kruger Telegram, that, if Germany had

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XI, page 82, No. 2,651.

sent German troops across Portuguese territory to the Transvaal, as the Emperor had originally intended, no English Government would have been strong enough to prevent the English people from compelling a declaration of war on Germany, and such an Anglo-German war would have become a world war. The French Ambassador in London, M. de Courcel, had already informed him (Lord Salisbury) on behalf of the French Government that, in the event of an Anglo-German war, France would observe a very benevolent neutrality, and would probably also take an active part in the war.<sup>1</sup>

Even the lessons of this third attempt did not destroy the hope that France would yet decide on sincere adhesion to the Triple Alliance. Herr von Bülow also, after he had become Secretary of State, took cautious steps in this direction; and his efforts, after numerous attempts, eventually crystallized in a Treaty, the Treaty of Björkö, which however, lived like a fly, for one day only, since French assent to its provisions was not to be had. The book of MM. Bourgeois and Pagès argues that, since these attempts at *rapprochement* were invariably followed (as in the case of the Transvaal crisis) by attempts at understanding with England, they are to be explained only by the design on our part to sow dissension between England and France or between France and Russia, so as to secure German predominance in the world on the basis of the maxim "*divide et impera*". In this charge they confuse cause and effect in the first place, and attribute to us in the second place motives which were the exact opposite of those by which we were in reality actuated. They confuse cause and effect, because the "tacking" between the Dual Alliance and England was due to the irreconcilability of France, and not the irreconcilability of France to our "tacking": and they attribute to us motives which were the

<sup>1</sup> See *Lebenserinnerungen und politische Denkwürdigkeiten* (Memories of my Life and Political Experiences) by Hermann Freiherr von Eckardstein, Vol. I, page 276.

opposite of our actual motives, because this "tacking" on our part was obviously based—the above note of Prince Hohenlohe is convincing proof that it was so—solely on our anxiety lest our efforts in the field of world policy should result in that combination of England and the Dual Alliance, which French policy was ever seeking to promote, and which we unfortunately in the end were unable to prevent. That combination, as the events of 1914 showed, enormously increased the danger of war; for its effect was to give a powerful impetus to the efforts of Russia and France in the direction of a violent modification of the *status quo*, whereas the Powers who were vitally interested in the maintenance of the *status quo*, and with the *status quo* of peace, that is to say Germany and Austria-Hungary, were placed at a great disadvantage.

All these attempts at *rapprochement* with the Dual Alliance and at an understanding with England had their origin, not in the design to base German predominance in the world on war and dissension,<sup>1</sup> but on the contrary on the fear that through war we might once again lose the unity which we had won in 1871, and all the advantages that came with unity, including all place in the field of world policy, the activities which had become for us of vital importance.

It was this anxiety which was the origin of the idea of creating a big German fleet.

It is not part of my intention to intervene in the dispute on the question whether the execution of this idea involved the adhesion of England to the Dual Alliance, or whether the Triple Entente was not rather a consequence of our economic expansion and would have come into existence

<sup>1</sup> This design is attributed by MM. Bourgeois and Pagès without proof to all attempts made by Germany from the year 1896 down to the Treaty of Björkö. They are compelled, however, to contradict this thesis when they admit that the Emperor was constrained to maintain peace until such time as the naval programme of 1900 was completed. "Il lui faut, à tout prix, conserver la paix, tant que le programme naval de 1900 n'aura pas été exécuté." Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 265.

much earlier if we had renounced our design of building a fleet, since it is a matter of indifference how this dispute is decided<sup>1</sup> in so far as the question of responsibility for the war is concerned, that is to say the question whether or no Germany intentionally worked for the war for decades past. I am only concerned here to show that the building of the German fleet was also due to our desire to maintain peace, and was intended, like our land armaments, not for attack but for defence.

Like the fundamental idea behind Herr von Holstein's programme of 30 December, 1895, the idea behind the fleet was to increase the risks for England in the case of conflicts between England and ourselves as a result of our entry into the field of world policy. Such an intention on our part was entirely defensive in character. It was based on the necessity for us to be in a position to defend the equilibrium continually menaced by the competition of the States in the field of world policy—if necessary with firmness.

The German fleet was intended, as Holstein's programme was intended, to help to convince England that it was better for her purposes not to adhere to a group of Powers hostile to Germany and working for the alteration of the *status quo*. But, in considering the question of the responsibility for the war, it is the intention alone which constitutes the issue, and not the success or failure to put that intention into effect. Who, moreover, is in a position to say to-day whether England would not have intervened in a war originating in the same circumstances as the war of 1914, if there had been no German Navy? On such a theme it is not possible to do more than put forward hypotheses. I myself think it a more probable assumption that England in such a case would have preferred to decide

<sup>1</sup> In this connection I am concerned only to discuss the relation of our ship-building programme to the question of responsibility for the war. I have indicated in my *Erinnerungen* (Memoirs), page 70, *et seqq.*, my attitude to Admiral von Tirpitz's idea of risks.

the war against us by blockading the German coasts, since in that case she would have been able to eliminate a competitor in the world market without any danger to herself.

The policy of Admiral von Tirpitz of making the fleet strong enough to attack the English coasts, instead of restricting itself to the defence of the German coasts, has led our opponents to the conclusion that Germany was actuated by aggressive designs in the building of the fleet. It is as false to come to such a conclusion as it would be to argue that a plan of campaign, which is based on carrying the war into the enemy's country, cannot emanate from the Commander-in-Chief of a country whose Government desires to maintain peace. At sea, as on the land, the maxim holds good in the last resort that the best defence is attack, and Admiral von Tirpitz's conception of risks is not transformed from a defensive to an offensive idea because he increased the risks for England to the point of danger of a German attack on the English Coasts. The peaceful end, at which this idea aimed, could not be fully attained until England was placed in a position of having to reckon with an attack on her coast-line, if she allied herself with our enemies for our annihilation. So long as that danger was not involved, England's adhesion to the ranks of our enemies was a far less dangerous transaction for her. This was the consideration which, as Admiral von Tirpitz has convincingly shown in his book *Der Aufbau der deutschen Weltmacht* (The building of Germany's world power), was at the basis of the construction of the German Navy. Germany's accusers cannot therefore find in the naval programme, if they are honest, a weapon to support their War Guilt Lies: and that would be so, even if they were able to prove that the construction of the fleet had had the opposite effect of what was intended by the man who created it, that is to say that it was the factor which drove England into the camp of our enemies. If they were able to prove this, they would be proving only a mistake in the

calculation of the effects of their policy on the part of the Emperor and his advisers: they would not for one moment be able to shake belief in the will to peace of the men who made the German Navy.

I may summarize briefly once more the contents of this chapter at its close. German entry into the field of world policy was a vital necessity for Germany. It did not presuppose German hegemony in Europe; on the contrary, if it was to be successful, peace in Europe, which German hegemony must inevitably endanger, was essential. Germany did not desire to shake the position of any single Power in this field; she asked only for equality of treatment. For the execution of this policy a fleet was necessary: that fleet must be strong enough to attack, but it was built only for purposes of defence.

Our entry into the field of world policy only involved dangers of war because England, with the frequent support—against her own interests—of France, again and again endeavoured to deny us the right to activity in this field, and to the protection of the interests which our activity in oversea territories had created. It was not the world policy of Germany which led in the end to the war of 1914. That war had its origin rather in that Eastern source of danger, from which war after war had sprung in the last half century. It is true that it did not become inevitable, or perhaps even possible, for us until there had come into being—in spite of all our efforts to arrive at a peaceful understanding—a grouping of Powers in which influences were at play which had been set in operation by our entirely justifiable, and for the maintenance of our national energy entirely essential, *Weltpolitik*.

## CHAPTER VI

### GERMANY'S POLICY OF PEACE IN THE BOER WAR

I HAVE endeavoured in the preceding chapter to show that the various attempts at *rapprochement* with the Dual Alliance were due to the desire for peace of the Emperor and his advisers. It was, therefore, a proof of the strength of this desire for peace, and not, as our accusers allege, of the scheming of the German Government that Berlin was anxious to prevent these approaches from leading to a breach between Germany and England, as desired by Paris and St. Petersburg, and sedulously avoided any commitments to the Dual Alliance which endangered English interests.

This caution was still more necessary when it became clear that the Holstein plan was bound to break down on the opposition of France, and that increased tension between England and Germany only stimulated France to throw over the projected understanding between Germany and the Dual Alliance and to place herself at the disposal of England.

On the outbreak of the Boer War, which for months had been hanging in the air like a black cloud menacing the peace of the world, we were accordingly at once clear what position we should take up. This time, too, it was Herr von Holstein who determined the lines of German policy. These lines he had laid down in a Minute in June,

1899, four months before the ultimatum sent by President Kruger to the British Government and abruptly rejected by the latter—President Kruger wanted England to admit that she had no suzerainty in the Transvaal—and from the recommendations of this Minute Germany never diverged by a hair's breadth throughout the Boer war, in spite of all the overtures of the Dual Alliance. Before these lines of policy were laid down, the Foreign Secretary, von Bülow, had already drawn the attention of President Kruger—through the intermediary of the Dutch Government, and not directly, so as to avoid arousing mistrust in Pretoria<sup>1</sup>—to the great danger threatening the Transvaal, if the latter was not prepared to make any concessions in the matter of the Uitlander to whom political rights were denied.<sup>2</sup> This action alone had shown the value which the German Government placed on the maintenance of peace. It had informed the British Government of its action, in order to allay any possible suspicions in London; and Lord Salisbury had caused his thanks to be conveyed to the Chancellor.<sup>3</sup>

Herr von Holstein probably feared—and, as events showed, he was quite right—that this cautious intervention might furnish a pretext to the Powers of the Dual Alliance to induce Germany to assume the rôle of intermediary. This apprehension apparently induced him to write the above Minute sagely foreshadowing the future. It may be reproduced here since it discloses the motives of German policy during the Boer war and, inasmuch as Holstein's counsels were in fact followed, evidence of the peaceful intentions of that policy.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XV, pages 369–70, Nos. 4,357–9.

<sup>2</sup> The Uitlander were mostly English settlers in the Transvaal. They were not to be allowed civic rights until after fifteen years' residence in the country.

<sup>3</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XV, page 370, Nos. 4,630 and 4,361.

<sup>4</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XV, page 372, No. 4,362.



“ We should, if possible, avoid undertaking any mediation between England and the Transvaal,” he writes on 8 June, 1899 ; “ the dispute cannot be settled without considerable withdrawal by one side or the other. If we suggest concessions to the Transvaal which make for bad feeling there, we have trouble with German public opinion. If we advise the English to abandon their claim to a dominant, that is to say, suzerain position, we shall encounter acute mistrust on the latter’s part. For this reason it would seem better for the present to wait until we are actually approached with a view to mediation, and till then to say nothing one way or the other. If we are actually approached, we should answer in something like the following terms :

“ Since the fact that Germany and England have concluded an Agreement<sup>1</sup> in respect of the South African territories bordering on the Transvaal has become publicly known, Germany is no longer fitted for the rôle of mediator. Any but a wholly anti-English decision would be represented as one-sided, and a result of the concessions which England has made to us. It is therefore better, for England no less than for ourselves, not to put us in the foreground. Here, as in almost all cases, German interests are best served by avoidance of war. For this reason, as soon as we had ascertained that we were at one with the Dutch Government on this point, we authorized the latter to communicate our friendly counsel at the same time as their own to Pretoria. But for this association with the Dutch Government, whose motives are beyond suspicion, we should probably have held back with our counsel, from the consideration that the impression

<sup>1</sup> The Agreement of 5 September, 1898, with regard to eventual possible partition of the Portuguese colonial possessions, as a result of which Germany became eminently interested in all events in South Africa.

created in the Transvaal by our South African Agreement must appreciably diminish the weight of our recommendations. The most suitable mediator of all appears to be the North American Republic. In the first place the United States ranks unmistakably next after England at the present time in the list of civilized States ; and in the second place the Dutch element has a prominent position in the public and social life of America down to the present day. This circumstance, combined with the Republican form of that State, would naturally inspire confidence in the Boers."

The Senatorial Report contends that at the turn of the century, that is to say, half a year after this Minute was written and was made the canon of German policy, Germany was the holder of undisputed hegemony in Europe. But who, having the dominance of the world in his hands, will follow such a policy as is here proposed? This policy meant the abandonment of all influence in a question which closely affected Germany's interests, in view of the large investments of German capital in the Transvaal and the many Germans settled there and the future prospects of the Anglo-German Agreement ; and such renunciation is incompatible with the consciousness of dominance.

There is no conflict with the principles of Holstein's Minute to be found in the fact that eight days after the outbreak of the Boer War on 18 October, 1899, Herr von Bülow (who in the meanwhile had received the title of Count) visited the French Ambassador, the Marquis de Noailles, to tell him that French and German interests in the world were identical, and added on the subject of Africa : " You see that our interests in this field are entirely at one. Apart from the small triangle about which, as you know, I am not at liberty to speak, there is no point on which we could not reach an

understanding.”<sup>1</sup> An understanding with France on African questions without injury to British interests was very possible at this moment, when the conflict between England and France over Fashoda, which had nearly led to war, was settled. When the French Foreign Minister, M. Delcassé, in answering the despatch reporting this conversation, complains that the German Government, in spite of its conviction of the community of French and German interests, had never felt moved to put forward positive proposals, that is the best proof that Count Bülow had no intention, by his visit, of promoting Franco-German action against England, only to leave France later in the lurch. Had such been Count Bülow’s intention, he would inevitably have put forward positive proposals. The sole object of this visit at the moment of the outbreak of war was to emphasize the possibility of friendly relations between Germany and France. It was on the cards, indeed, in spite of Germany’s firm resolve to observe strict neutrality in the Boer War, that conflicts would break out between England and Germany; and the German Government was naturally concerned, in this event, to be on the best possible footing with the Dual Alliance. A conflict of this kind did in fact break out when England illegally confiscated one after the other three steamers of the (German) East Africa Line. There was no treacherous intent behind Germany’s desire to maintain the tolerable relations with France which had developed during the period of Anglo-French estrangement, intensified in the French Press to the point of bitter hostility. The bitterness of the attacks of the French Press throughout the period of the conflict over Fashoda and the Boer War exceeded all reasonable bounds, and put in the shade any per-

<sup>1</sup> The F.O. Papers contain nothing with regard to this visit, which shows that Count Bülow did not attach much importance to it. We know of it from the Senatorial Report, in which a part of a letter on the subject from the Marquis de Noailles of 18 October, 1899, and Delcassé’s answer of 30 October, are reproduced. Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 286.

performances on the part of a section of the German Press in the same period, performances which were very much against the wishes and desires of the German Government. The French comic papers in particular were full of outrageous calumnies of Queen Victoria and the whole British people. In *Le Rire* of 15 October, 1899, for example, Queen Victoria is shown in a bath with the crown on her head reading the Bible, and underneath are the words : " God be praised that I can take another bath in Christian blood, before I die ! " Another picture has a winged figure of Death carrying Britannia in his skeleton arms up to Heaven, while bonfires are lit by a rejoicing world below. Underneath are the words : " The day perfidious Albion expires will be a day of rejoicing for the whole world. " A third caricature in the same number shows the Queen of England kneeling in despair to President Kruger, with the words underneath : " Calm yourself, old dame, you have lost your throne only in the minds of all decent people ! " In the number of 23 November, which the well-known caricaturist Willette devoted entirely to the English, there is a picture of Napoleon I on St. Helena, and underneath : " I conquered all the peoples, and am become the prisoner of the most cowardly of them all. O God ! How cruel art Thou ! "

That Germany was not to be blamed during the Boer War for any action which might have involved a breach with England could not have been long in doubt in Paris, in spite of the visit of Count Bülow to the Marquis de Noailles, on which MM. Bourgeois and Pagès lay so much stress. On 29 October, eleven days after the visit, the Emperor himself took the opportunity of clearing the matter up with the French Ambassador. The Emperor met the Ambassador on this day at the theatre at a performance of *Madame Sans-Gêne*, and on the Ambassador expressing his concern in regard to the situation, and discreetly sounding him as to whether the nations with African interests would not do well to take precautionary measures to counter

British expansionist ambitions, the Emperor answered him to the following effect : " What we are witnessing is the founding of a second huge colonial empire, probably to take the place of India. That is no longer to be prevented. If the English were now to be interrupted in their work in any way, they would merely elbow us others, who are sitting on the surface of Africa, gently into the sea without our being able to do the slightest thing to prevent them. In the year 1896 the British Fleet was not prepared ; it was one-third weaker than it is now ; and my telegram [the Kruger telegram] took the country completely by surprise. If at that time all the States had joined us, something might have been done. Your predecessor Herbette, the ' Richelieu ' of France, Hanotaux and Prince Lobanow turned their backs on us derisively, and placed all their hopes on a collision between England and ourselves. Now the position is quite different. England's fleet is capable of facing any coalition. Germany is, for all practical purposes, without a fleet at all. She cannot afford to exceed the limits of the most rigid neutrality. She has first to create a fleet. Twenty years hence, when that fleet has been built, she will be able to adopt a different language."

The substance of this conversation has been completely inverted probably by French agencies, in order to sow dissension, as may be seen from the following circumstances. These inverted reports were still treated by Eugene Lautier as genuine in the year 1922, when, in the *Homme Libre* of 9 October of that year, he stated that the Emperor had told the Marquis de Noailles : " We must come to an understanding. We must come to an understanding with you against England. It is the moment for action." The Editor of the Foreign Office Papers is in the right when he remarks that the Emperor said just the contrary.<sup>1</sup>

If the Marquis de Noailles gave his Government correct information as to this conversation, there could no longer

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor's Report to Count Bülow. F.O. Papers, Vol. XV, page 406, No. 4,394 and page 408, foot-note.

be any doubt in Paris on 30 October that Germany would not allow herself to be induced to abandon her neutrality during the Boer War, however the issue might go. This attitude was one more expression of the German will to peace, whereas the Franco-Russian attempts to form a coalition against England would in all probability, if they had been crowned with success, have provoked a European war of the first order. For there can be no doubt that, the moment Germany allowed herself to be induced to intervene in the Boer War, the French people would immediately have sacrificed the new animosity to the old, since there was not a single Frenchman for whom Alsace-Lorraine was not more important than the distant Transvaal.

In spite of the unmistakable answer which the French Ambassador had received from the Emperor, he endeavoured eight days later once more to sound Count Bülow. He reports on the subject to M. Delcassé on 6 November : "I put to the Secretary of State the purely personal question for my own guidance and information"—had he not sufficient guidance and information, one asks, from the conversation in the theatre?—"whether he was in a position to give me some indication as to his conception of our mutual interests. Count Bülow of course perceived immediately the object of my feeler, and confined himself to listening attentively and replying that the question interested him extremely, but that he must have time to study it thoroughly as it deserved."<sup>1</sup> M. Delcassé perceived in the end that the Marquis de Noailles was putting France in an unfavourable position by his insistence, and he wrote to him accordingly : "I learn from Berlin that agents of the Foreign Office are saying you have been making overtures to Herr von Bülow, which he has received with reserve. This reversal of the rôles makes the greatest discretion necessary. The German Government

<sup>1</sup> On this conversation also there is nothing to be found in the German F.O. Papers. We learn of its purport, and of Delcassé's answer, only through MM. Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 282.

has on various occasions in recent years expressed the view that the interests of Germany and France in Asia and Africa are identical, and has regretted that their separate handling has increased the difficulty of enforcing them : this being so, it is for the German Government, if it thinks fit, to give form and precision to its ideas.”

In reality there was no reversal of the rôles, as M. Delcassé would have his unskilful Ambassador believe. The real position clearly was that France had wished to use England's difficulties in order to be able to make Germany a scapegoat of Franco-Russian interests, and her proposal had failed owing to the skill of German diplomacy. M. Delcassé, it is true, was not direct in his methods. From the first he intended to throw on Germany the odium of having taken the initiative in action directed against England. He said as much quite openly in the answer which he gave on 28 February, 1900, to Count Murawiew's inquiry whether he was prepared to join Russia in proposing joint intervention in Berlin. Of this *démarche* more will be said below. In the first instance he made use, not of his official representative in Berlin, but of an agent who had frequently been active in French interests, M. Jules Hansen, a Dane, in order to ascertain whether Germany was prepared to consider intervention in the Boer War. The same gentleman had already, at Hanotaux's instigation, in 1896 approached the German Government—through the same intermediary, Herr von Huhn of the *Kölnische Zeitung*—with a view to promoting a *rapprochement* between France and Germany.<sup>1</sup> Twelve days before the visit of Count Bülow to the Marquis de Noailles on 6 October, Count Hatzfeld had been informed by Berlin that this agent had asked through the intermediary of Herr von Huhn, Berlin correspondent of the

<sup>1</sup> On this occasion, too, it was the tension over the Transvaal between England and Germany which was the pretext for the French (*i.e.*, for Hanotaux's) attempt to promote a *rapprochement* with Germany. F.O. Papers, Vol. XI, No. 2,842, page 324 *et seqq.*

*Kölnische Zeitung*, for an audience with the Secretary of State, "as he was authorized to make an important communication with regard to South African affairs", and that his request had been met with a negative answer. It is in vain therefore for MM. Bourgeois and Pagès to endeavour in this case also to charge German policy with treachery and duplicity. German policy was merely discreet and reserved, and certainly not actuated by any hegemonistic designs. Germany did not boast, as it is attempted (after the event) to suggest, of the strength of her position in Europe; and she did not use the position of the British in South Africa, which at the outset of the Boer War was really imperilled in the highest degree, to intrigue against England. On the contrary, she offered decided resistance to every attempt to induce her to participate in anti-English action. If the rulers of Germany utilized the opportunity to pursue further their aims in the field of world policy, and if, with this intention, they postponed the visit to London, of the Emperor and Empress, which had been announced (and which in the critical days of November, 1899, was of the utmost importance for England as an outward and visible sign of complete understanding) until a settlement of the problems in connection with the ownership of Samoa, which England had continually put off, was an accomplished fact, they only acted as it was their duty to act. It would have been a neglect of their own responsibilities, if they had not utilized the exceptionally favourable situation of Germany in the world at the turn of the century in order to press for equal treatment of Germany in the field of world policy.

Even in this extraordinarily favourable situation they advanced no exaggerated claims. What was the demand for putting an end to the condominium in the Samoa Archipelago compared with the claims which France, England and Italy invariably put forward, when their situation was as favourable as that of Germany during the Boer War? Only extreme perplexity at the lack of



documentary material, with which to support their thesis of Germany's hegemonistic designs, can have induced the jurists and politicians entrusted with the task of substantiating the charge of Germany's responsibility for the war to utilize this modest exploitation of a favourable political situation as a proof of the duplicity of German policy. It is an unwitting eulogy, and no accusation, of German policy to which they give voice, when they reprint the reports of the French Embassies in London and Vienna, as showing that the result of Germany's policy was markedly to increase the strength of Germany's position.<sup>1</sup>

This increased strength was due exclusively to the use of peaceful means. "The year 1900", writes the Senatorial Report, "was for him [the Emperor] a kind of triumphal year. After the Anglo-German Agreement of September, 1898, which opened up almost unlimited prospects to German colonization in Africa, after the journey to Constantinople and Palestine in the autumn of 1898, when the project of the Bagdad Railway took shape, with all the possibilities which it held out of an extension of German trade and German influence across Asiatic Turkey as far as the frontiers of Persia and India, after the acquisition of the Caroline and Marianne Islands (end of 1899) the possession of which would enable her to control the whole area of the Pacific Ocean in the neighbourhood of the Far Eastern littoral (*sic!*) after the passing of the Second Navy Law (in June, 1900) which assured the possession in the future of a German Navy equal to the British Navy (*sic!*), after the International expedition of August, 1900, when the Chinese saw a German Field Marshal at the head of all the contingents of European troops, no one contested any longer the 'world rôle' which the economic activity and the military strength of the Reich enabled it to play."<sup>2</sup>

This picture may be highly exaggerated: but what is most astonishing in it is the fact that it appears in a work

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 283.

<sup>2</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 289.

of accusation of Germany, and not in a book written with the express object of glorifying the German people and their rulers for having attained such unparalleled successes, in despite of all the hostile Powers arrayed against them, by exclusively peaceful means.

Unfortunately this picture of Germany's position among the World-Powers is quite wrong. It gives the lights without the shadows. With the turn of the century the dangers, which were implicit in these successes, began to increase as the *rapprochement* between England and the Dual Alliance, which we had been able hitherto to prevent, began to take shape. If we had pursued a different policy during the Boer War from that which we actually did pursue with complete consistency from first to last, this new concatenation of the European system of alliances, in the womb of which the world-war lay hidden, would have come into being very much sooner. The Senatorial Report is at variance with the facts, therefore, when it attacks the Emperor and his advisers for their policy at this time. Not content with this, it has recourse once again to a falsification of history comparable to that which was concocted by Gortschakow in connection with the mission of Herr von Radowitz in 1875.<sup>1</sup> To this, too, I must refer, since the Report draws from it conclusions of quite exceptional weight in support of its fundamental thesis of Germany's guilt.

The attempt, which had failed in October, to induce Germany to intervene in the Boer War was repeated in February, 1900, when the victory of England after the initial failures was no longer in doubt. This time it came from the Russian, and not from the French, side, and was made through the customary diplomatic channels. MM. Bourgeois and Pagès' description of this attempt is, in general, accurate. It is confirmed in the early stages by the Foreign Office Papers. It is the conclusions which they draw from the facts they describe that are false.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter II, page 54.

They describe how the Russian Foreign Minister, Count Murawiew, on the occasion of a visit to Paris on 28 February, told M. Delcassé that his Government was of the opinion that Germany should be induced to take sides in the dispute: the German Government should be asked whether it did not consider the moment to have arrived for a joint *démarche* in London with a view to the restoration of peace. Delcassé replied that he did not believe in the success of such a *démarche*—which shows that he was accurately informed as to the intentions of the German Government—but that he did not wish to dissociate himself from the Russian Government. He agreed, therefore, to the Russian proposal, but only on condition that the Russian Ambassador in Berlin should speak jointly in the name of Russia and France, and that, in the event of an understanding being reached, Germany, and not the Dual Alliance, should take the initiative towards intervention between England and the Transvaal Republic. In other words, he wanted Germany to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the Dual Alliance.<sup>1</sup> Thus far the Senatorial Report's account of the Paris preliminaries to the attempt to induce Germany to join in intervention in London. From the German Foreign Office Papers we learn that almost at the same time a simultaneous overture was being made in St. Petersburg. The German Ambassador to the Russian Court reported on 5 February a conversation which he had had with the British Ambassador to the Russian Court, Sir Charles Scott.<sup>2</sup> The conversation reveals the existence of a low intrigue, as to the origins of which there is no very certain information. The British Ambassador said to Count Radolin, in very friendly tones, that the anti-English feeling in Russia was due to German suggestions, designed to create hostility between England and Russia. "What am I to say", he continued, "to the information which reaches me that His Majesty the Emperor,

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, pages 286-8.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XV, page 513, No. 4,469.

in presence of a foreign diplomat, recently expressed the opinion that now was the moment to fall on England, and that he was only surprised it had not been done already." He added : " The Emperor's words have no doubt been distorted in order to make bad blood. But it is a fact that these utterances found belief ; and it is a legitimate conclusion that Germany is behind the agitation."

This story can only be a malicious misrepresentation of the conversation of the Emperor and the Marquis de Noailles on 29 October, reported above, in which the Emperor in an unmistakable manner declined any intervention in the Boer War. That the Marquis de Noailles himself reported the Emperor's words in the form in which they reached St. Petersburg is not to be supposed, since MM. Bourgeois and Pagès would certainly not have allowed any such utterance of the Emperor to escape them, had they found it in the papers of the Quai d'Orsay. It is however probable, and the Editor of the German F.O. Papers takes the same view, that these reports were spread by the French Agent, Jules Hansen, who (as has been related above) had in vain approached Count Bülow in October with a request for an interview, and had since then been at work creating the belief in London that Germany was anxious to form a coalition against England, but had found the doors shut in her face by " the loyal Governments of Paris and St. Petersburg ". Herr von Eckardtstein makes this statement, in his interesting memories of his life, in very positive language, and it seems worth while to reproduce in full the conversation which he had on the subject with the Prince of Wales. The Prince had just returned at the time from a journey to Denmark, and had been greeted by the Emperor on the way at Altona. Eckardtstein was present at this meeting, and the Prince asked him to call at Marlborough House as soon as he was back in London, since he (the Prince) had an important communication to make to him. Eckardtstein complying with this invitation, a conversa-

tion took place, which Eckardtstein describes as follows :<sup>1</sup>

“ I was received by the Prince of Wales in his study. He began by expressing in hearty words the pleasure he had had at the unexpected reception by the Emperor in the station at Altona. He then came at once to Murawiew’s proposal of intervention, and said: ‘ I beg you in the first place not to make any official use of what I am about to tell you. All I say is in the strictest confidence. The fact of a Franco-Russian proposal in Berlin for intervention has been known to me for some time from letters of the Emperor ; and the Ministers are also informed on the matter. Latterly however we are continually being told by St. Petersburg that Germany is unremitting in her attempts to provoke intervention. No one here believed in these insinuations. I am sorry to say, however, that I myself in the course of my short stay in Copenhagen was somewhat taken aback. Amongst other things, I was given a written Memorandum on the Intervention question, which I wish you would look through.’

“ The Prince then handed me the document, and I read it through. It was written in French, without signature or date ; and the sense was briefly as follows :

“ ‘ Before the outbreak of the Boer War the German Government had repeatedly thrown out feelers in St. Petersburg and Paris as to whether the two Powers would, under given circumstances, be prepared in the event of war to join with Germany in taking England in the rear, with a view to a re-grouping of colonial possessions in Africa, in Asia and in the

<sup>1</sup> Hermann Freiherr von Eckardtstein, *Lebenserinnerungen und politische Denkwürdigkeiten* (Memories of my Life and Political Experiences), Vol. II, page 169 *et seq.*

Pacific. These perfidious enticements of German diplomacy met with no response either in St. Petersburg or in Paris. It was not till quite recently that another advance in this connection came from Berlin. They approached the St. Petersburg Government with the suggestion that it should use its influence in Paris to induce the French to drop all Germanophile tendencies in the future. If Russia and France were prepared to act with Germany, Russia might obtain considerable advantages in Asia, and France in Egypt and other parts of Africa, in the event of a partition of the British Colonial Empire. This perfidious suggestion was of course rejected with indignation. But it is high time that the British Cabinet should recognize the great services which Russia and France then rendered, and are continuing to render, to the British Empire by their loyal attitude.'

"After I had read this document, full of astonishment at its contents, the Prince asked me what I thought of it. At this I laughed out loud and answered that this document was no doubt from the pen of Jules Hansen; it was a phenomenal expression of duplicity and perfidy, and one more proof of the energy with which the attempt was being made to separate England and Germany. The Prince replied:

"Who the original author of this document was, I do not know. It was given to me by a highly-placed personage at the Danish Court with the comment that it came direct from the Ministry in Petersburg.'"

The unsuccessful Russian attempt at intervention, with its two overtures in Paris and St. Petersburg, was to be represented in London in the light of the above Memorandum. What was the actual course of events?

On 3 March, 1900, the Russian Ambassador in Berlin, Count Osten-Sacken, handed the Secretary of State,

Count Bülow, a Memorandum raising the question whether it was not possible to put an end to the South African War by common intervention by Russia, France and Germany. This Memorandum appears to me to constitute a proof that Count Murawiew's proposal was due to Russian initiative, and cannot have come from Germany. It puts an end to the legend which was spread from St. Petersburg and is still employed by MM. Bourgeois and Pagès as material in support of their War Guilt Lie. It shall therefore be given here *in extenso*.

It is in French, and was sent in that language with Count Bülow's answer to the German Ambassador in St. Petersburg. The following is a translation :

“ The Imperial Russian Cabinet is of the opinion that in view of recent events, and of the late success of the British arms, the moment is come for the Continental Powers to take steps to avert the grave consequences which might arise from the complete annihilation of the South African Republics. Friendly pressure on the part of the European Governments with a view to ending the sanguinary struggle in Africa appears the more desirable in that public opinion in all countries is unanimous in sympathizing with the heroic defence of the brave Boer people, which is fighting for its independence, and is indignant with the indifference displayed by the Governments in face of this unequal conflict with the might of Great Britain. The moment appears to be particularly favourable now that the theatre of war has shifted from the English parts of S. Africa to the Orange Free State, where the English troops have just gained a victory which is calculated to satisfy their national pride. In the event of the German and French Governments concurring in the proposal to exercise friendly pressure on England, the Imperial (Russian) Government would not refuse, in connection

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with such understanding as may be reached by England and France as to the aim to be attained, to lend its moral support to a work in keeping with the humane principles to which the Powers proclaimed their adhesion in the International Conference at the Hague."

This Memorandum, which was transmitted in specially solemn form "by order of the Emperor Nicholas", bears such clear signs of its Russian origin that it cannot have been due to German initiative. Is it conceivable that it should contain not a single word of reference to such initiative, if it did not come from the Russian Government spontaneously? There would have been such a reference, if for no other reason, because St. Petersburg would necessarily be concerned to have documentary evidence that the initiative to intervention came from Germany.

And would it be possible that the reply to this Memorandum should be what it was, if the German Government had ever expressed a wish for intervention in St. Petersburg?

This was what Count Bülow replied :

"The suggestion is the expression of the noble and philanthropic sentiments of His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas, and is not calculated to surprise us, inasmuch as it is a natural consequence of the attitude which led the Tsar to summon the Peace Conference at the Hague. This leading position involves as a corollary that His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas should ascertain in the first instance what reception the suggestion of peace is likely to meet with on the part of the Government of Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

"So far as Germany is concerned, I should wish at once, and without reference to the present issue, to observe that, as a matter of general principle, German policy is compelled scrupulously to avoid all possi-



bilities of complications with other Great Powers, and in particular with other Naval Powers, so long as we are not sure of the attitude of our neighbour France. Security on this point could only be obtained by means of a Pact under which the Contracting Parties would guarantee the *status quo* of their respective possessions over a considerable period of years. Such a Pact is consequently for us the *conditio sine qua non* of any new and far-reaching combinations."

Here, therefore, Count Bülow declined to concur in any way in the Russian proposal, before it had been ascertained through Russia in London whether England was disposed to accept the intervention of the Continental Powers.

Just because he was concerned to maintain the peace of Europe, he was unwilling to exercise any pressure on England. He laid his cards openly on the table, and told his two neighbours the reason for his attitude. It was the most cogent reason that could be conceived: it was the knowledge that France was thinking always and before everything else of Alsace-Lorraine, and that no German Government could permit itself the luxury of differences with England, so long as the western frontier was not secure. How right this attitude was, was shown in 1914 with terrible clearness. And the justification of our putting forward of this condition is confirmed by the reply which Count Murawiew gave to the *exposé des motifs* of Count Bülow, in which in fact the key to our whole policy is to be found. Count Murawiew told Prince Radolin that no Ministry which agreed to assume such an obligation in relation to Germany could remain in power twenty-four hours in France.<sup>1</sup>

The authors of the Senatorial Report nevertheless make it a particular ground of accusation against the German Government that it rejected the Russian proposal for the reasons contained in the *exposé des motifs*. Such an attitude

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XV, page 528.

is without the slightest justification on the part of nationals of a nation which, although protected by its own strength and by the guarantee of the Treaty of Versailles against attack—more securely protected than any Power on earth has ever been before—has not ceased for five years to cry aloud for a Pact of Security to guarantee its possessions.

The authors of the Report further assert that the rejection of the Russian proposal, after the various attempts made by Germany to promote an understanding with France and Russia, is evidence of the double-tongued character of German policy. We have seen that this assertion is not in accordance with the facts. But the authors of the Report are not content with making the assertion : they say also that the Russian proposal is unintelligible except on the supposition of a German suggestion, since Murawiew and General Kuropatkin (according to a report of the French Ambassador in St. Petersburg) had stated fourteen days before that such a step would have no success in Berlin.<sup>1</sup> It is a fact that, when Prince Radolin handed Murawiew Count Bülow's answer on 5 March, Murawiew told him that " he had assumed on the basis of earlier information, which had reached him from Paris and Berlin, that in making his proposal he had gone half-way to meet the policy of the German Emperor for the maintenance of the world's peace and the intentions of the German Imperial Government ".<sup>2</sup> In the Report, with which Prince Radolin followed up this telegram on 11 March, he says that Count Murawiew had been at pains to create the impression that the instructions given to Count Osten-Sacken were merely a sequel to remarks of His Majesty the Emperor and King to the Russian Ambassador in Berlin, indicating a desire for intervention with a view to ending the war. In two drastic marginal comments the Emperor declared this assertion to be untrue.

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 288.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XV, page 519, No. 4,464.

There is nothing in the Papers of the German Foreign Office about such reports or such remarks of the Emperor: on the other hand, there is found again and again from January onwards the assertion that Germany would not favour intervention.<sup>1</sup>

But MM. Bourgeois and Pagès, on the basis of purely vague presumptions which the above narrative confutes, put forward the terrible accusation that St. Petersburg had no intention to propose intervention, and that the Emperor only suggested it in order to be able to denounce it to Queen Victoria as a hostile proceeding on the part of Russia and France. Having put forward this charge, they ask: Can one call a policy, which has recourse to such methods, a policy of peace? <sup>2</sup>

I will not address the same question to France, because it is not possible to prove that the memorandum, which was handed to the Prince of Wales in Copenhagen, was manufactured in Paris, and all that is certain is that it found its way from St. Petersburg to the Danish capital. But it is nevertheless probable in the highest degree that this mendacious document, composed in the French language, came at any rate from the pen of a French secret agent. The French origin of the calumny contained in it may also be presumed from the fact that Count Metternich reported on 28 and 31 March that Lord Rothschild had received information from Paris that Germany was endeavouring to induce France and Russia to intervene in the South African War, but was putting forward quite exorbitant claims for herself at the same time, and that he (Lord Rothschild) on inquiry in Paris had received the answer that Germany had asked the French and Russian Governments to guarantee the permanent possession by Germany of Alsace-Lorraine.<sup>3</sup> Count Bülow told the plain truth, when he replied to this report of Count Metternich as follows:

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XV, Nos. 4,463 and 4,464.

<sup>2</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 288.

<sup>3</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XV, page 534, No. 4,493 and page 539, No. 4,495.

“ The French report is false. The German Government has never attempted, either officially or unofficially through intermediaries, to induce France and Russia to intervene in the South African War. On the contrary we have continually received suggestions from numerous quarters, both before and after the outbreak of the Transvaal War, the object of which was to secure the co-operation of Germany in the formation of an anti-English Continental grouping.”<sup>1</sup>

This calumny also, with its heavy implications for German policy, is shown up by the Foreign Office Papers in all its baseness ; and thereby yet another of the columns which support the edifice of the War Guilt Lie is shattered. It is on these grounds that I have dealt with it at such length.

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XV, pages 542-3, No. 4,497

## CHAPTER VII

### COMPETITIVE ARMAMENTS

THE years which followed the Boer War were indeed of the highest importance to Germany, inasmuch as they saw the adhesion of England to France and, through France, to the Dual Alliance, while Italy and France came to an understanding with regard to their Mediterranean interests. As, however, these events lend themselves even less than the events of the last decade of the nineteenth century to the assertion that Germany had won for herself hegemony in Europe, they do not afford our accusers the least opportunity for proof of the thesis which they support. Consequently the Senatorial Report of MM. Bourgeois and Pagès passes over the years 1901 to 1904 with a description which in fact throws to the winds all that they had been at pains to prove in the preceding 150 pages. They relate how Delcassé's skill was able to promote a reconciliation, and in the end a complete understanding, on all colonial issues between England and France, how the aggressive strength of the Triple Alliance during these years was systematically broken, how Russia endeavoured to promote a *rapprochement* between Germany and France, and how the French Ambassador in Berlin, M. Bihourd, after the almost simultaneous visits of President Loubet to London and of King Victor Emmanuel III to Paris, wrote in triumph: "Under present circumstances these visits are no longer mere international courtesies: this must make a big

impression on William II." They go on to cite Count Bülow's speech in the Reichstag of 20 January, 1903, in which he said that he was persuaded that peaceful and undisturbed relations between France and Germany were in the interest and for the welfare of both countries; that there were a number of questions in which both countries could go hand in hand to their mutual advantage; and that he for his part would continue to cultivate with the most sedulous care good relations with the neighbour in the West. All of which indicates a state of things quite incompatible with hegemony of Germany in Europe.<sup>1</sup> Those who are continually looking for *rapprochements* and understandings cannot either be the possessors of hegemony or seekers after it; one cannot be working for a war with neighbours with whom one is endeavouring to come to an agreement.

But these statements, which look strange indeed in the pages of our accusers, do not prevent the latter, in the paragraph in which they summarize their conclusions at the end of the Section to which they have given the title of "The German hegemony", from accusing Germany of having prepared for war throughout the entire period 1871 to 1914. At the end they play their last trump card, when they write:<sup>2</sup> "From 1871 to 1914 Germany never ceased increasing the strength of her armaments. Having given her army a standing organization, which was made independent of parliamentary influences by the first Septennate<sup>3</sup> of April, 1874, the Imperial [German] Government was not content to renew the Septennate successively before its expiration: it never ceased in the intervals between successive renewals—on occasion by special legislation—to increase the burdens resting on the population, and to raise for example (in 1888) the peace

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, pages 292-3.

<sup>2</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, pages 294-5.

<sup>3</sup> [The German Army Law of April, 1874, made budgetary provision for the Army for a period of seven years ahead—hence the name "Septennate".]

strength and (in 1893) the war strength. Germany wished to have as strong an army as possible: she wished that this army should be so organized and so trained as to be ready at all times to go to the front (*sic!*). And when, by her policy of expansion throughout the world, Germany came to compete with the Naval Powers, the Imperial Government increased its fleet, as formerly it had increased its army, and the Naval Law of 1900 followed on that of 1898 as the Army Laws had followed on one another. And in preparing her Army and Navy she was in reality preparing for war. The Great General Staff prepared—it existed for that purpose—a plan of campaign against each of its neighbours, and adjusted the same from day to day to suit the changing conditions. These plans once prepared, the Government reinforced its material preparations alike in the East and in the West, by fortifications, strategic railways, military loading and unloading depots and exercise grounds, so far as was possible in time of peace. ‘They want to be ready at any time,’ wrote M. Cambon of the Germans in May, 1913. So it was throughout the age of Bismarck and of the Emperor William II.”

These assertions do not prove Germany’s will to war: they would be equally cogent, no more and no less, if the trifling alteration were made of substituting for the words “Germany and the Imperial German Government” the words “France and the Government of the Republic” or “Russia and the Government of the Tsar”.

It is easy to prove from the fact that both these countries since 1873 did just the same as Germany is accused by MM. Bourgeois and Pagès of doing, and with far less justification, since they were not threatened by a war on two fronts. Lloyd George recognized as much at the time when he defended Germany in Parliament—he was then in opposition—from the charge of creating too strong an army. I shall show, however, in what follows that even in the matter of armaments Germany was always in a position of defence; that it is the reverse of the truth to say,

as our accusers do, that our Army was as strong as possible; and that at the outbreak of war Germany was not, as the Covering Note of 16 June, 1919, asserts, "alone among the nations equipped and prepared", but on the contrary was (with her Allies) far behind her enemies (with their Allies) alike in numbers and in arms; and consequently that, if any conclusion at all is to be drawn from the strength of armaments as to the warlike intentions of peoples—which I do not admit—the warlike intentions must have been exclusively on the side of our enemies. A peculiarly absurd item in our accusers' picture is their suggestion that it should be regarded as an aggravation of the offence that the German Army by its organization and training was ready at any time "to go to the front", as though that was not the natural object at all times and in all places of all armies with any claim to be anything more than toys for the pomp and circumstance of sovereigns. It is equally absurd to attack the German General Staff for preparing plans of campaign for all eventualities and continually adjusting them to suit the changing conditions, as though in any country a General Staff which omitted to do this would not rightly and properly be thrown out neck and crop for failing to justify its existence!

The German armaments do not affect in any way the truth of the words which my father used in the Speech from the Throne quoted above,<sup>1</sup> to the effect that to employ this strength for wars of aggression was far from his heart, and that Germany needed no new military glory or conquests of any kind, since she had won for herself at last the right to existence as a united and independent nation.

What was it that began the competition in armaments of the European peoples after 1871? It was the French Recruiting Law of 1872, which made nine classes liable for service in the Active Army, and enabled France by aid of the Reserves of the Active and Territorial Army to place

<sup>1</sup> [See opening paragraph of Chapter IV.]



an army of 2,000,000 men in the field out of a population of 36,000,000 only.

Our accusers assert that it was the German Army Law of 1874 which gave the signal for the competition in armaments. They make this assertion regardless of the fact that under this Law the peace strength of 1 per cent of the population, which had been fixed under the Constitution since 1867, was not attained, let alone increased. This Law was merely the belated answer to the French Law of 1872. It increased the peace strength only to 401,659 men out of a population of 41,000,000, and the war strength including *Ersatz* and fortress troops to 1,271,350 men without Landsturm, whereas under the French Law of 1872 the budgetary peace strength for the year 1875 was 442,014 men out of a population of 36,000,000, and the war strength 1,200,000 men without Territorial troops, or 2,200,000 with them.<sup>1</sup>

In the speech which Field-Marshal Helmuth von Moltke made during the first reading of the Army Bill of 1874 on 16 February—a speech which may be recommended to the perusal of our accusers as showing that the Chief of the German General Staff himself was thinking, not of attack, but of defence—the Field-Marshal bases the need for the increases provided in the Bill on the numerical superiority of the French Army under the French Law of 1872 and nothing else. He said: <sup>2</sup> “ Universal conscription has been introduced in France with a twenty-year liability of service. We have only a twelve-year liability of service. The Law has, moreover, been given retrospective effect, with the result that many Frenchmen who had long since served their time have now suddenly become liable to serve again. The French Government is already entitled to call to arms

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Secretary of State, von Bülow, to the Emperor William I of 12 April, 1875: F.O. Papers, Vol. I, page 255 *et seqq.* No. 163.

<sup>2</sup> *Gesammelte Schriften und Denkwürdigkeiten des General-Feldmarschalls Grafen Helmuth von Moltke* (Collected Writing and Memoirs of General Field-Marshal Count Helmuth von Moltke), Vol. VII, page 110 *et seqq.*

1,200,000 men of the Active Army and another 1,000,000 men of the Territorial Army. In order to provide formations even in part for these masses—for the House must understand that it is not a question merely of the numbers of conscripts, but of the cadres in which they are to be formed—it has been necessary to increase the cadres. In Germany, now that we have regained the lost Provinces, we have only to distribute the existing burden—apart from certain special arms—over more shoulders. In France, which has lost  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions of inhabitants, very considerable new formations have been introduced. The number of infantry regiments in France before the war was 116: it is now 152. That is to say, there are 36 new infantry regiments, and in addition 9 battalions of chasseurs. Fourteen new cavalry regiments have been formed since the peace. The number of batteries before the war was 164: it is now 323. That is to say, there are 159 new batteries. These increases are not yet completed: but the peace strength has never been so high in France as it is now. It is 40,000 stronger than in 1871. The average figure of the budgetary strength for 1874 is 471,170 men<sup>1</sup> and 99,310 horses. Instead of the eight Army Corps with which the French faced us at the beginning of the war, France will in future place 18 Army Corps in the field while there is a nineteenth in Algeria which is not included in this calculation. The French Military Budget—I will give the figures in talers to facilitate comparison with our own figures—has risen since 1871 by over 25 millions. It comprises 125 million talers for the National Army in the Ordinary Budget, and 46 millions in the Extraordinary Budget, total 171 million talers. The French National Assembly, Gentlemen, without regard to the State finances and without distinction of party, has voluntarily made every

<sup>1</sup> The difference between the figure 442,014 in the report of the Secretary of State, von Bülow, to the Emperor (see page 38), which also, of course, comes from the General Staff, and the figure given here by Moltke is due to the fact that the latter figure includes officers.

sacrifice that was asked of it for the reconstruction and expansion of the French Army. It has gone further. More warlike than the War Minister himself, it has actually compelled the Military Commission to include in the current year 17 million francs for a particular object, the calling up of the 'seconde portion'. The French Communes have not lagged behind in patriotism: they are reporting on suitable training-grounds, building sites for officers' messes and so on, erecting barracks, and the like. All this, Gentlemen, gives us a picture of the feeling in France. I believe, indeed, that the great majority of Frenchmen, who beyond a doubt are enduring their misfortune with more reasonableness and dignity than might be supposed if one were to listen only to the French popular orators or read the French Press, I believe (I say) that this majority is firmly convinced of the absolute necessity, for the present, of preserving the peace. I find confirmation of this view in the fact that a military man of acute perceptions is now at the head of the French Government. But we have all learnt, Gentlemen, how the French parties whose views find voice in Paris are able to carry Government and people with them to the length of the most extraordinary decisions. All that we hear from the other side of the Vosges is one loud cry for revenge for the disaster which they brought upon themselves.

"We have not followed our neighbour in the path of increase of our military strength. We believe that what is proposed in this Bill will suffice us. But, Gentlemen, we must not allow the internal excellence of our army to be weakened either by curtailing the period of service or by reducing its strength."

And again in the speech, which the aged Field-Marshal delivered on 14 April, on the second reading of the Bill, he emphasised once more the extraordinary moderation of the demands presented to the Reichstag, in view of the armaments with which we were threatened. "All around us, Gentlemen," he said, "all the Great Powers have

largely increased their military resources; we on the other hand have adhered to the 1 per cent. of the population of an earlier census. We cannot reckon on numerical superiority: we must rest our confidence on the internal efficiency of our army, and that efficiency is closely connected with the length of service of each individual soldier. The French infantryman has a period of actual service with the Colours of three to three-and-a-half years. We hope in view of the high capacity of our troops, the continual advance of education, the newly-introduced gymnastic exercises, and the unwearied energy of our non-commissioned and commissioned officers, who are hard at work from morning till night, to be able to produce capable infantrymen with a shorter period of service."

Given the French Army Law of 1872, a measure placing in the hands of a neighbour thirsting for revenge a great numerical superiority, was it possible to reply with more moderate armaments than those which the German War Ministry and the German General Staff proposed in the Law of 1874? Even so, it was only with the greatest efforts that it was possible to secure acceptance for this Law in the Reichstag, whereas the French Chamber (as Field-Marshal von Moltke pointed out in his first speech) gave the French War Minister more even than he had asked. On which side of the Franco-German frontier lay the desire for War? The Army laws, which were laid successively before the Reichstag between the years 1874 and 1913, all encountered the liveliest resistance on the part of the representatives of the German people, whereas, with the exception of the Law of 1912 which reintroduced three-year service, the French Army Laws had only to encounter the mildest of opposition: but notwithstanding this attitude of the German Parliament the German Government agreed, abandoning its original intentions, to expose the budget for the Army to the danger of reduction every seven years. It is true that, as a result of our neighbours' armaments, no such reductions were ever seriously in question. But the

danger was nevertheless recurrent every seven years owing to the gradual growth of the Social-Democrat Party. The assertion of the Senatorial Report that, thanks to the Septennate, the German Government was made independent of parliamentary control in respect of the organization and arming of the Army is quite false. The Septennate system did not limit, it increased, the influence of the Reichstag in the organization of the Army since, until it was adopted, it was the Emperor under Article 63 of the Imperial Constitution who determined the peace strength of the Army contingents. If the Septennate prevented the Parliament for a period of seven years from reducing the expenditure on the Army without the consent of the Government, it also prevented the Government from increasing it without the assent of the Parliament. There is thus no question of a blank cheque being given to the Government in the matter of armaments by the adoption of the Septennate system, as MM. Bourgeois and Pagès appear to assume

The German Army Law of 1874, which did not even overtake the lead secured by the French Army, was countered in the following year by the French Bill, to which I have already referred in connection with the crisis of 1875. The new measure, as is well known, added 144 battalions to the French infantry. As the number of companies per battalion was at the same time reduced by two, the effect was that, although the peace effectives were not increased, it was made possible in case of mobilization (the war strength of the battalion being 1,000 men) to put an additional 144,000 men at once into the field. In other words, while the existing numerical superiority was maintained, the striking force of the French Army was greatly increased. In spite of this disproportion, which would have been intolerable but for the more thorough training of the German soldier and the supreme efficiency of the German officers corps by which it was to some extent offset, no change was made for six years in the German

military organization created by the Law of 1874. In 1880, however, when, as a result of the estrangement between Germany and Russia in consequence of the Berlin Congress, the possibility of war on two fronts had to be taken into account—the dangers of such a war were diminished by the conclusion of the Austro-German Alliance in 1879, but were still extremely grave—the disproportion between the strength of the German and Austrian Armies on the one hand and the French and Russian Armies on the other had become so great that it was decided, nine months before the Septennate expired, to increase the peace strength of the German Army. The complexion of the Reichstag returned at the elections of 1879 was such that the possibility of securing a vote for a modest increase could be contemplated. According to a comparative table of the War Ministry of the year 1879 the war strengths of the Powers likely to be opposed to one another in the event of war was as follows:<sup>1</sup>

Germany had at her disposal:

923 Infantry battalions;  
 557 Cavalry squadrons;  
 2,640 guns (440 batteries);  
 232 Foot Artillery batteries;  
 121 Companies of Engineers.

Austria had at her disposal:

732 Infantry battalions;  
 395 Cavalry squadrons;  
 1,620 guns (205 batteries);  
 72 Foot Artillery batteries;  
 96 Companies of Engineers.

<sup>1</sup> Baron L. Rüdft von Collenberg, *Die deutsche Armee von 1871 bis 1914, Forschungen und Darstellungen aus dem Reichsarchiv* (The German Army from 1871 to 1914, Researches in the German archives), Part IV, Berlin, 1922, page 25. The facts given in the present chapter are taken in the main from this work, as are also the Tables.

whereas

France had at her disposal:

- 1,266 Infantry battalions, including
  - 20 Companies of *chasseurs forestiers* and
  - 20 Battalions of *douaniers*;
- 471 Cavalry squadrons;
- 4,572 guns (762 batteries);
- 271 Foot Artillery batteries;
- 184 Companies of Engineers,
  - to which must be added
- 19 Squadrons of *éclaireurs volontiers*.

The Russian Army consisted, apart from local troops, irregulars and *opolchenie*, of:

- 1,484 Infantry battalions;
- 412 Cavalry squadrons;
- 3,584 guns (481 sections, *i.e.*, half-batteries);
- 210 Foot Artillery batteries;
- 121 Companies of Engineers.

France alone, therefore, had a superiority over Germany at this time of 334 battalions of infantry and nearly 2,000 guns, to say nothing of the vast superiority of the Russian, over the Austrian Army. Only the cavalry of the Central European Powers exceeded that of their two neighbours—by 50 squadrons; and cavalry in modern war is not a decisive factor. Who then had been responsible for the competitive increase of armaments during the second half of the seventies of the last century? If Germany under the menace of this alarming numerical superiority of her neighbours endeavoured, nine months before the lapse of the Septennate, not indeed to make up this dangerous difference—there could be no question of that—but to do something to diminish it, can anyone justly blame the German people or the German Government?

The Army Law of 16 May, 1880, increased the peace strength of the German Army for the period 1 April, 1881,

to 31 March, 1887, by 22,402 men and 3,212 non-commissioned officers only. It increased the number of peace formations from 469 to 503 Infantry battalions, from 300 to 340 Field Artillery batteries, from 29 to 31 Foot Artillery batteries, and from 18 to 19 Companies of Engineers: the number of Cavalry squadrons remained the same.

But what of the Third Army Law, the "Law for determining the Peace Strength of the German Army" of 11 May, 1887 (down to the passing of which there was no change in the strength or organization of the German Army, although at the time, as has been shown in Chapter III, the Boulangist movement was celebrating its orgies in Paris and the friendly relations between France and Russia were every day becoming closer)—was the Third Army Law in the nature of a challenge by Germany of her two neighbours?

The comparative strength of the armies of the five Powers coming in question in the event of a European continental war—the Triple Alliance had been concluded in the meanwhile—was at the end of 1886 as shown in the following Table:

State	Number of Men called up for Military Service in 1885	Peace Strength in 1886 (N.C.O.'s and Men)	Strength of the Field Armies in 1886	Total War Strength in 1886
Germany ...	179,827 <sup>1</sup>	427,274 <sup>2</sup>	1,000,000	1,509,104 <sup>3</sup>
Austria-Hungary	95,424 <sup>4</sup>	262,302 <sup>5</sup>	?	1,077,104 <sup>6</sup>
Italy ... ..	82,000	215,675 <sup>7</sup>	500,000 <sup>8</sup>	?
France ... ..	129,805 <sup>9</sup>	471,811 <sup>10</sup>	1,150,000	1,800,000 <sup>11</sup>
Russia ... ..	230,000	790,698	1,850,000	2,000,000 <sup>12</sup> (approx.)

For foot-notes see page 180.



The peace strength of the Triple Alliance thus remained in 1886 below that of the two Powers with whose joint attack it was already incumbent on the German Government and the German General Staff to reckon by 337,358 men, while that of Germany was below that of France by 44,537. The war strengths of the two groups of Powers showed a difference of more than 450,000 to the disadvantage of the Triple Alliance, on the assumption that the unknown war strength of the Italian Army was in the same proportion to the strength of the Italian field army as that of the German war strength to the German field army, that is about 750,000 men. The war strength of France alone was superior to that of Germany by nearly 300,000 men.

When, therefore, Prince Bismarck asked (once again a year before the lapse of the Septennate) for an increase of the peace strength of 468,409 men, on the ground that in the Spring of 1887 Germany was confronted with the menace of war from the East and from the West, as has been shown in Chapter III he was only following the example of the statesmen and generals of our two neighbours.

The French Army, it is true, had not been appreciably increased since 1880: but its marked numerical superiority

<sup>1</sup> Class 1886, incorporated men, including volunteers (Freiwillige), but without the Navy, and 4,527 non-combatants.

<sup>2</sup> Budget strength.

<sup>3</sup> Without Landsturm or special formations.

<sup>4</sup> Imperial and Royal Army and Navy.

<sup>5</sup> Including Landwehr and Honved.

<sup>6</sup> Without Landsturm.

<sup>7</sup> Average strength.

<sup>8</sup> From a statement of the Italian War Minister in the Chamber on 16 February, 1886.

<sup>9</sup> Incorporated men of 1st and 2nd Portion without volunteers.

<sup>10</sup> Average strength without Gendarmerie.

<sup>11</sup> Not including Territorial Army Reserve.

<sup>12</sup> Including Cossacks and irregulars but not including Landsturm.

over the German Army could not be allowed to continue, now that the political grouping in Europe had shifted, and France, elated with Chauvinistic aspirations, seemed on the point of acquiring as an ally a country, whose population exceeded that of the German Empire by 100 per cent and its war strength that of the German Empire by 33½ per cent. Moreover this increase of the German defences (which was far from making up the difference between the two sides) was the more necessary in that a Bill was under discussion at the time in France, which was to introduce an improved system of cadres and an increase in strength calculated appreciably to augment the training facilities and the striking power of the French Army. This Bill, which became law in July, 1887, further increased the peace formations of the French Army by the creation of 18 new infantry regiments and 13 cavalry regiments.

Simultaneously the number of the formations in Russia had been increased, the extension of the Russian railways was being taken in hand, and the facilities for concentration after mobilization were correspondingly improved. Every step in short, which MM. Bourgeois and Pagès regard as a proof of Germany's warlike intentions, had been taken in 1887 in France and Russia, while our own armaments lagged behind those of our two neighbours alike in peace and in war strength. This being so, the difference had to be made up, to some extent at any rate, by a new Army Law: and such a Law was passed by the Reichstag under the impression created by Bismarck's powerful speech of 6 February, 1888. This Law brought the period of Service with the colours, in the Reserve and in the Landwehr, which up to then had been 12 years in Germany (in France 14, and in Russia as much as 19 years), up to the level of the Russian figure, 19 years, and extended the liability to service with the Landsturm to the 45th year. Unlike the French Conscription Law of 1872, however, it did not have retroactive effect.

The Laws of 1887 and 1888 which, as has been pointed out, did not even make up the difference between the numerically superior French Army and the German, had scarcely come into force when the French Republic once more gave the signal for new competition by the Conscription Law of 1889. The total period of service under this new Law was indeed merely lengthened (to 25 years) as in Germany—in this one instance France was following Germany's example—but, in view of the fact that the Law had retroactive effect for persons over 45, some 600,000 men, who had already completed their military service, were placed once more at the disposal of the French War Minister. At the same time the number of years in the standing army (Active and Reserve) in Russia had been increased to 18 : and in order to enable the organization of the Army to be completed, and to make it possible to concentrate large striking forces on the Western frontier as quickly as possible, the Russian War Minister was given a grant of 1,060 million roubles for five years from 1889 to 1893, with a further appropriation of 20 to 60 million roubles to be drawn on by instalments at his free and uncontrolled disposal. As a result he had at his disposal for purposes of the Army an annual sum of 3 milliards of marks [\$750,000,000 or £150,000,000], whereas Germany in the Budget of 1889-1890 had voted only one milliard for the purpose.

For these reasons the German War Minister, Verdy du Vernois, in the Spring of 1890 came to the conclusion that it was impossible any longer to postpone an increase of the German Army. Under the impression created by these armaments he had already asked for an increase in the peace strength in 1889 but had not been able to carry his point owing to the political position of Bismarck at the time. The following Table shows the comparative strength of the armaments of the European Powers at this time (column 2) and as it was after the passing of the Law (column 4) :

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State	Number of Men called up for Military Service in 1888	Peace Strength in 1889 (N.C.O.'s and Men)	Number of Men called up for Military Service in 1891	Peace Strength in 1892 (N.C.O.'s and Men)
	Col. 1	Col. 2	Col. 3	Col. 4
Germany ...	185,609 <sup>1</sup>	468,409 <sup>2</sup>	193,930 <sup>1</sup>	486,983 <sup>2</sup>
Austria-Hungary	95,474 <sup>3</sup>	262,302 <sup>4</sup>	124,013 <sup>5</sup>	288,452 <sup>4</sup>
Italy ... ..	82,000	235,069 <sup>6</sup>	95,000	222,721 <sup>6</sup>
France ... ..	170,150 <sup>7</sup>	489,000	208,000 <sup>7</sup>	519,000
Russia ... ..	250,000	926,000	275,000 <sup>8</sup>	1,020,000

The difference between the peace strength of France and Russia on the one hand and the Triple Alliance on the other had thus again widened to our disadvantage since the last increase in the Army. It was now nearly 440,000 men, while the German Peace strength alone was still some 21,000 men less than the French. The Law of 15 July, 1890, which provided for an increase only of 15,307 men, did not make good this difference; and for the third time Germany was left lagging behind her two neighbours' armaments. The chief feature of the Army increase of 1890 was the strengthening of the artillery from 340 to 434 batteries, that is by 70 batteries; but the number of our guns was still far behind the number that France had had at her disposal for years.

<sup>1</sup> Incorporated men, including all volunteers (Freiwillige) and respectively 4,180 and 3,600 non-combatants.

<sup>2</sup> Budget strength.

<sup>3</sup> Imperial and Royal Army and Navy.

<sup>4</sup> Including Landwehr and Honved.

<sup>5</sup> Imperial and Royal Army and Landwehr and Honved.

<sup>6</sup> Average strength.

<sup>7</sup> Affectés.

<sup>8</sup> Including contingent for the Fleet.

By 1892 the proportion between the respective war strengths of the Dual and Triple Alliances had already become so unfavourable for Germany that it was necessary to take in hand what (with the exception of the increase of 1913) was the largest increase of the peace strength which the German Army ever knew. It will be recalled that it was combined with the reduction of the period of service with the colours (for other than mounted troops) to two years.

In a Memorandum of 6 April, 1892, the Chancellor, Caprivi, calculated the war strengths of the two groups of Powers as follows :

Germany	..	..	..	2,662,000 men
Austria-Hungary	..	..	..	1,216,000 „
Italy	..	..	..	1,108,000 „
				<hr/>
Total of Triple Alliance	..	..	..	4,986,000 „
Russia (without Asia)	..	..	..	3,364,000 men
France (without Africa)	..	..	..	2,778,000 „
				<hr/>
Total of Dual Alliance	..	..	..	6,142,000 „

This numerical superiority was now so great that it could no longer be made good. And yet even so it was not until the summer of the following year that the new Army Law secured acceptance. The Chief of the General Staff, Count Waldersee, was greatly perturbed at the delay. On 26 April, 1892, he gave vent to his feelings in his diary with the following picture of the future which, in part at any rate, was to be realized 26 years later in fact : " On both fronts ", he wrote, " we are confronted with a numerically much superior adversary, and an unsuccessful war means beyond any question our complete collapse. The other States can survive defeat. We cannot. The German Empire will go to pieces. Prussia will be reduced

to dimensions even smaller than in 1815. Republican tendencies will get the upper hand, and the House of Hohenzollern may go into exile."

It was not until 1893 that a Bill was at length introduced, which was designed to bring the number of Germans liable to military service up to the constitutional figure of one per cent of the population. But the desire of the War Minister and of the Chancellor, Caprivi, to attain this figure was not fulfilled. The Reichstag made so many cuts that nothing like all the able-bodied men in Germany could be incorporated. The average annual strength of men without non-commissioned officers was increased by 59,267 to 479,229 : but on grounds of economy the mistake was made of forming them in half-battalions, 173 in number. The new formations came into being on 1 October, 1893.

This Law, like its predecessors, left the numerical superiority of our future adversaries untouched. Three years later, in 1897, the peace strengths were as follows :

State	Number of Men called up for Military Service in 1897	Peace Strength in 1898 (N.C.O.'s and Men)
Germany ... ..	261,606 <sup>1</sup>	557,436 <sup>2</sup>
Austria-Hungary ... ..	124,013 <sup>3</sup>	330,916 <sup>4</sup>
Italy ... ..	98,000	209,337 <sup>5</sup>
France ... ..	262,000 <sup>6</sup>	560,542
Russia ... ..	297,700 <sup>7</sup>	1,000,000 (approx.)

<sup>1</sup> Incorporated men, including all volunteers (Freiwillige) and 4,512 non-combatants.

<sup>2</sup> Budget strength. (For remainder of references see next page.)

The Dual Alliance was thus still nearly half-a-million men stronger than the Triple Alliance. In France the number of effectives was doubled owing to the fact that the Reserve of the Active Army comprised three more classes. Further, in 1893 the number of officers was increased, the object being, as explained in a contemporary French Memorandum, to equalize the efficiency of the Reserve and Line Regiments, an essential move in the preparation for war, to which we only decided to resort a few years before the War. In 1897 a Law was promulgated adding a fourth battalion in the course of the next few years to 145 Infantry regiments; and in 1898 a 20th Army Corps was formed. At the same time the number of formations in the Russian Army was raised to 910 Infantry battalions, 627 Cavalry squadrons, 464 batteries and 37 battalions of Engineers; in which figures Reserve and fortress troops, together with 68 battalions, 85 squadrons, 34 batteries and 28 companies of Engineers in Asia, are not included.

We were thus forced by the arming of our future adversaries to the Sixth Army increase of 25 March, 1899. Our adversaries had in the meanwhile bound themselves by a political agreement in the form of a military convention directed exclusively against us.

The new German Law increased the peace strength only by 16,271 men to 495,500, not counting non-commissioned officers; but this strength was not to be reached before the end of 1903. At the same time, however, a far-reaching re-organization of the Army took place, for which a special Law was introduced, increasing the number of Army Corps by 3 to 23. Under this Law machine-guns at length found a place in the armament of the German Army.

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<sup>3</sup> Imperial and Royal Army and Landwehr and Honved.

<sup>4</sup> Including Landwehr and Honved.

<sup>5</sup> Average strength.

<sup>6</sup> Affectés.

<sup>7</sup> Including contingent for the Fleet.

This re-organization was a marked step forward, and appreciably increased the disponibility of the Army in the event of war. It was in the highest degree essential ; for, in view of the enormous numerical superiority of our future enemies, the greatest possible acceleration of our mobilization was literally a vital necessity for Germany.

The next increase of the German peace strength did not take place till March, 1905. This time the period of validity of the Law of 1899 (five years) was not only not anticipated; it was exceeded by one year.

The increase was only 10,393 men. The following Table shows the relative peace strengths of the two groups before the introduction of this Law.

State	Number of men called up for Military Service in 1903	Peace strength in 1904 (N.C.O.'s and Men)	Budgetary Expenditure on Defence in million marks		Expenditure on Defence per head of Population in Marks
			Without Navy	With Navy	
Col. 1	Col. 2	Col. 3	Col. 4	Col. 5	Col. 6
Germany ...	256,809 <sup>1</sup>	587,858 <sup>2</sup>	732.7	976.0	16.38
Austria-Hungary	128,650 <sup>3</sup>	342,322 <sup>3</sup>	436.6	479.4	8.93 <sup>4</sup>
Italy ...	88,676 <sup>5</sup>	207,162 <sup>6</sup>	192.8	289.6	8.90
France ...	234,000 <sup>7</sup>	575,000 <sup>8</sup>	650.2	949.3	24.20
Russia ...	330,800 <sup>9</sup>	984,000 <sup>10</sup>	804.4	1,048.3	7.20

<sup>1</sup> Incorporated men, including all volunteers (Freiwillige) and 3,670 non-combatants.

<sup>2</sup> Budget strength, including one-year volunteers (Einjährgfreiwillige) and school-teachers.

<sup>3</sup> Imperial and Royal Army and Landwehr and Honved.

<sup>4</sup> Not including expenditure on the Navy. (Notes continued on next page.)



The peace strength of the German Army had thus, for the first time, exceeded that of the French Army, but only by 12,000 men. The combined strength of the Dual Alliance on the other hand still exceeded that of the Triple Alliance by 400,000 men. As, however, it was hardly possible for our General Staff, after the conclusion of the Agreement between Italy and France in 1902, still to reckon on active support from Italy in a Franco-German war, and as there was no longer any certainty of England's neutrality since her accession to the Dual Alliance by the Treaty of 1904, the proportion of the respective strengths of the two groups of Powers was in reality much more unfavour-

<sup>5</sup> Class 1902, incorporated men : the number called up was 101,814.

<sup>6</sup> Average strength.

<sup>7</sup> Affectés : the results of the conscription in this year were exceptionally small : in 1902 the numbers were 275,000, and in 1904 263,000 men.

<sup>8</sup> Including colonial troops in France. The peace strength of the French Army was 595,000 in 1903, and 591,000 in 1905. (The effective peace strength varied from year to year according to the number of recruits, the medical standard applied at the annual conscriptions not being always the same.)

<sup>9</sup> Including contingent for the Fleet.

<sup>10</sup> Europe and the Caucasus only, together with 55,000 men from the Turkestan Command and the mobile forces in the Far East.

*Remarks on Columns 4 to 6.*

Germany : total expenditure on the Army and Navy borne on the Ordinary and Extraordinary Budget, including pensions, but not including cost of the campaign in S.W. Africa.

Austria-Hungary : total expenditure on the Imperial and Royal Army, Landwehr and Honved, and the Bosnian-Herzegovinian troops, including non-recurrent, recurrent and all extraordinary expenditure.

Italy : total expenditure, including pensions.

France : total expenditure, including pensions. The expenditure on the Territorial Army includes that for the colonial troops in France and for the Gendarmerie. The cost of the operations in Morocco and of the manufacture of powder are not included.

Russia : expenditure of the Ordinary Budget only, not including extraordinary or extra-budgetary expenditure. Pensions and cost of the Far Eastern campaign are not included.

able for us in 1904 than it had ever been.<sup>1</sup> In spite of this, however, the peace strength, as has been said, was increased only by about 10,000 men.

The Law was to hold good only from 15 April, 1905, to 31 March, 1910; but it was not till 1 April, 1911, that Germany proceeded to effect a new increase, and that a very slight one, of her peace strength. In this connection it must be borne in mind that dark clouds were gathering at this time, in the East and in the West, which threatened to disturb the peace of Europe, that in the year 1907 the Anglo-Russian antipathy, which had been thought to be unbridgeable, was brought to an end by the Agreement of 31 August, and that in the meanwhile by the Law of 1906 the principle of universal military service had been carried in France to its logical conclusions, so that in the year 1908 for example 83 per cent of the entire population liable to service had been incorporated in France, whereas Germany in the same year incorporated only 53.7 per cent of the units called up. That being so, it really cannot be asserted that this modest increase of the peace strength by 9,482 men, effected a year after the normal date, can have had any other motive than the desire to make the prospects of successful self-assertion in the event of an attack on two fronts somewhat more favourable. That the increase in question could not have originated in any aggressive designs on the part of Germany is plain from the following Table, which shows the formations which the five Continental Powers and Great Britain were in a position to mobilize at the end of 1910, that is to say before the introduction of this Law :<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That the burden imposed on the individual Frenchman by the expenditure on the Army and Navy was much higher than that which the German had to bear will be apparent from Column 6 of the Table on page 187.

<sup>2</sup> This Table is based on the information available to the General Staff in 1910.

	Army Corps	Cavalry Divisions	Reserve Divisions
Germany .. .. .	26	11	22
Austria-Hungary .. .. .	15	9	16
Germany and Austria-Hungary .. .. .	41	20	38
France .. .. .	21	8	18
Russia .. .. .	31	36	33
France and Russia .. .. .	52	44	51
Balance by which France and Russia exceeded Germany and Austria-Hungary .. .. .	+11	+24	+13
Add British Expeditionary Force	3	1	—
Total by which the Triple Entente exceeded Germany and Austria-Hungary .. .. .	+14	+25	+13
Italy .. .. .	12	3	8

The effective strength of each Army Corps, it should be added, was greater both in France and in Russia than in Germany, there being 30 battalions of 7,000 men to each Russian Corps, and 25 to each French Corps, but only 25 to each German Corps. The Austro-Hungarian Corps on the other hand consisted of 30 battalions like the French.<sup>1</sup>

The Law of 1911 also provided for an increase of machine-guns: but the difference in strength between the Dual Alliance and Germany was nothing like made up by this extension of our equipment with this decisive weapon

<sup>1</sup> The number of horses to the cavalry and the number of guns, taken as a whole, were about the same in the Corps of both groups.

## STRENGTHS IN 1911 191

of modern battle. On 1 October, 1911, France had 1,796 machine-guns, Russia 2,800, and Germany only 1,068.

At the end of 1911, as a result of Russian arming on a vast scale, the disproportion between the armies of the Triple and Dual Alliances had become greater than ever.

The peace strengths, including non-commissioned officers, were:

Germany.. ..	..	..	610,000 men
Austria-Hungary	..	..	361,936 „
Italy .. ..	..	..	240,000 „
Together .. ..			1,211,936 „
France .. ..	..	..	589,000 men
Russia .. ..	..	..	1,225,000 „
Together .. ..			1,814,000 „

As our General Staff had ceased for some years to reckon on assistance from Italy, the armies of the Dual Alliance were thus 80 per cent greater than those of their prospective adversaries. That was a situation which in view of the political situation in the world—the Balkans as a result of the war in Tripoli had been transformed into a volcano, the eruptions from which were incessant—concealed in itself dangers impossible to forecast: and it was on this ground alone that the Government decided, on the pressing representations of the War Minister, von Heeringen, and the Chief of the General Staff, von Moltke, to take in hand a somewhat greater increase of the Army at the close of the first of the five years for which the Law of 1911 was to run. The peace strength was accordingly raised by 28,890 men. At the same time two new Army Corps

were created, and the peace formations extended by 17 battalions, 6 squadrons, 41 field batteries and 4 companies of engineers. It will be clear from the above Table of the peace strengths at the end of 1911 that this increase, in spite of the heavy financial expenditure which it involved, could only be as a drop in the ocean. In October, 1912, the Balkan War broke out, and France at the beginning of 1913 issued new Cadres Laws increasing her formations at the cost of her budget strengths: she had no other course indeed open to her, short of incorporating the halt and the maimed. The great rapidity of our mobilization, which was the only means we had of countering to a certain extent the numerical superiority of our opponents, was thus, if not entirely eliminated, at least appreciably affected. The Government accordingly in the spring of 1913 again brought in an Army Law, which was to introduce the biggest increase in the peace strength since the founding of the Reich.

This Law, which involved an increase in the peace strength of 117,267 men spread over two years—the Law came into force on 3 July, 1913—did not of course achieve the impossible: it did not, that is to say, bring us anywhere near the peace and war strengths of the allied armies of our adversaries, although its execution, including non-recurrent expenditure, was to cost over a milliard marks.

When the War broke out, the Law was not even fully in operation. In France on the other hand, one month after the passing of this, the last, German Army Law, three-year military service, which had already been in contemplation before the German Law was brought forward, was reintroduced. In Russia a Law of National Defence was in process of execution, which was to bring the peace strength in the winter of 1915 up to the monster total of 2,230,000 men, while at the same time four New Army Corps were to be formed. The following Table shows the peace strengths which the Great Powers and Belgium had reached in the summer of 1914 when the war broke out:

# PEACE STRENGTHS IN 1914 193

State	Number of Men called up for Military Service in 1913	Peace Strength in summer of 1914 (N.C.O.'s and Men)	Peace Strength in summer of 1914 (including Officers)
Germany ... ..	359,156 <sup>1</sup>	725,149 <sup>2</sup>	760,908
Austria-Hungary ... ..	202,252 <sup>3</sup>	441,551 <sup>3</sup>	477,859
Italy ... ..	130,000 <sup>4</sup>	250,000	unknown
France—			
(a) French troops ...	468,000 <sup>5</sup>	765,366 <sup>6</sup>	
(b) Foreign and coloured troops...		85,700 <sup>7</sup>	883,566 <sup>8</sup>
(c) Total ... ..		851,066	
Russia ... ..	505,000 <sup>9</sup>	1,539,000 <sup>10</sup>	1,581,000 <sup>10</sup>
Belgium ... ..	35,000	58,000	61,282

<sup>1</sup> Incorporated men, including all volunteers (Freiwillige) and 2,752 non-combatants.

<sup>2</sup> Including all volunteers (Freiwillige) and 7,535 non-combatants.

<sup>3</sup> Imperial and Royal Army, including Landwehr and Honved and Bosnian-Herzegovinian troops.

<sup>4</sup> Contingent for the year 1912, incorporated men.

<sup>5</sup> Affectés, Classes 1912 and 1913, including 23,000 non-combatants.

<sup>6</sup> Including 45,000 non-combatants.

<sup>7</sup> Foreign Legion, Arabs, Moors, Senegalese negroes.

<sup>8</sup> According to the calculations of the German General Staff before the war. General Buat, *L'armée allemande pendant la guerre 1914-1918*, gives the figure as 910,000 men.

<sup>9</sup> Including 9,600 for the Fleet.

<sup>10</sup> Including Cossacks, but not including frontier posts.

As regards the war strengths of the several States confronting one another in August, 1914, the following Table shows the enormous disproportion between the two groups: <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The figures of effectives given in this Table are taken from the great work based on the public archives of the Reich, *Der Weltkrieg von 1914-1918* (The World War of 1914-1918), Vol. I, page 25. The figures given in Baron Rüdts von Collenberg's book, which in their turn are taken from the well-known *Löbellsche Jahresberichten* (Löbell's Annual Record) make the disproportion nearly 1,300,000 men greater, since he estimates the Russian Army at some 650,000 men more than the figures given above. The French themselves (*see* the Doumer Report) estimated their effectives at 2,900,000 men, which is 750,000 more than the estimate of the German General Staff.

State	War Strength in Summer of 1914 <sup>1</sup>					
	Population in 1914 millions	Infantry Divisions	Cavalry Divisions	Field Guns	Heavy guns (other than Fortress Guns)	Effectives <sup>2</sup>
Germany ...	64.9	85½ <sup>3</sup>	11	5,358	578	2,147,000
Austria-Hungary ...	51.4	57	11	2,370	168	1,400,000
Together ...	—	142½	22	7,728	746	3,547,000
Russia ...	166.1 <sup>4</sup>	118½ <sup>5</sup>	40 <sup>6</sup>	6,812	360	2,712,000
France ...	39.6	75 <sup>7</sup>	10	4,108	232	2,150,000
Great Britain <sup>8</sup> ...	45.4	6	1 and 2 independent Brigades	462	28	132,000
Serbia ...	4.6	10	1	360	40-50	285,000
Belgium ...	7.4	6	1	468	—	100,000
Together ...	—	215½	53	12,210	660-670	5,379,000

<sup>1</sup> Without immobile Ersatz formations: without Landwehr and Landsturm in Germany, without Landsturm in Austria-Hungary, without Territorial Army in France, and without *opolchenie* in Russia.

<sup>2</sup> Including Officers.

<sup>3</sup> Including 6½ mobile Ersatz Divisions.

<sup>4</sup> In Europe and Asia.

<sup>5</sup> Including Caucasian, Siberian and Trans-Caspian Corps.

<sup>6</sup> Including 12 Cossack Divisions.

<sup>7</sup> Two of these were not formed until October, 1914.

<sup>8</sup> Expeditionary Force only.

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It is plain from this Table that the allied enemies of Germany had a numerical superiority over the Central European Powers of 1,832,000 effectives or, including the African troops of France and the Siberian troops of Russia, 2,309,000 men: they had 73 more infantry divisions, 32 more Cavalry divisions, and 4,482 more guns: and the only arm in respect of which Germany came favourably out of the comparison in these forty years of competitive arming, forced upon her against her will, was the heavy artillery of the field army. To the compelling language of these figures the Chief of the French General Staff, General Buat, who accompanied the Premier, Briand, as Military Expert to Washington, was compelled to bow. In his book "*L'armée allemande pendant la guerre 1914-1918* (The German Army during the war, 1914-1918)" he writes in ruthless exposure of the mendacities contained in the Note which Clemenceau signed on 16 June, 1919: "It is not only incorrect to say that Germany in 1914 had exerted herself to the utmost limits of her power: it is equally false, when the difference in population is taken into account, to assert that Germany had gone as far as France in the utilisation of her reserves."

Even General Buat in this admission is not telling the whole truth. What has the account given in this Chapter established beyond all question ?

First, the competition in armaments was not begun by Germany, but by France. Secondly, the ten Army Laws, which successive German Governments introduced and carried since 1874, were all without exception the effect and not the cause of the arming of our prospective adversaries. Thirdly, the assertion that the German Army was as strong as it could possibly be at the outbreak of the war is false, inasmuch as in the year 1913 there were 38,000 men in Germany, fit and capable of military service, who were nevertheless not incorporated, whereas France had gone to the extreme limit of her strength. Fourthly, the numerical superiority of the countries banded against



the Central European Powers on 1 August, 1914, was so enormous that victory for the German arms could only be hoped for as a result of miracles of bravery and genius in the leadership; and the assertion of the Covering Note of 16 June, 1919, that Germany alone among the Powers entered on the war completely prepared is consequently untrue, and the contrary is the truth: and therefore, fifthly, Germany cannot have brought on the war in the summer of 1914 because she knew herself to be better armed than her enemies.

It is far from my intentions on the basis of these no longer disputable facts to retort that, since our enemies were numerically superior to us, it follows that they brought on the war against us. I have said above that the strength of armaments does not justify conclusions as to the bellicose intentions of the country arming. The most powerful armies may be created for no other purpose than defence, and their creators may be without any aggressive intentions whatever. The desire of our enemies for war cannot be proved from the numerical superiority of their armies alone. But, as our caluminators have always cited the strength of our arms as one of the most important arguments for our warlike intentions, and as in their accusations they play it as their last trump card, I have been compelled to strike this poisoned weapon from their hands.

# **PART THREE**

## **ISOLATION**



## CHAPTER VIII

### DUAL AND TRIPLE ALLIANCES

I TAKE the heading of this chapter from MM. Bourgeois and Pagès' book. They have placed it at the head of their narrative of the events of the period which runs from the conclusion of the Anglo-French Agreement of 8 April, 1904, to the Sarajevo assassination. I adopt it from our accusers, not only because what I have now to say is to refute that section of their book which appears under this heading, but also because it contains in itself the involuntary admission that Germany during this period was in a position of defence, and is calculated accordingly to disprove the arguments of our accusers with regard to the German "will to war" and the "gospel of force". The conclusion of the Triple Entente, which assumed its first written form in the Agreement of 8 April, 1904, and was completed by the Anglo-French Agreement of 31 August, 1907, could have no other object than to restrict by superior force the activities of Germany in the field of world politics and her position as a Continental Power. The Agreements, it is true, by which England proclaimed her adhesion to France and Russia were intended in the first instance to eliminate differences between the contracting parties; but such was only their immediate object. The underlying design was the establishment of diplomatic co-operation between the contracting parties in all questions of European or world politics, and the point of this co-operation was

directed against Germany. It was this underlying design which made the German Government and the German people regard the establishment of the Triple Entente and the attempts which were made to extend it, of which there was no lack, as the expression of a policy of "isolation",<sup>1</sup> reducing Germany to the defensive. Our accusers themselves are far from denying that the Triple Entente pursued such designs. They object only to the word "isolation" in reference to their actions, on the ground that the word implies a suspicion of aggressive intentions. They maintain that the formation of this coalition was in itself a measure of defence, such as one is accustomed to take in the case of wild beasts, who are shut up in cages in order to prevent them from doing people injuries : and they are at pains to show the need for this coalition of defence by a study of the behaviour of Germany ever since the Peace of Frankfort. Their conception of the dangerous character of Germany bears a close resemblance to the description given by the witty Director of the Jardin des Plantes in Paris of one of the animals on exhibition there :

" Cet animal est très méchant ;  
Quand on l'attaque, il se défend ".<sup>2</sup>

It will be the object of this Chapter to show that Germany's "viciousness" consisted, in the period 1904-1914 no less than before, merely in an attitude of self-defence against unjustified attempts to restrict her natural development and her right to live, and to undermine the existence of an allied State, the destruction of which was calculated so to weaken Germany's own position in Europe that she could not have continued to resist the attainment of its aims by the Triple Entente.

<sup>1</sup> [*Einkreisung*, literally "encirclement", "closing in on all sides".]

<sup>2</sup> As far back as April, 1905, when all kinds of dark designs were being attributed to Germany's Morocco policy, Count Bülow found this saying applicable to Germany. He quotes it in a letter to the German Ambassador in London, Count Metternich, on 11 April, 1905. F.O. Papers, Vol. XX, 2, page 606, No. 6,843.

In the earlier Parts of this book I have shown that these aims could only be attained by changes in the *status quo* in Europe to the disadvantage of the Central Powers.

The prospect of their attainment developed in an alarming manner during the last decade before the outbreak of the war, with the conclusion of the Triple Entente. The whole of Germany's diplomatic action between 1904 and 1914 had one sole object ; and that was by peaceful means to avert, or if possible to make an end of, the danger of war which was bound up with the modification of the *status quo* in the sense desired by our two neighbours, and to escape the almost annihilating consequences for the prosperity of Germany and her position in the world with such modification. That German policy had no other aim is so clear that MM. Bourgeois and Pagès themselves no longer maintain the charge of the Covering Note of 16 June, 1919 (that Germany had prepared for war for half a century) in the case of this last decade in which she was surrounded by Powers bound to one another by Treaties and armed to the teeth. They write :

“ William II no doubt did not desire war, though he believed himself to be a unique and distinguished master of the arts of war, and fulfilled his duties as commander-in-chief with the conscientious method and deliberation of an officer passionately engrossed in military matters. But he shrank nevertheless from the terrible responsibility involved in this mission. He knew that in a future war Germany would be risking the extraordinary expansion which she owed to her past victories. What he would have liked would have been to compel his opponents to retreat from their positions, as Bismarck had done after 1871, without resort to fighting.”<sup>1</sup>

*Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus!* Truly it is the smallest of mice which is born of these mountains' travail.

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.* page 339.

The admission contained in the last sentence of the above quotation leaves scarcely anything standing of the thesis which their book sets out to establish. They cannot, after all, have found in all their archives proofs of the warlike intentions of the Emperor. With so wretched a remnant of their terrible accusation not even the most unbridled hate can continue to justify the demand for a world court to sit in justice on the Emperor William II. I imagine that, ever since diplomats and diplomacy have existed, the political art of all rulers and statesmen has consisted precisely in action such as the Emperor is blamed for in these words, that is to say, in the attainment of political ends without resort to war. I am convinced that there is no Frenchman, no Englishman, no Italian, no American, no Japanese, who would not reckon it creditable in the highest degree in a statesman of his own country that he should succeed in increasing the power of his native land by compelling other States to withdraw from their positions without fighting.

In order that the whole edifice of their argument should not crumble, our accusers are compelled to maintain at least the assertion that those responsible for German policy in their desire to impose such withdrawal, first on one and then on another of the States which had combined together for the "taming" of Germany, were actuated only by the fact that they were not content with equality of treatment and were aiming at supremacy in Europe. Before the Triple Entente came into existence, they maintain, the leaders of German policy were able to attain their aim : after the conclusion of the Triple Entente they were no longer able to do so, and between 1904 and 1914 they were compelled in practically every case, with the exception of the Bosnian crisis, to give way because their armament was not yet completed. It was not till the Army Law of 1913 had been passed that they felt themselves strong enough to take up the struggle, and without further withdrawals began the war with the object, the sole object, of securing

the hegemony of the world. William II was for peace indeed, but for peace as he saw it, a peace which allowed him to do everything that he pleased and allowed his opponents to do nothing that they pleased.<sup>1</sup>

But even this "ridiculus mus" cannot be allowed to continue to exist.

The opposite is the truth. The Triple Entente wanted a peace which restricted the freedom of Germany's movements, while it restrained the action of the Entente partners only where they were calculated to go counter to the interests of the firm, and set no limits to their pursuit of aims which ran counter to the interests of the Central Powers.

I have already shown in Chapter VI that England promoted the war in the Transvaal with the design of changing the position created by the Agreement of 1884 in South Africa, with which she was dissatisfied. The peace of the world as it was at the turn of the century did not satisfy Great Britain's idea of peace; and she must needs set to work to modify it, not by any Court of Arbitration (such as a few months before her own representative Sir Julian Paunceforte had proposed at the Hague Conference as the permanent and, in certain cases, obligatory solution of disputes), but by war.

The Russo-Japanese war, which broke out in February, 1904, was also due to the fact that, not merely the two combatants, but also Japan's Ally by the Treaty of two years before, were not satisfied with the peace of the Far East. Each of the three Powers concerned desired a peace in accordance with its own desires. Germany, as may be shown beyond a doubt from the Papers of the German Foreign Office, observed the strictest neutrality throughout this war.<sup>2</sup> But she seized the opportunity to endeavour

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.* page 320.

<sup>2</sup> The guiding lines of German policy during the Russo-Japanese war were laid down (again by Herr von Holstein) on 12 July, 1902, a year and a half before the war actually broke out. F.O. Papers, Vol. XIX, 1, page 5, No. 5,921.



once again to bring about that coalition of the three great Continental Powers which she had twice failed to accomplish, a coalition which, if it could have been realized, would undoubtedly have assured the peace of the world to the advantage of all the Powers of the Dual and Triple Alliances alike. The position of Great Britain in the world would not have been shaken by such a coalition : the only change would have been that it would no longer have been a matter dependent on England's grace how much of the earth's superficies should be left to the other peoples with freedom to move and turn. The attempt was shattered on the same rock as the two previous attempts. France was not prepared to recognize the *status quo* in Europe, and was not in favour of an alliance with a Power which, with the fullest justification, insisted on such recognition.

The pretext for the renewal of the German attempt was found in the incident of the Dogger Bank. The Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Fleet had fired on British fishing-boats in the night of 21-22 October, 1904, in the belief that they were Japanese torpedo-boats. The whole English Press flared up with indignation at this unheard of attack, implying as it did a question of the inviolability of Britannia's rule of the waves. The British Government demanded satisfaction. All Europe expected an open breach between England and Russia. Instantly—and therein lies incontestable proof of the fact that Germany was on the defensive—the German Government was attacked in the organ of the British Navy, *The Army and Navy Gazette*, and accused of being responsible for the incident, because it had warned Russia, before the departure of the Baltic Fleet, against Japanese attacks, and had thereby made the Russian Commander-in-Chief nervous and suspicious.<sup>1</sup> The charge was sheer invention. It is true that the German Ambassador in London had reported, as it was his duty to do, that he had been informed in reliable quarters that mines were to be laid in the Sound and in the Cattogat on behalf of

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XIX, 1, page 281, foot-note.

Japanese agents.<sup>1</sup> But the Foreign Secretary, Herr von Richthofen, had declined to pass the information on to the Russian Government, on the ground that to do so would be inconsistent with the observance of neutrality.<sup>2</sup> It is intelligible that the Emperor was greatly excited by such unfounded attacks, and gave expression to his indignation in numerous marginal notes on the Reports of the German Ambassador in London. The tension between England and Germany, for which the British Press was to blame, was increased by the action of England in declaring the supply of coal to Russian warships to be a breach of neutrality, and in forbidding German ships to go out of port which had taken on board in English harbours coal which was intended for Russia.<sup>3</sup>

The impression made by these incidents was still fresh in the Emperor's mind when on 27 October, 1904, he addressed a telegram to the Tsar,<sup>4</sup> in which he returned to the proposal, made by Herr von Holstein four years before, of an alliance between Russia, Germany and France to enable the three Continental Powers to protect themselves against British encroachments.<sup>5</sup> The Tsar immediately fell in with the proposal. "It is certainly high time", he answered on October 29, "that Germany, Russia and France should combine together so as to make an end of the Anglo-Japanese arrogance and shamelessness. Will you be good enough to lay down definite lines for such an agreement and let me know? As soon as accepted by us, France is bound to join her ally. I have frequently had this

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XIX, 1, No. 6,100.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XIX, 1, page 281, foot-note.

<sup>3</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XIX, 1, Chapter 133.

<sup>4</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XIX, 1, No. 6,118.

<sup>5</sup> This telegram was merely in continuation and support of the action of the Foreign Office, of which the first step had been a conversation of Holstein with the Russian Ambassador, von Osten-Sacken, on 24 October, 1904. All the telegrams and letters from my father to the Tsar in this connection were drafted by the Foreign Office. F.O. Papers, Vol. XIX, 1, page 303, foot-note.

combination in mind. It means peace and quiet for the world.”<sup>1</sup>

In response to this request a Feldjäger (Prussian military courier) left with an answer from the Emperor for St. Petersburg, the object being to maintain secrecy as to the proceedings. The Emperor's answer contained a draft Treaty consisting of four Articles : the preamble stated that the object of the Treaty was to localize the Russo-Japanese War. The first Article ran as follows : “ In the event of one of the two Empires being attacked by a European Power, its Ally will go to its aid with all its forces on land and at sea. The two Allies will jointly remind France of the obligations imposed on her by the Franco-Russian Alliance.”<sup>2</sup>

The Treaty came to nothing however, since the Tsar was persuaded by Lambsdorff to refuse to sign it until France had been informed of its contents. This demand neither the Emperor nor Count Bülow could admit, for two reasons. In the first place, France would have left no stone unturned to prevent the conclusion of such a Treaty, unless presented with the *fait accompli*. In the second place, it was feared that in Paris the secret would not be kept.

Our French accusers see in this new attempt to promote an understanding between the Continental Powers no more than the design to separate France and Russia, in order by

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XIX, 1, No. 6,119.

<sup>2</sup> The French Senatorial Report says of this Treaty : “ Il serait bien curieux de connaître ce projet de traité (It would be very interesting to know what this draft treaty was).” The curiosity of MM. Bourgeois and Pages is now gratified by the publication of the German Foreign Office Papers. They are now enabled—thanks to the Germans—to learn from these Papers that the Tsar was anxious to alter the preamble, which indicated as the object of the Treaty the localization of the Russo-Japanese War, so as to expand the German draft into a Treaty for the maintenance of peace : that is to say (to adopt Count Bülow's description of the Tsar's alterations) he wished to make of the Treaty a firmer, weightier and more permanent instrument. F.O. Papers, Vol. XIX, page 308, Annexe 2, and page 311, Annexe, and page 312, No. 6,125.

destroying the Dual Alliance to make Germany the undisputed ruler of Europe ; and they represent it as a particularly malicious and reprehensible action on the part of Germany that she desired to present France with an accomplished fact.

The first assertion is refuted by the text of the Treaty itself. The Treaty expressly provided for the adhesion of France, and the adhesion of France would have immensely strengthened the French position in the world. It was left entirely to France to decide whether she should secede from the Dual Alliance or not. If the authors of the French Senatorial Report regard a Russo-German defensive agreement as a measure calculated to isolate France, the only possible reason is that they consider the alliance with Russia would have lost all interest for France, once Germany figured in it as a third. In that event, it is true, the Alliance would have ceased to be an alliance for the recovery of Alsace-Lorraine : and for France it had never been anything else but a means of enabling her to seize the first opportunity of attaining that end.

But if the Franco-Russian Alliance had in fact been broken up as a result of the French unwillingness to abandon their desire for revenge, Germany would not have become the master of Europe. She would have secured herself against the ever-threatening danger of war on two fronts ; but she would have been exposed to other grave perils. The point was elaborated by Count Metternich, the German Ambassador in London, in a Memorandum which he drew up at the suggestion of Count Bülow, who summoned him to Berlin for the purpose. In this Memorandum he gave answers to seven questions which the Chancellor put to him. The Chancellor was anxious as to whether a Russo-German defensive alliance might not involve war with England. Such a war, he felt, was particularly dangerous, inasmuch as Germany could not count on effective support from her new ally, whose fleet had just been destroyed and whose army had just suffered defeat. It will be admitted that such questions, addressed to the

Ambassador solely for purposes of the Office, to afford him insight into the real intentions of the German Government and without any question of their going any further, were not designed for the purpose of deceiving anybody. The form in which they are drafted shows that the Emperor and Chancellor were anxious, in accordance with the sense of Herr von Holstein's Minute of 31 December, 1899, not to provoke a rupture with England, but merely to prevent her being any longer in a position to compel the Continental Powers to do her bidding. The first of these questions was as follows : " Our intentions in regard to England are wholly peaceful. We shall act in relation to England with the utmost possible prudence. We shall make every effort to avoid incidents. The increase of our fleet is proceeding at a slower rate than that of many other countries. The Navy Bill, which is to be expected next winter, will be kept within comparatively modest limits, and will be introduced and supported quietly and without any agitation in the country. Is there any danger that in spite of these precautions we may nevertheless be attacked by England anywhere in the near future ? " <sup>1</sup>

Count Metternich replied to this question with a very decided negative ; <sup>2</sup> and his representations appear to have been a considerable factor in preventing the proposal for a Russo-German defensive alliance being carried further. It would not, indeed, have been carried further, even if the Tsar had waived the condition which he made, that France should be informed before signature of the Agreement. This shows clearly that the Emperor's proposal of 27 October was made in the belief that an English attack was imminent, and the proposal, consequently, was purely defensive in character. The accusation of aggression falls completely to the ground, for the reason that it is not directed equally against France's ally. The Tsar not only received the German suggestion with enthusiasm, he met

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XIX, 1, page 331, No. 6,139.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XIX, 1, No. 6,140.

the cautious German overture with a request to proceed at once with the drafting of an agreement. Even the proposal to present France with a *fait accompli* came, not from Germany, but from the Tsar, who wrote in his letter to the Emperor: "As soon as accepted by us, France is bound to join her ally." It was not till later that the Tsar, at Count Lamsdorff's instance, abandoned this idea. Italy should be standing with us in the dock, because she asked for an extension of the Triple Alliance in 1887<sup>1</sup> and thereafter supported Germany's "lust for domination" for thirty years; Russia should be there because of her attitude in the autumn of 1904. The fact that MM. Bourgeois and Pagès do not include Russia in their indictment on this account in itself knocks the ground from under their feet.

If Germany had really aimed at world-hegemony, the Russo-Japanese War would have been the most favourable opportunity for her to attain her ends. There was no time between 1871 and 1914 when the European situation was more favourable for her than at the close of the Russo-Japanese War: she could have secured herself and her allies for long years ahead from the attacks of her two neighbours and, with the freedom of movement thus obtained in Europe, she could have proceeded to develop her fleet and contest with England the mastery of the seas.

Germany made no attempt to exploit this opportunity. All she did was to endeavour to conclude a "Security Pact", for which she is now attacked by the historians and politicians of a people whose Government have made the conclusion of a Security Pact the lodestar of their policy, although the dangers confronting France to-day are pure figments of the imagination. It was otherwise with Germany in 1904, when she was confronted with a coalition bent on the pursuit of aims which could only be attained by the infliction of mortal injuries on herself.

The baselessness of the interpretation which our accusers place on the objects pursued by the Emperor

<sup>1</sup> See pages 99 and 100.

and Count Bülow in this renewed attempt to promote a coalition of the three great Continental Powers, is shown by their comments on an article, which appeared in the semi-official *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of 29 October, expressing satisfaction that the prudence of the Russian and English Governments had made possible a peaceful settlement of the conflict arising out of the shooting at the Dogger Bank. This article they describe as mendacious and hypocritical, because (they say) the object of the Emperor in his *démarche* with the Tsar was on the contrary to embitter the conflict between England and Russia.

It may be shown from the German Foreign Office Papers that the contrary is the case. The letter of the Emperor to the Tsar of 31 October, which Count Bülow drafted, contains the following passage: "The damned Hull incident must of course first be settled before we can take any further step or approach France. My information leaves no doubt that in this matter Delcassé and Cambon have already determined the attitude of the French Government in the Anglophile sense. If, therefore, we were now to compel France to take sides in the matter, we should be driving her into the English camp."<sup>1</sup> A peaceful settlement of the Hull incident is thus clearly stated to be the necessary preliminary to success in respect of the coalition project; and the article in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* was thus a true expression of the views of the man responsible for German policy, and not mendacious or hypocritical. The insinuation against German policy in this particular case may appear of minor importance; but I am concerned to refute it, because it reveals unmistakably the distorted character of the premisses which it is intended to support.

Our accusers are arguing from the same premisses when they attribute to German Imperialism the origins of the friction which arose between Germany and France over Morocco in the autumn of 1904, and led at a later stage

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XIX, 2, page 310, No. 6,123.

to the Emperor's visit to Tangier, the Conference of Algeciras, the Agreement of 1909, and finally to the sudden sending of H.M.S. *Panther* to Agadir, by which time the two countries stood on the brink of war. They say that the Franco-Spanish Agreement defining the respective French and Spanish spheres of influence in Morocco was treated by the German Government as an encroachment on German rights, and served as a pretext for the anti-French policy of Germany in Morocco.<sup>1</sup> It is clear, however, from the Foreign Office Papers that Germany worked behind the scenes for the conclusion of this very Agreement, and rendered the Spanish Government great services by her advice in the struggle for Spain's rights in Morocco. By the advice which she gave during the extremely difficult negotiations in the summer of 1904, Germany, came forward on behalf of the rights of the weaker State, and against the claims which France advanced (relying on the Agreement concluded with England on 8 April, 1904), claims which already revealed the French design of treating Morocco as an object of exclusively French exploitation.<sup>2</sup>

The German Ambassador in Madrid, Herr von Radowitz, was able to telegraph to the Foreign Office on 13 October : "The King and Queen to-day expressed to me their warmest thanks for our timely hints here, thanks to which alone (they said) the negotiations with France over Morocco have been brought to what it is, in the circumstances, a favourable result. The Queen said that the concessions to Spain had only been accepted grudgingly in Paris : she had no illusions as to the prospect of Spain finding herself involved again in the most difficult situations with France in Morocco. It was necessary to be prepared from the outset to defend the rights which had been acquired against the French. It was to be hoped that England would then support Spain in her own interest."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 307.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XX, 1, pages 169-194.

<sup>3</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XX, 1, page 192, No. 6,510.



It was not the Franco-Spanish Agreement, but the imperialistic designs of France, as disclosed in the negotiations with regard to it, which induced Germany to intervene in defence of the Sultan's independence from the moment that it seemed in danger from France as a result of the Anglo-French Agreement. The Agreement itself did not directly impinge on the independence of the Sultan ; but, like all agreements delimiting spheres of influence for European Powers in oversea lands, it was no more than the preliminary to a Protectorate, and it was easy to foresee that the independence of the Maghzen would very shortly become, like that of the Egyptian Khedive, an independence only in name. Of this England was very well aware ; and Count Bernstorff, who shortly after the conclusion of the Agreement replaced Count Metternich in London (the latter being recalled to Berlin), could only explain the " fact, for which there is no parallel in the world's history, that England had concluded a 'societas leonina' with another Power while contenting herself, contrary to all her traditional aptitudes, with the wild ass's share " by the expectation that the good relations created between the two Western Powers as a result of the war in the Far East would bring England so many advantages in her competition with Russia in the field of world politics that the surrender of Morocco to France would be effectively counterbalanced. <sup>1</sup>

Why was it that Germany was not content to surrender Morocco to French Imperialism without a struggle ? Morocco was a long way from Germany ; and France was entitled, if only by geographical considerations, to exercise a greater influence there than any other Power, except Spain.

Was it merely prestige and " limitless lust of domination " that determined Germany's Moroccan policy ? Was it not rather cogent and justifiable economic interests that made her wish not to be shouldered out of Morocco ? The rich

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XX, 1, page 16, No. 6,376.

ore-fields of North-West Africa, a land which had ceased to be bound by any but the loosest political ties to the Turkish Caliphate, represented one of the few regions of the earth in which the urgently required openings for politico-economic activity were still available for Germany. The land was in a position, not only to supply German industry with indispensable raw materials, but also to become an important market for the products of German industry and a remunerative field for German technical activity, in the process of the execution of costly civilizing works which its princes and people desired. Of all the great Powers of the earth Germany had the smallest colonial possessions. Every other country commanded richer and more extensive sources of raw materials than Germany. Was Germany asking too much when she put forward the claim that this last possibility of, at any rate in part, making good her disadvantage should not be barred to her? Was she not bound to regard every attempt to deny her complete equality of treatment in competition for the cultural and economic exploitation of these last free sources of the world's iron as a powerful encroachment on her just interests? Was she not acting purely on the defensive when, on the principle of *principiis obsta*, she let it be clearly known, as soon as with the conclusion of the Anglo-French Entente such encroachment became probable, that in Morocco, as elsewhere, decisions affecting German interests must not be taken without Germany being consulted?

It was such considerations as these, and not the desire for domination, that induced the German Government to exert its influence to secure the conclusion of the Franco-Spanish Agreement of 3 October, with regard to Morocco so as to prevent the creation of a precedent by the exclusion of Spain; and such considerations were behind every German move from the visit of my father to Tangier to the sending of the *Panther* to Agadir.

Chance brought it about that, at the very moment when the Anglo-French Agreement of 8 April had opened up

the possibility of serious menace to German interests in Morocco, a new incident in the series of unsettled disputes between the Moroccan Government and Germany arose. On 7 March the Pasha of Fez had caused a native employee of a German firm, who as such was under German protection, to be illegally arrested. The German Consul in Fez had in vain attempted to secure his release. The prisoner had been compelled, with a view to depriving the German Government of its right to intervene, to sign a written statement waiving his right to German protection. The German Minister in Tangier, Herr von Mentzingen, did not recognize this document with its forced signature, and demanded the immediate release of the prisoner. His demand was not complied with on pretexts which were obviously hollow. Herr von Mentzingen reported to Berlin that the Sherifian Government had for months past endeavoured to evade all its obligations in regard to Germany.<sup>1</sup>

It is striking proof of the peacefulness of German policy that the despatch of warships to Tangier, which was recommended by Herr von Mentzingen and was proposed by Count Bülow to the Emperor, who was cruising in the Mediterranean at the time, was rejected by my father in a telegram from Messina.<sup>2</sup> The Emperor suggested coming to an understanding with the three other Powers interested in Morocco, France, Spain and England, with a view to joint representations to the Sherifian Government. Five days later the Anglo-French Agreement was published, and from that moment all idea of forcible action in relation to Morocco was abandoned "as it might easily be misinterpreted and might conduce to suppositions alien to German policy".<sup>3</sup> In these words the Foreign Secretary, Herr von Mühlberg, explained the Instructions which he sent to Herr von Mentzingen on 21 May, telling him to

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XX, 1, page 198 *et seq.*, No. 6,512.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XX, 1, page 199, No. 6,513, dated 3 April, 1904.

<sup>3</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XX, 1, page 206, No. 6,520.

observe an attitude of reserve in relation to the Sherifian Government until it should become clear what effect the handing over of Morocco to French influence would have on the foreign relations of the Moorish Empire. For the same reasons the news that the Sultan intended to approach the Emperor for help against French encroachments on his sovereign rights was met by the instructions sent on 19 May to the German Minister in Tangier to dissuade the Sultan from taking any such step. Can it still seriously be maintained, in view of the documentary evidence of this cautious, almost timid, handling of the Moroccan question by Germany, inspired solely by the desire of avoiding conflict with France, that the methods of Germany in this case were the methods of a ruthless Imperialism ?

And how was this attitude of reserve required by France ? She endeavoured, immediately after the conclusion of the Agreement of 8 April, to secure for herself a monopoly of all concessions and contracts for the supply of the Sherifian Government. She did not consider it necessary even to discuss the matter with the other Powers having economic interests in Morocco (other than England and Spain). The first of such powers was Germany.

It was not until there was no longer any doubt that France would use her political influence, as in her other Protectorates, to prevent the granting of concessions to German nationals, that Berlin began to consider the desirability of asking France, on the strength of the Madrid Convention and the right to most-favoured-nation treatment accorded us in the German-Moroccan Commercial Treaty (which latter instrument it was not open to the contracting parties to denounce), for an assurance that Germany would still be free to compete for contracts for the Moroccan State. Negotiations on such a basis involved recognition of the privileged position of France, and with it recognition of the pregnant principle that two Powers are entitled by an Agreement concluded without the participation, and indeed without the knowledge, of other

Powers to take decisions as to political and economic influence in promising colonial territories. Berlin accordingly hesitated long before embarking on this course. A second possibility was to continue steadfastly the peaceful penetration of Morocco and the independent protection of German rights in the country, in reliance on the Madrid Convention and the Commercial Treaty, until France found herself compelled to take steps to arrive at an understanding. In so doing France would be making good the great mistake she made in coming to an understanding with England, whose legal position in Morocco did not differ from that of Germany, with regard to her dominion in Morocco, while leaving Germany unconsulted.<sup>1</sup>

It was not until the pressure which the French representative in Fez endeavoured to exercise on the Sultan, with the support of the French military control which had in the meanwhile been established, had led to the growth of a movement of hostility to the foreigner, and the Europeans were flocking from the interior to the coasts, that Germany decided to save the German influence in Morocco by a policy of stiffening the Sultan's back. It was with this object in view, and no other, that my father consented, against his will, to land in Tangier in the course of his Mediterranean trip in March, 1905, and to give open expression on the spot to the fact that Germany regarded the independence of the Sherifian Government as inviolable. It was not the German Emperor who infringed the existing treaties in making this declaration, but those who contested his right to make it. To avoid any misconception in regard to his visit to Tangier, my father had used the following language in the speech which he made the day before his departure on the *Hamburg* at the unveiling of the statue of his grandfather in Bremen: "I take credit

<sup>1</sup> A comprehensive account of the stages of development of German policy will be found in the letter of Count Bülow to the German Ambassador in Paris, dated 21 July, 1904, and the latter's answer, dated 27 July. F.O. Papers, Vol. XX, 1, Nos. 6,523 and 6,524.

to myself that, profiting by the lessons of history, I have never striven after a barren dominion in the world. The world-empire of which I have dreamed is rather the ideal of a state of things where the newly created German Reich shall before all things enjoy the most complete confidence on all sides as a quiet, honourable and peaceful neighbour ; and, if one day people should come to talk of a German world-empire or a Hohenzollern hegemony of the world, I mean that it should be founded, not on political pre-eminence acquired by the sword, but on the confidence in us of other nations striving after like ends." With this speech fresh in their memories—for it is not to be supposed that historical experts such as MM. Bourgeois and Pagès can have forgotten it—our accusers contend that, after the defeat of the Russians at Mukden, the moment appeared to the German Emperor to have arrived to pass to challenges and threats ; and in the declaration of the Emperor to the French representative in Fez that in the protection of Germany's interests against monopoly and annexation of every kind he would negotiate only with the free and independent Sultan of Morocco, they see a glove thrown down for France to pick up. In reality it was my father who in these words was picking up the glove which France had thrown down to all the Powers with economic interests in Morocco, when she began to force the free State of Morocco, without consulting them, under the yoke of a French Protectorate. The Emperor's intervention in Tangier was on behalf of equality of treatment not only of Germany, but of all the nations : he made no claim for special treatment for Germany.

That this equality of treatment was the last thing that France wanted is shown by the successive phases through which Franco-Moroccan relations passed down to the year 1911.

Of these phases, that which led up to the Conference of Algeciras is the most difficult for our accusers to handle. MM. Bourgeois and Pagès could not fail to find in the

archives of the Quai d'Orsay a great number of proofs that the man who in 1905 had been responsible for French foreign policy for seven years was, in the view of his own Ministerial colleagues an imperialist whose policy, based on the work of his own hands, the Entente with England, was to treat Germany as a factor to be left entirely out of account. In the struggle which developed over the proposal of a Conference M. Delcassé advanced claims which were not consistent with the existing treaties, whereas Germany supported the legal position created by the treaties. This our accusers naturally contest ; but the falsity of their standpoint is revealed by the account which they give of the negotiations. For example, they cite from a Note of Delcassé to the French representative in Fez the following passage : " You will inform Ben Sliman [Moroccan Foreign Minister] categorically that there can be no third Power intervening between the French Government and the Moroccan Government, and that there is no third country between Morocco and Algerian France. France is Morocco's only neighbour." <sup>1</sup>

But it was as clear as the day that the Madrid Convention gave no Power the right, without the consent of the other signatory Powers, to make changes in the *status quo* in Morocco by direct negotiations with the Moroccan Government. It was not in order to separate England from France by force, as our accusers suggest, but in order to defend the rights of Germany as a signatory of the Madrid Convention which Delcassé had ignored, that Prince Bülow took up the proposal of a Conference. A direct understanding with Delcassé, who considered France to be entitled to make a Tunis of Morocco, Prince Bülow held to be impossible, after the conclusion of the Anglo-French Entente, which had already gone to the point of preparation for the conclusion of an offensive and defensive alliance. I am not concerned here to inquire whether it was a mistake on Prince Bülow's part to insist with such obstinacy

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 309.

on the Conference proposal after Delcassé, who had been determined even at the cost of war to force the Sultan to accept the French reforms, had resigned on 12 June, 1905. Prince Bülow's attitude, whether it was mistaken or not, cannot at any rate be thrown into the scales as an argument of German "guilt" in the sense of the Treaty of Versailles. Those who condemn Prince Bülow's policy, in this case again inspired by Herr von Holstein, always do so on the ground that more could have been obtained by direct negotiation with France than was in the end obtained at the Conference. They argue that it would have been possible to come to an arrangement with France for a delimitation of spheres of influence in Morocco, and that a more considerable extension of our colonial possessions could have been effected than was afterwards secured by Kiderlen-Wächter in 1911. If Germany, by direct negotiations with France, to the exclusion of the other signatory Powers to the Madrid Convention, had increased her oversea possessions by the acquisition of South Morocco, she would have been compelled to disavow her entire Moroccan policy, which was based on the inviolability of the Sultan's rights, and she would further have been guilty of betrayal not only of the Sultan, but also of the King of Spain, to whom the Emperor had promised in the course of his Mediterranean trip at Vigo that he would not aim at any territorial acquisitions in Morocco.<sup>1</sup> Neither the Emperor nor the Chancellor wanted territorial acquisitions: and our accusers are once again inverting the truth when they say that Germany insisted on the Conference because she wished to humiliate France.

This is so undeniable that our accusers, whose national pride will not allow them to admit that France was humiliated at the Conference which after long demur she accepted, write that even, after Delcassé's resignation, Rouvier never diverged by an inch from the policy which the latter had pursued, since (they say) throughout the

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XVII, page 363, No. 5,208.



negotiations with Germany there was never any question of the validity of the treaties with England and Spain.<sup>1</sup>

This assertion is in sheer contradiction of the passage, quoted a few lines before, from Tardieu's book *La France et les Alliances* as proof of Germany's policy of force. The passage runs :<sup>2</sup>

“ If the Emperor insisted on the holding of the Conference, it was because the mere fact of the Conference in being would proclaim to all the world that France's treaty system was not enough, if Germany asserted herself against it, and because this Conference, as the instance to which Germany addressed her appeal against our policy in Fez, represented a monument to the might of Germany, and a warning to any and every one who should presume to attempt to assert their political independence.”

It is very comprehensible that our accusers should find themselves involved in such contradictions, since the French Premier, M. Rouvier, himself condemned the methods of his own Foreign Minister. In a conversation which Herr von Holstein had with a confidential emissary of the Premier, the French financier, Betzold, on 2 May, 1905, the latter remarked (Holstein having laid the whole blame for the increased Franco-German tension on Delcassé) : “ Rouvier shares the German view with regard to Delcassé ; he does not trust him further than he can see.”<sup>3</sup> Our accusers indeed are championing a lost cause in their account of the origins of the Algeciras Conference : for it is impossible for them to conceal the

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 311. They quote in this connection the statement which Rouvier himself made in the Chamber on 10 July, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> [In the English version (André Tardieu, *France and the Alliances*, Macmillan & Co., New York, 1908) this passage will be found on page 189 : but the translation there given is not here followed.]

<sup>3</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XX, 2, page 359, No. 6,646.

fact that Delcassé was regarded by his own colleagues as involving in his person the danger of war, and that the French Premier bore witness against him on this very ground, as Freycinet had done against Boulanger in 1887, and in so doing provided the justification of German policy.

It is unnecessary for me to say much about the Treaty of Björkö, the conclusion of which, on 24 July, 1905, fell in the middle of the negotiations with regard to the Morocco Conference, since the charges which are made against Germany in this connection are the same as are brought against her attempt a year before to conclude a defensive alliance with Russia, and the same arguments can be used to refute them.<sup>1</sup> The alliance concluded at Björkö, like its predecessor, was concluded for the maintenance of peace, and it would have maintained peace, if the Tsar (who signed it with enthusiasm) had not deferred to his counsellors, in particular Count Lambsdorff, and, in defiance of the text of the Treaty itself, had insisted on the adhesion of France as a preliminary to its validity, a condition which was impossible of fulfilment since the adhesion of France was not to be had in spite of the understanding which had been reached in the interval over Morocco.<sup>2</sup>

There is, however, one charge in connection with this Treaty on which I must touch, since it raises once again Germany's alleged preference of might before right, and so is closely connected with the War Guilt Question. It is not hard to refute. Referring to a letter of the Emperor to the Tsar dated from Rügen on 2 August, and written after a stay at the Danish Court, MM. Bourgeois and Pagès accuse the Emperor of having looked to the

<sup>1</sup> *V. supra* page 206 and *et seqq.*

<sup>2</sup> The Tsar wrote on 27 September, 1905, to the Emperor: "But if France were to refuse to join us, then, not only would Article IV drop away, but also the meaning of Article I would change radically, because its obligations in the present wording point to any European Power and France too—Russia's ally." F.O. Papers, Vol. XIX, 2, No. 6,247.

Treaty of Björkö to effect the enslavement not only of France, but also of Denmark.<sup>1</sup> The Emperor wrote :

“ In the course of a long conversation which I had with Isvolsky [Isvolsky was then Russian Minister at Copenhagen] I acquired the certainty that the present Foreign Minister, Count Raben, and a number of other influential persons have come to the conclusion that, in the event of war and of an attack on the Baltic by a foreign Power, the Danes, confronted with invasion and unable to maintain even the shadow of neutrality, expect Russia and Germany to take immediate steps to protect their interests, and to occupy Denmark accordingly and hold it for the duration of the war, which incidentally would be the best security they could have for their country and its continued existence and that of the dynasty.”<sup>2</sup>

How one can conclude from these words that the Emperor intended to enslave Denmark is unintelligible on the face of it, since the occupation of Denmark contemplated was to take place in the event of war, with the consent of the Danish Government and for the protection of Danish neutrality. But here again the charge of our accusers is to the wrong address ; for this letter of the Emperor is nothing but a report on the execution of a mission with which the Emperor had been entrusted on his visit to Copenhagen by the Tsar, France's ally !

In the letter which the Emperor sent to Count Bülow with regard to the conclusion of the Treaty of Björkö he wrote at the end<sup>3</sup> : “ There was also much talk of Denmark,

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 317.

<sup>2</sup> It appears further from this letter and from the correspondence of the Emperor with Prince Bülow at the time (July, 1905) that my father, during his stay in Copenhagen, followed Prince Bülow's advice in not raising the question of the neutralization of Denmark with King Christian, as the Tsar had desired him to do.

<sup>3</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XIX, 2, page 464, No. 6,220.

and the Tsar expressed the wish that we should consider if there was not some form to be found by which we could both guarantee King Christian in the possession of his country, since no declaration of neutrality was of any use to us which would allow the Danes—with perfect propriety from their point of view—to pilot enemy ships into the Baltic right in front of our ports. If the adversary does not respect the neutrality of Denmark, which in view of the weakness of this small country is a probable assumption, he will immediately lay hands on it, and Denmark will then be compelled, in spite of neutrality, to co-operate with the enemy, to whom she will afford an admirable basis for operations against our coasts. Denmark, he said, is after all a Baltic Power and not a North Sea Power. I promised to discuss the matter with you.”<sup>1</sup>

Those, therefore, who wish to find material for accusation in the design to occupy Denmark in the event of war for the protection of its neutrality, must bring their accusations against the Tsar, the nephew of the King of Denmark and the Ally of France, in whose honour MM. Bourgeois and Pagès a few pages before pronounce an encomium of praise for his loyalty and love of peace. The reference is sufficient to reveal the absurdity of the charge.

The Treaty of Björkö was never regarded by my father as an instrument for the enslavement of any other State ; in his eyes it was an act of liberation, and its consummation was in the nature of a miracle. That is clearly shown by the letter quoted above, which he wrote to Count Bülow on the day the Treaty was signed off Wisby. “ Thus the morning of 24 July, 1905, has become a turning-point in the history of Europe, thanks to God’s grace, and a great

<sup>1</sup> See also the documentary evidence in Chapter 129, Vol. XIX, 1, of the F.O. Papers with regard to the blocking of the Baltic, from which it appears that the neutralization of Denmark had been proposed as early as 1903 by Prince Hans of Glücksburg, the brother of King Christian, and that the Tsar had already made the proposal that, in the event of a war with England, Russia and Germany should jointly occupy Denmark for the protection of its neutrality.

relief to my beloved Fatherland, which is thereby freed at last from the horrible grip of the Gallo-Russian pincers.”<sup>1</sup>

The miracle was never consummated because the Tsar, once freed from the Far Eastern danger by the Peace of Portsmouth, for the conclusion of which he had Germany to thank, wrote on November 10 communicating a declaration which he desired should rank as a supplementary article to the Treaty. The declaration stated that the Treaty should not apply to a war with France—or even, be it noted, to a war provoked by France. As the Treaty was concluded on our side primarily in order to protect Germany against a French attack, it lost all value for us by this addition.<sup>2</sup>

Another miracle a year and a half later was more successful. This was the settlement by the Agreement of 31 August, 1907, of the differences between England and Russia, a development the impossibility of which had been the basis for years of the whole of the policy inspired by Holstein. Our accusers contend that this Treaty, as also the Franco-Japanese Treaty of 10 June, 1907, which Edward VII brought about, and the Russo-Japanese Treaty of 30 July, 1907, were concluded solely with the object of maintaining peace. They say: “Was not Edward VII right when he said a year later in Berlin that all his efforts had been directed towards the maintenance of peace and to the happiness of all nations in this peace?”

I have no reason to answer the first part of this question otherwise than in the affirmative. With the encirclement of Germany Edward VII had achieved what he wished, a peace to England's taste, a peace which left him arbiter of the world. It may be assumed that he wished to maintain such a peace. But to the second part of the question I must reply with a no less decided negative; for the

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XIX, 2, page 463.

<sup>2</sup> The Treaty was of course also designed to protect Germany against an English attack. As, however, an English attack was extremely improbable, except in the event of a French one, the Treaty in fact was deprived of all its value when it relieved Russia of her liability to come to the aid of Germany in the event of a French attack.

essential purpose of these Treaties was, if not entirely to eliminate, at any rate to curtail as far as possible Germany's share in the blessings of this peace. Germany was placed entirely on the defensive. The encirclement was complete.

King Edward would never have been able to carry through these treaties, or to place Germany in this position, had it not been for the fact that in May, 1906, shortly after the conclusion of the Peace of Algeciras, the office of Foreign Minister in Russia was taken over by a man of destiny with the programme, the pregnant programme, out of which the world war was born. I refer to Alexander Petrovitch Isvolsky, who will be known in history as "the father of the world war".

Nine months before his arrival at the Winter Palace Square<sup>1</sup> Isvolsky collected in the French capital, as he himself relates in his Memoirs, the Russian Ambassadors accredited to Paris, London and Rome; and he then and there evolved with them the policy, which he afterwards consistently pursued, first as Foreign Minister and after 1910 as Ambassador in Paris. The object of this policy was the mastery of the Straits, the unrestricted domination of the Balkans, and the annihilation of all obstacles which blocked the way. Two years before the war he found in Poincaré an ally who, like himself, was pursuing an aim which could only be realized by war.

The first steps on this path were the Treaties of 30 July and 31 August, 1907, by which Russia wound up her Far Eastern policy and made a friend of her most powerful enemy, Great Britain. As Isvolsky was firmly resolved to secure by war the prize for which his policy was striving, if it was not to be attained by peaceful means, one may say that his assumption of office in the Empire of the Tsars marked a turning-point in European history. It pointed in a direction which was the direct opposite of that which my father would have given it by the Treaty of Björkö.

<sup>1</sup> [The *Dvortsovaya Ploshchad* in Petrograd, where the former Russian Foreign Office was situated.]

## CHAPTER IX

### THE SECOND HAGUE PEACE CONFERENCE THE BOSNIAN CRISIS—AGADIR

THE French Senatorial Commission's Report treats as an admission of guilt the fact that the Memorandum of the German historians, which was handed to the Peace Delegation in 1919 in order to confute the Report of the Entente Committee on the responsibility of Germany for the world war, has scarcely anything to say of the diplomatic activities of the German Government between the years 1904 and 1908. It says: "They [the authors of the German Memorandum] reproach the Allies, who, with proofs in their hands, have shown that Germany and Germany's Emperor were for the war, because they have confined the examination of the question of responsibility to the year 1914 and have ignored considerations of earlier date. They themselves, however, have neglected, completely and systematically, the plots concocted by the Emperor and his servants between the years 1904 and 1908 against the peace of the world, plots 'in pursuit of political and economic interests which could only be realized by a war'." <sup>1</sup>

If the authors of the German Memorandum have not gone deeply into the events of these years, the reason is not to be sought in any impossibility of finding a defence for

<sup>1</sup> The passage in the single inverted commas is an ironical quotation of the words applied to Russia and France in the German Memorandum.

German diplomacy during that period. The contents of the preceding Chapter are sufficient to show that the reason is to be found elsewhere. If the authors of the German Memorandum were silent on these years, it was because they could not conceive that it would occur to anyone to include these years of "encirclement"—a time when Germany was continuously on the defensive, endeavouring to avert the dangers of war by understandings with her neighbours—within the hunting-grounds in which to seek material for accusation. What MM. Bourgeois and Pagès call plots against the peace of the world were really efforts to maintain it. If they had not broken on the rock of French opposition, even the Sarajevo assassination would not have led to the outbreak of the great catastrophe.

To prove that the encirclement was not felt by Germany herself as a threat, our accusers ask: "If Germany felt herself threatened, as she was always complaining she did, by the agreements which went with the Franco-Russian Alliance and the general cordial understanding in every part of the world, could she not have found in the Hague Conference the best means of defence? But she preferred to this scrap of paper her own sword, and proceeded to sharpen it."<sup>1</sup>

I am led by this question to go into the subject of Germany's behaviour during the second Hague Peace Conference, which plays so important a part in the War Guilt Lie propaganda. In the fact that Germany would not allow the recourse to force to be blocked by any international agreements our enemies find one of their strongest arguments for our war guilt. In view, however, of the experience of humanity under the rule of the League of Nations Covenant, can our accusers' question be treated seriously? That Covenant was not able to prevent either the Russo-Polish or the Turco-Greek war, and it apparently seems to the members of the League to offer so little security against future wars that they now consider Security

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 325.



Pacts to be more indispensable than ever, and are maintaining their armaments intact.

How can it occur to anyone to suppose that Germany in her isolation might have found a means of defence in the proposals put forward at the Second Hague Conference, proposals which restricted the jurisdiction of the compulsory Arbitration Court (by the insertion of the so-called "national honour" clause) to questions over which wars could never again arise, and left all questions in which the possibility of war was inherent to be solved as before by the customary diplomatic methods or, as and when these failed, by the sword? It was precisely because of the certainty that no single war would ever be prevented by arbitration proceedings, as proposed by the Powers which were even then banded together against Germany, that the latter could not forego the sharpening of her sword, in the interests of her own safety, and not for aggression, but for defence.

All the Powers who pressed for a solution of the question of disarmament and compulsory arbitration by the Second Hague Conference in reality shared this view. They did not put forward their proposals, and Germany did not reject them, because their love of peace was greater than Germany's, but because they wished to create an impression—the impression that they believed in the power of their proposals to avert war. And Germany did not refuse to take part in the discussion of these proposals because her love of peace was less than that of the other Powers, but because she was foolish enough to be too honourable to hide her disbelief, as the others hid theirs, in the power of such proposals to avert war.

All doubt on the point is removed when it is learnt that Isvolsky, the Foreign Minister of the very Power which summoned the Conference, admitted during the proceedings his profound scepticism in regard to the British proposal to place the limitation of armaments on the agenda, but advised Germany to allow the British to bring in their

proposal and then give it a first-class funeral. Italy and France were of the same opinion.<sup>1</sup> One piece of evidence, the value of which it is impossible to over-estimate, as to the hypocrisy which underlay the indignation in regard to Germany's attitude at the Hague Conference, is to be found in the conversation which the German Naval Representative, Captain Siegel, had with Vice-Admiral Sir John Fisher, the Naval Representative of England and later First Sea Lord at the Admiralty, during the first Hague Conference on 28 June, 1899. This very outspoken seaman, who (it will be remembered) revealed himself on another occasion in his correspondence with Tirpitz as the *enfant terrible* of British diplomacy, made no concealment of the fact that in case of necessity England would not trouble herself over any resolutions of the Hague Conference. His actual words to Captain Siegel—Fisher was at the time in command of the British Mediterranean Squadron—were as follows: "They have sent me to the Conference, because they know my views on naval war and its requirements. I was fetched from the West Indies before my command had run out; and I told the Admiralty at the outset that I knew only one principle, and that was 'Might is right'. I left no doubt in the mind of the First Lord [Goschen] either as to my personal views: I told him what I thought when I was given my new command, and left it to him to take another Admiral as head of the Mediterranean Squadron, if he did not like my views. I should not hesitate an instant in the case of a conflict in the Mediterranean to take action, even without instructions and in defiance of any dubious agreements about arbitration and mediation, if I were convinced that the political and

<sup>1</sup> Erich Brandenburg, *Von Bismarck zum Weltkrieg* (From Bismarck to the World War), page 237. The great series of Papers published by the Foreign Office has not yet reached the Second Hague Conference at the time this book is printed. I therefore use in its place the book of Erich Brandenburg, who has had access to the F.O. Papers for the years 1907 to 1914.

military position and the advantage of my country demanded it." <sup>1</sup>

Can it really be contended that Germany was actuated by militarist and martial motives in voting against the compulsory Arbitration Court, when it is known that the German Government was receiving such reports as this as to the true purposes behind the British Arbitration Court proposal?

It was because she had such cogent grounds for doubting the sincerity of the proposer, and on purely formal grounds of law, that Germany voted against the jurisdiction of the compulsory Court in purely legal questions. It was not that she was afraid that an Arbitration Court might frustrate her in the fulfilment of a design to make war. Militarist intentions and bellicose designs could not have been the motives of her decision, because the Court was not to be invoked at all in cases out of which wars might arise. I will not deny that amongst the Representatives assembled at the Hague at this time there were sincere pacifists, who believed that the proposed rules with regard to the compulsory arbitration procedure might operate to maintain peace, even with the addition of the limiting clause with regard to questions affecting national honour, which was to exclude recourse to the procedure precisely where danger of war arose. But those from whom these Representatives drew their instructions must have worn a smile on their lips, such as augurs smile, for every serious politician who reckoned with realities to see. To-day, when we know that England for example, in spite of the existence of an arbitration treaty with Germany declined a German proposal for arbitration on a purely legal point, where neither her national honour nor her vital interests were concerned—I have already stated the facts in Chapter III <sup>2</sup>—to-day, when we see both England and Italy refusing to sign the

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. XV, page 229-30, No. 4,275.

<sup>2</sup> In the case of the compensation claims of German residents in the Transvaal in 1910: see page 71.

Geneva Protocol on the ground that they consider it an encroachment on their sovereignty, only a child in politics (as Erich Brandenburg pertinently observes) can maintain that the acceptance of the proposals for compulsory arbitration in the form in which they were put forward at the Hague would have prevented any one of the subsequent wars.<sup>1</sup>

The attitude of Germany at the Second Hague Conference was no doubt unwise, unwise because straightforward; but it proves nothing to the detriment of her peaceable intentions any more than the proposals of the other Powers prove anything as to their peaceable intentions.<sup>2</sup>

In the matter of disarmament, it is true, Germany had an additional motive, which was urged by her at the First Hague Conference eight years before. Germany had to consider her exceptionally dangerous geographical position and the impossibility of determining the strength of the army which she must maintain, in order to counterbalance this danger, in accordance with a fixed scale. This point was made by the German Representative at the First Hague Conference, Colonel von Schwarzhoff, in so masterly a manner and with such frankness that he persuaded all the other Representatives of the truth of his contentions.<sup>3</sup> One would imagine that France, above all other countries, would appreciate now Germany's reluctance to contemplate disarmament then. It is France who to-day, in spite of a security against attack such as no people in the world has ever had before, opposes bitterly any kind of limitation

<sup>1</sup> Erich Brandenburg, *Von Bismarck zum Weltkrieg*, page 238.

<sup>2</sup> The Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry accepted this view in its decision of 22 December, 1923, for which Prof. Schücking and the Social-Democrat members of the Committee also voted.

<sup>3</sup> Another argument, which influenced the German Government in its rejection of compulsory arbitration at both the Hague Conferences, was the fact that the existence of the Court in the case of a real danger of war would have eliminated the indispensable advantage of Germany's greater rapidity of mobilization, with which alone Germany could hope to counterbalance the numerical superiority of her probable opponents.

of her armaments; France, who declared before the Conference of Washington that she would not take part in the proceedings, if disarmament on land were placed on the agenda, an attitude going far beyond that of Germany at the Second Hague Conference. Those Frenchmen, who to-day cite the attitude of Germany at the Second Hague Conference as a proof of our treacherous and guilty responsibility for the war, must not be astonished if their argument is turned against themselves, and the charges against Germany are applied to France. They will hardly be astonished in such case, unless indeed they are filled to overflowing with that very arrogance with which they charge Germany, the arrogance which claims for one's own people what one would forbid to all the others.

The fact that the German Memorandum passes over the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in a few lines, and begins its narrative of the Balkan Crisis with September, 1908, provides our accusers with another proof of Germany's bad conscience. They profess their desire to fill the gap which the German Memorandum has left, so that everyone may see that Germany and Austria, and not Tsarism, were responsible for the long drawn-out Balkan crisis, out of which the great European conflagration arose.

It is remarkable that in this matter the argument of our adversaries goes to acquit the chief criminal, *i.e.*, Germany, of responsibility: it is to Baron Aehrenthal, since 1906 the occupant of the Ministry in the Ballplatz <sup>1</sup> that they impute the chief part of the responsibility for the kindling of strife in the Balkans. It could hardly be otherwise. With the best will in the world it is not possible to maintain that Germany incited Austria to annex the two Provinces, which the Berlin Congress had entrusted to the administration of the Dual Monarchy without limit of time. But our accusers' acquittal of Germany in this case goes much further than this negative admission. Baron Aehrenthal's action is described by them expressly as a reaction against

<sup>1</sup> The Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office.

Germany's proponderance in the Triple Alliance. His real motive, they say, was to show that Austria-Hungary was strong enough to be able to discard the rôle of "brilliant second", with which she had had to content herself at Algeciras, and to assume on occasion the leading part in the Alliance. MM. Bourgeois and Pagès have found in the French archives a Report of the French Ambassador in Vienna, M. de Saint Aulaire, in which in fact an assertion to this effect is contained.<sup>1</sup> M. de Saint Aulaire in a retrospect, dated January, 1913, of the year 1906 writes that Aehrenthal was expected when he took office, without shattering the Alliance with Germany, to achieve greater independence for Austria within its limits. MM. Bourgeois and Pagès seem to think it is to Germany's discredit to have accepted such a reversal of the rôles. What at any rate is clear is that, if Baron Aehrenthal's policy had the motives which they ascribe to it, the hypothesis of German responsibility for the Bosnian crisis is entirely eliminated. It is on the thesis of "Germany's customary violence against friend and foe" that the War Guilt Lie has been built up; and that thesis is shaken to its foundations, if the leaders of German policy are accused of too little violence, on an occasion when it suits our adversaries' argument better.<sup>2</sup>

Of course M. de Saint Aulaire's retrospect is in reality at fault. Aehrenthal's policy had quite other, very much more cogent, motives than the emancipation of Austria from German influence.

The motives of Aehrenthal's policy are to be found in the natural and entirely legitimate struggle for survival of the Danubian Monarchy. MM. Bourgeois and Pagès themselves appear to have some idea of the dangers to Austria-

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 328.

<sup>2</sup> MM. Bourgeois and Pagès do not draw from their premiss of the emancipation of Austria from German influence the inevitable conclusion of German innocence in regard to the Bosnian crisis: on the contrary, in violation of every rule of logic, they draw the opposite conclusion, as we shall see later.

Hungary, which were latent in the awakening of Serbian Nationalism, when they write: "To an increasing degree Serbia began to stand out in the Balkans as a nation which was capable, after the manner of Piedmont, not indeed of attacking Austria, but of preventing her from doing mischief."<sup>1</sup> One thing at any rate which is false in this sentence is the statement that Serbia was not capable of attacking Austria, unless by the word "attack" only actual aggression in arms is understood. Serbia was not only capable of constituting a great peril for the existence of the Monarchy, but she had the firm desire to do so. Is there nothing aggressive in the shouts with which (as MM. Bourgeois and Pagès recount—as if it were the most harmless of incidents) King Peter Karageorgevitch was hailed in 1903 by Croatian patriots in Belgrade as "The King of Croatia! Long life to him!"?

The policy of Aehrenthal had but one aim; it sought to set up a dam against the dangers with which the Monarchy was threatened by Serbian Nationalism: in other words, it was a policy of defence and of self-preservation on the part of the Austrian State. The Serbian national movement aimed, under the guidance of the House of Karageorgevitch, not only at the union of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the Serbian Kingdom, but at the detachment of all the Jugoslav territories of the Monarchy, that is to say at the splitting up of the Austrian State. It was an obvious duty in self-preservation to guard against this danger; and if Austria-Hungary, in the struggle for her existence against the menace of Pan-Serb expansionism, allied herself with the young State which was also threatened by this menace, Bulgaria, that was no crime on her part, unless indeed one holds the view that this State of many nationalities on the Danube had no right to exist at all, and that it was out of harmony with the spirit of the age to hold together in one body politic a number of races with centrifugal tendencies. It is in fact this view which is at

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 319.

the back of all the attacks on Austria's Balkan policy, whether openly professed or unexpressed. At the bottom of their hearts those who attack the Central Powers believe that Austria-Hungary's defence of herself against the undermining efforts of the Slav was a crime against the self-determination of peoples. If anyone is entitled to profess this view, it is assuredly not our accusers, who in place of this single State of many nationalities (to which incidentally it was on the point of granting far-reaching autonomy) have created three different congeries of nationalities, in which millions of men who do not belong to the dominant race are more entirely deprived of rights than were ever the Slavs and Italians under the Austrian rule. Those who have created such an artificial fabric as the Polish State, tearing from its natural political allegiance so venerable a home of German civilization as Danzig, and slashing aimlessly across the geographical connection of lands that Prussia had colonized in the remote past with their motherland, are accusing themselves when they deny to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, as it was down to the Peace of Saint Germain, the right to exist. Their accusations are self-mockery in their mouths.

It is not for me, however, to defend the policy of Austria. If all the charges which the French Senatorial Report brings against Austria were justified, they would prove nothing as to Germany's responsibility for the war in the sense of the Versailles Treaty and its commentaries: and that would still be the case, even if it were possible—as it perhaps is—to show that the transfer of the lead in the Eastern policy of the Central Powers from German to Austrian hands in fact increased the danger of war. The success of Austrian policy in this field could not in any case mean any direct advantage for Germany, nor could it strengthen the German position in Europe.

Prince Bülow, it is true, at the time made unreserved support of Austrian interests the supreme principle underlying all his Eastern policy. The reasons for this attitude



are elaborated by him in numerous Memoranda to the Emperor. A single sentence, which Erich Brandenburg quotes from one of these Memoranda, summarizes the position in a few words:<sup>1</sup> "If one may be allowed", he writes, "to embody our attitude in the present phase of Eastern policy in a single formula, it would be this: the primary criterion of our attitude in all Balkan questions is the consideration of the needs, interests and desires of Austria-Hungary." The motive behind this attitude was not the desire to strengthen Germany's position, but on the contrary the fear of complete isolation and the anxiety not to lose the last ally left us in Europe. The Chancellor no doubt knew from the archives of the Foreign Office of that celebrated letter, which Bismarck wrote to Lord Salisbury in 1887, and in it the passage: "The existence of Austria as a powerful and independent Great Power is a necessity for Germany, which is quite independent of the personal sympathies of the Sovereign. Austria, like Germany and present-day England, is one of those States which are satisfied or (to quote Prince Metternich) 'saturated', and for that reason anxious to cherish and maintain peace. Austria and England have recognized in all sincerity the *status quo* of the German Empire, and have no interest in seeing it weakened. France and Russia on the other hand appear to be a menace to us; France, because she remains true to the traditions of the last century in displaying permanent hostility to her neighbours, and because of the French national character; Russia, because her present-day attitude to the peace of Europe is that disturbed and unrestful attitude which distinguished the France of Louis XIV and Napoleon III. It is partly the Slav ambition which is responsible for this state of things; but one must also look to internal politics to find the explanation of the provocative attitude of Russia and her armies. The Russian revolutionaries look to a foreign war to bring their

<sup>1</sup> Erich Brandenburg, *Von Bismarck zum Weltkrieg*, page 267. Reports of Prince Bülow to the Emperor William II, of 17 and 23 July, 1908.

emancipation from the Monarchy: while the Monarchists hope by the same means to make an end of the Revolution.”<sup>1</sup> Different as the position was in 1908 and in 1887, the difference only increased Germany’s need for the maintenance of a strong and independent Austria; for in the interval England had gone over to the camp of those Powers which Bismarck twenty years earlier had described as indulging aspirations which only war could realize.

The consciousness of the necessity for the maintenance of Austria as a strong and independent State was the motive which guided Prince Bülow in laying down these lines for the conduct of German policy. If our accusers see in the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, into the preceding history of which I cannot here enter, a violation of the Act of the Berlin Congress and a menace to peace, they must not forget the very important circumstance that the consent of Russia to this action of Aehrenthal had been obtained in principle at the Buchlau meeting<sup>2</sup> of 15 September, 1908. The consent of Russia had not of course been given for nothing. Austria had undertaken to place no difficulties in the way of a solution of the Straits question in accordance with Russian desires—another violation of the Act of the Berlin Congress!—and to evacuate the Sandjak of Novi Bazar. If, therefore, the crime of the Annexation resides in the fact that it was a violation of existing treaties, Russia was an accomplice in the crime, and was an accomplice in it for imperialistic motives. The danger of war arose only when Isvolsky found that he could not obtain the consent of his own allies, England and France, to his agreement with Austria

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. IV, page 378, No. 930: and Otto Hammann, *Zur Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges* (The preceding history of the World War), page 157, in which this letter first appeared in a German translation.

<sup>2</sup> [Buchlau (in Moravia) was a house belonging to Count Berchthold, then Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in St. Petersburg. M. Isvolsky, the Russian Foreign Minister, came over from Karlsbad to meet Baron Aehrenthal, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, here.]

over the Straits, and endeavoured, in his vexation, to revoke the concession which he had made to Austria in return.

The veils which shroud the origins of the Bosnian crisis have not all been lifted. As regards the Buchlau meeting, which is the starting-point, Aehrenthal and Isvolsky, the two participants, have given diametrically opposite accounts.<sup>1</sup> But even if it were proved that the Russian statesman was duped by the Austrian, and that the latter, in giving permanent form in Bosnia-Herzegovina to the provisional settlement of thirty years before, was pursuing a policy of national vanity and not of self-preservation, no one, at any rate without sinning against the truth of history and the most elementary laws of logic, can impute to Germany the responsibility—in the sense of the Treaty of Versailles—for the dangers of war which arose out of the conflict of Austrian and Russian interests.

The authors of the French Senatorial Report none the less, saddled with the task of providing proof of Germany's responsibility for every danger of war with which Europe was threatened from the year 1871 onwards, commit this sin against history and logic, and to a degree bordering on the grotesque. The astonishing and fallacious argument, which they construct for the purpose, is as follows: Germany's violence had robbed Austria of all independence. The remark of the Emperor after the Conference of

<sup>1</sup> Aehrenthal said that Isvolsky himself suggested annexation to Austria, if she (Austria) would be complaisant over the Straits. Isvolsky said that the Annexation was only discussed at Buchlau as an academic question, that no date for it was fixed, and that for that reason Aehrenthal dropped the subject. See Erich Brandenburg, *Von Bismarck zum Weltkrieg*, page 270. MM. Bourgeois and Pages say that Isvolsky expressly made the assent of the signatory Powers of the Berlin Act a condition of the validity of the Buchlau Agreement. This is highly improbable, though it is asserted by Isvolsky himself, because he did not raise any objection to the Annexation, which took place on 5 October, until he had ascertained that he could not hope for English and French adhesion to the Russian solution of the Straits problem. See also the Reports of the Serbian Ministers in London and Paris of 5 and 13 October, 1908, in Boghitchevitch *Causes of the War*, London, 1920, pages 113 and 117.

Algerias with regard to the "brilliant second"<sup>1</sup> proclaimed Austria's vassalage to the world. Consequently, the new Austrian Foreign Minister, Herr von Aehrenthal, received instructions to do something to prove to the world that Austria could also act alone. Consequently, he annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, in the last analysis it was the violence of the German Emperor which was responsible for the dangers of war, which threatened the peace of Europe after the Annexation. *Quod erat demonstrandum!*

So nonsensical is this argument that my readers will perhaps imagine I have misunderstood the French Report. I accordingly reproduce the actual text of this passage, where the normal fallacious fatuity of the Report impinges on the ridiculous, first in the original French and then in a translation. It is as follows:

"La réalité c'est, qu'entre la Serbie, ranimée par une dynastie nationale, s'éveillant à une vie nouvelle, s'ouvrant à un avenir, qui inquiétait l'Autriche, et l'Autriche-Hongrie impatiente avec le baron d'Aehrenthal de donner à ses Souverains, humiliés du rôle secondaire auquel prétendait les réduire l'Empereur allemand, la satisfaction d'une manifestation de force et de puissance, la crise inévitable s'est

<sup>1</sup> The French (as also the English) translation "brilliant second" is open to a double meaning, involving a disparagement which is not attached to the German word "Sekundant" (second in a duel), and which the Emperor's remark was never intended to bear. The much-commented-on telegram of the Emperor to the Austrian Foreign Minister, Count Goluchowski of 13 April, 1906, in which this description of Austria occurred, had not the effect in Vienna which is attributed to it by the French Senatorial Report. It was issued for publication in Vienna, and not in Berlin: and the line taken by the Press comments, which it occasioned, was not that it represented a disparagement of Austria's position in the Triple Alliance, but rather that the praise of the loyal Ally read like a lesson to the disloyal Ally—Italy. The satisfaction indeed with which the message was received in Vienna found open expression in the Austrian Press. F.O. Papers, Vol. XXI, page 332, No. 7, 139 and foot-note.

ouverte en 1907. Et de cette crise encore, en dernière analyse, la véritable responsabilité rémonte au Souverain de Berlin, qui avec son peuple, en était venu à traiter en vassaux ses alliés et l'Europe en rebelle, s'ils n'obéissaient pas à ses lois."

"The truth that is that between Serbia, inspired with new life by a national dynasty and awaking to a new existence and to a future which disquieted Austria, and Austria-Hungary, impatient with Baron Aehrenthal to offer to her Sovereigns, humiliated by the secondary rôle to which the German Emperor took it upon himself to reduce them, the satisfaction of a display of force and strength, the inevitable crisis opened in 1907. And for this crisis, too, in the last analysis the true responsibility lies with the Ruler in Berlin who, with his people behind him, had come to treat his allies as vassals, and Europe as a rebel, so soon as they ceased to obey his laws."

It is difficult to imagine anything better calculated to acquit the accused than this nonsensical argument of his guilt. To such logical acrobatics as this one does not have recourse except when one has despaired of the possibility of finding really cogent proofs.

The Bosnian crisis ultimately came to an end with a proposal by Germany of mediation, which Isvolsky accepted with gnashing of teeth and rage in his heart, for the sole reason that Russia did not feel at the time sufficiently armed for war. The German proposal was treated, both in St. Petersburg and in London, as an ultimatum, and was never forgotten. The annexation of Bosnia was recognized by all the Powers, after Austria had asked for the suspension of Article 25 of the Act of the Berlin Congress: and Serbia, by a Note of 31 March, 1909, undertook to refrain from all Pan-Serb propaganda within the Monarchy. But, though she promised, she had already conceived the firm design not to keep her word.

Serbian Nationalism continued to remain as before a menace to the peace of Europe.

A month and a half before the quenching of the flames of war in the Near East, the fire that had been smouldering beneath the ashes of the Algeciras Conference in Morocco had also—to all appearance—been put out. On 8 February, 1909, Germany had concluded an Agreement with France, which for the first time made possible the co-operation of German and French economic enterprise in Morocco, while it recognized—subject to the independence of the Sultan—the political supremacy of France in that country. In the year preceding the conclusion of the Agreement, all the disputes which had arisen between France and Germany in this unruly land, from the murder of the French doctor, Mauchamp, in Marrakesh, to the escape of the Foreign Legionaries with the aid of the German Consul in Casablanca and the contest of Abdul Aziz and Muley Hafid for the Throne, had been peacefully settled by the personal intervention of the Emperor. On 5 October, 1908, he appended the following marginal note to a Report of Prince Bülow on the position created by the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina: "Such being the position, the miserable Morocco business must be brought to a conclusion, quickly and finally. There is nothing more to be done: the country is going to be wrench in any case! Let us then get out of the business with self-respect, so as to make an end of all this friction with France at a time when big questions are on the *tapis*." Proposals to send German ships to Moroccan harbours, which were made to him on a number of occasions by the Government, he continually rejected. It was not until France had continued to elude the Agreement of 8 February, 1909, and was at length embarking on the march to Fez, that he gave his consent, against his will and only after hearing a special report on the matter from Kiderlen-Waechter in Kiel, to the despatch of a ship to Agadir. During the negotiations which followed, between Kiderlen-

Waechter and Cambon, in order to put an end to the great tension which had arisen as a result of this action, he received a Report from the Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, from which he learnt that Kiderlen-Waechter had said that "a very energetic line must be taken". To this he caused the reply to be sent that, if the Foreign Secretary considered that anything in the nature of a threatening attitude should be adopted, he (the Emperor) must immediately break off his Scandinavian cruise: nothing was to be done in his absence. The Minister, von Treutler, who was in attendance on the Emperor telegraphed that he had been summoned from his bed to send off this telegram, and added that the Foreign Office must be prepared for the Emperor to interrupt his cruise and for the Allies to be informed of what was going forward, and that His Majesty's consent to any steps which seemed to him capable of involving war would be hard to obtain.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt, therefore, that the Emperor was not prepared to make war for Morocco. It is also clear from private letters of Kiderlen-Waechter, which came by underhand means into the possession of the French Government, that the Foreign Secretary was not for war.<sup>2</sup> He, too, believed that the conversion of Morocco into a French Protectorate was no longer to be prevented, and was anxious only to secure some equivalent compensation for the consequent disadvantages to German industry and commerce.

The history and the issue of the Morocco Question reveal Germany as the champion of rights which were based on treaties, while they reveal France as the representative of an imperialist policy of expansion which was inconsistent with these treaties. From this conflict—in which it is fair to say that the two French Governments of Rouviers in 1905 and Caillaux in 1911 also displayed their reluctance for war—France emerged with the advantage on her side, thanks to

<sup>1</sup> See *Kiderlen-Waechter als Staatsmann und Mensch* (Kiderlen-Waechter, the Statesman and the Man), Correspondence and Remains, edited by Ernst Jäckh, page 127 *et seqq.*

<sup>2</sup> Caillaux, *Agadir*, pages 339-40.

the German Emperor's love of peace. Our accusers in their description of the issue of the crisis of 1911 have once again forgotten their part. It is more like an imperialist song of triumph, when they write: "The military operations of France [the march on Fez] had decided the Spanish Government to occupy Larache and Alcazar. It seemed as if Europe were going to settle in Morocco without Germany."

Although France had carried her point without any exceptions, although by the latest agreement of 4 November, 1911, her colonial possessions, which already exceeded those of Germany many times over, had been increased by the addition of a rich land, and although it was only a question of time before Morocco became a new Tunis, Gallic arrogance treated the cession of the small and almost worthless fragment of the French Congo, which the French had been obliged to leave to Germany in compensation, as an intolerable humiliation. The Ministry, which had agreed to the cession of this territory was overthrown. This was perhaps the most pregnant consequence of Herr von Kiderlen-Waechter's Moroccan policy; for French Chauvinism now placed at the head of the Government of the Republic a man who, in alliance with the Russian Ambassador in Paris, regarded the great European war, which his predecessors (like the leaders of German foreign policy) had viewed with apprehension, as an object of aspiration and hope. Raymond Poincaré came to the French Foreign Office on the Quai d'Orsay, and found in Isvolsky a malicious and intriguing associate with similar aims to his own. The moment at which this change took place was the most unfortunate imaginable for the peace of Europe; for, as a result of the French invasion of Morocco, the Turco-Italian war burst forth in Tripoli, providing fuel in its turn to the conflagration which was still glowing in the Balkans, till that, too, burst into a blaze and involved the whole world in the disaster. The French ideal of "revenge" had found the wings to its feet which were to bring it to its goal.



## CHAPTER X

### POINCARÉ AND ISVOLSKY

AT the close of the Introduction to this book I made the assertion that it could be shown with complete certainty that the Governments who were responsible in the last few years before the war for the policy of Russia and France, prepared for war, contributed to it, and hoped that it would come. It will be the task of this Chapter to provide the documentary evidence of this assertion. Much probability is lent to it *a priori* by the circumstance that observers of the course of events at the chief foci of European politics, men whose sympathies were drawn naturally to the side of the Triple Entente alike by the geographical position, the nationality and the political and geographical relations of their country—I mean the diplomatic representatives of Belgium in the capitals of Europe—speak uniformly in their despatches, and the Belgian Government does the same in its Circular Notes, from 1897 onwards, of St. Petersburg and Paris as the centre of war dangers, and of Germany as the Power primarily responsible for the maintenance of peace.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A selection of the Belgian diplomatic despatches for the years 1905 to 1914 was first published in a German White Book in 1915. In 1918 Colonel Schwertfeger, with Prof. Alfred Doren and Dr. Wilhelm Köhler, published them in four volumes, with the title *La politique européenne 1897-1914* (European policy 1897-1914), and a fifth volume with the title *L'idée de la revanche et le panslavisme* (The idea of the "Revenge" and the

It is not to be supposed that the Belgian statesmen were so fundamentally at fault as to the underlying motives of European policy over all these years as to have made uniformly erroneous reports. I might have made use of the Belgian despatches in my discussion of all the crises which troubled the peace of Europe since the year 1897 : for they afford ample testimony to the peaceable aims of German policy, and in a very marked degree to my father's love of peace. They accompany the course of events with a running commentary of impartial observations like the chorus of a Greek tragedy.

They have frequently been used in the campaign against the War Guilt Lie ; and their significance gathers weight from the fact that our accusers observe a silence as of the grave in regard to these witnesses against their case. They are indeed witnesses out of their own camp. The Belgian Minister in Berlin himself, Baron de Beyens, who contributes some of the most valuable testimony in the collection, can find no other means in his book, *L'Allemagne avant la guerre* (Germany before the War), of defending himself against himself than by ignoring the parentage of every despatch he ever sent to his Government. In his book he has not a single word about one of them, although on page after page he contradicts in the most categorical manner the views which he expressed at the time !

To give some idea of the " love of truth " of the Baron de Beyens, I give below two extracts side by side. One is taken from his book and the other from one of his contemporary reports. They both deal with the character of my father, and it will be seen that the one says exactly the opposite of the other. On 8 March, 1913, Baron de Beyens

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Pan-Slav Movement) in French. In his book *Der Fehlspruch von Versailles* (The Miscarriage of justice at Versailles) Colonel Schwertfeger has provided a guide to these volumes. All these publications are now appearing in a new edition in German : this will contain a complete collection of all the Belgian despatches and the Circular Notes of the Belgian Foreign Ministers based on them, which were discovered in 1917.

wrote to his Chief, the Belgian Foreign Minister, as follows :

“As regards the warlike designs attributed to Germany, it is sufficient to read a Paris newspaper every morning to arrive at a clear view on this point. Such designs are out of all harmony with the profoundly religious and peace-loving character of the Emperor, whose mysticism seems to deepen more and more in the numerous speeches which His Majesty has had occasion to make in the course of this year. The glorious recollections of the period a hundred years ago, when Germany fought victoriously to win back her independence and erected on the battlefields the pillars of her national unity, are of course evoked. But the Emperor sees always in these connections the finger of God rewarding the German people for its religious faith by liberation from the French yoke. Such is not the language of a man with thoughts of war and conquest in his heart.”

Two years later, in 1915, that is to say during the war, he writes in his book :

“One might suppose that he [the Emperor] hesitated long before he set foot on the dark road which opened before him. One might picture his conscience troubled by the vision of the streams of blood and the floods of passion which the coming struggle was to cost, and conclude that in the end he was swept into it against his will by his fate. Any such suppositions would be wrong ! The attack was planned for many months beforehand, the plan of campaign was complete to the smallest details, and it was with conscious design that the Emperor gave the signal for hostilities, prematurely, for he would not await in his impatience the issue of the conversations, which the Powers of the Triple Entente obstinately

and desperately fought to continue. It is this design of purpose which subsequent generations will take as proved, while they will crush the accusation which he, his Chancellor and his Press bring against their opponents, in their desire to justify themselves before the public opinion of Germany and foreign peoples."

When a man puts down on paper an accusation so grave as this, he must, if he has a good conscience, be concerned to explain the glaring contrast with the view which he himself expressed two years before. M. de Beyens does nothing to explain this contrast. It is patent that he had not a good conscience when he wrote the latter passage. When he wrote the despatch of 8 March, 1913, he had no motive to lie. When he wrote his book, in the middle of the war, he had a thousand motives for concealing the truth. One can only conclude that he still inwardly believes to be correct what he wrote before the war about my father.

The more sedulously the authors of these despatches deny their own handiwork, and the more obstinately our calumniators conspire to ignore them, the more reason have we Germans continually to refer to them. Those who have now made it possible for Colonel Schwertfeger to issue the entire collection with a commentary in German have done a service which cannot be too highly appreciated in the struggle against the War Guilt Lie.

In these despatches in the two last years before the outbreak of the war the two men whose names I have placed at the head of this chapter appear as the chief disturbers of the peace of Europe.<sup>1</sup> And this view is com-

<sup>1</sup> For example, the Belgian Minister in Vienna writes on 22 November, 1911, shortly after the settlement of the Morocco Crisis, when a renewal of tension seemed to be threatened by the incident of Prizrend, on the subject of Isvolsky: "It is not the Government of the Tsar, it is said, which is responsible for this agitation. . . . It is not in St. Petersburg, but in Paris, that the originator of these intrigues is to be sought. M. Isvolsky, who cannot forget the blow which Count Aehrenthal dealt him with the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, is perpetually at work to get his revenge."

pletely confirmed by the documents published for the Foreign Office by Dr. Stieve, most of which had already appeared either in the Black Book issued by the Soviet Government or in the volume published by the former Secretary of the Russian Embassy in London, B. von Siebert, under the title *Diplomatische Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der Entente politik der Vorkriegsjahre* (Diplomatic Papers relating to the History of the Entente's Policy in the years preceding the War).<sup>1</sup>

The plenitude of proof of the pregnant activities of these two men is so great that, even in France, the question whether Poincaré wanted war has been asked and answered in the affirmative, while scarcely a month goes by without a book appearing in one or other of the countries which were allied against us, the purport of which is to make Poincaré and Isvolsky directly responsible for the war. I do not myself, as I have said, go to that length. One can look into no man's heart. But this much one can prove, that, mainly under the influence of these two men, a policy was pursued in Russia and France, of which the hope of war was a conspicuous characteristic, whereas the policy of Germany was inspired by the fear of war. And it is obvious that a policy which is based on the hope of war will tend, involuntarily but inevitably, towards measures in the background of which the design to provoke war is operative, whereas a policy based on the fear of war is necessarily actuated by the desire to prevent it.

Why did the Governments of the Dual Alliance want war, and why was no Great Power in Europe more afraid

<sup>1</sup> The collection of Isvolsky's diplomatic correspondence, issued for the German Foreign Office, is a source of the first rank for the study of the origins of the war. The documents are translated from the Russian originals. The collection adds some 500 new documents to those already published in the Black Book or in von Siebert's work. It is in four volumes, with a guide to the contents by Dr. Stieve as a supplementary volume. A fifth volume appeared while this book was going through the Press, and could not accordingly be used by me: it contains Isvolsky's correspondence from July, 1914 to 1917.

of war than Germany? In the preceding chapters I have indicated the reason. It was because the Powers of the Dual Alliance could only attain their ends by means of a European War, whereas German policy had no other aim than the maintenance of German unity and Germany's position as a Great Power, an aim in which there was nothing derogatory to any other nation.

An early piece of evidence that the Russian Government was conscious of the fact that its aims could only be attained by a European war is to be found in Article 5 of the Treaty which Russia concluded with Bulgaria in December, 1909. The existence of this Treaty remained a secret for ten years. In form it was a military convention; but in substance it was a treaty of political alliance of the clearest kind. It was indeed the only avowedly offensive alliance concluded in the current century; which in itself gives ground for the suspicion that the more powerful of the two contracting States was designing a war of aggression. It differed, moreover, from all other treaties of a similar kind in that it bound the weaker of the two States to support the stronger with the whole of its forces, even in the event of the latter engaging in a war of aggression, whereas the stronger was only bound to come to the help of the weaker power in the event of an unprovoked attack on the latter.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Article 1 of this Treaty reads as follows: "In the event of simultaneous armed conflict of Russia with Germany, Austria-Hungary and Roumania, or with Austria-Hungary and Roumania, as also in the event of armed conflict with Turkey, and without regard to which party may have taken the initiative to such armed conflict, Bulgaria undertakes, if so requested, immediately to mobilise her entire forces, and immediately to conduct operations of war in accordance with previously prepared plans, and not to cease from such operations until the aims indicated in the plans as below outlined have been attained, and in any case not until the Russian Government have agreed to such suspension of operations."

Article 2 reads: "Should Austria-Hungary with another Power attack Bulgaria without previous challenge so to do, Russia undertakes to give active aid to Bulgaria."

In Article 3 Bulgaria was promised Russian aid in the event of unprovoked attack by Turkey. See Boghitchevitch, *Kriegsursachen*, Annexe 1, page 115

Article 5 of this one-sided offensive alliance reads as follows : " In view of the fact that the consummation of the high ideals of the Slav people in the Balkan peninsula, which lies so near to the heart of Russia, is only possible as a result of a successful issue to the struggle of Russia with Germany and Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria undertakes the solemn obligation in such case, as also in the case of the adhesion of Roumania or Turkey to the coalition of the above-named powers, to make the utmost efforts to eliminate any circumstances which might give occasion for a further extension of the conflict. As regards the Powers which stand on terms of alliance or friendship in relation to Russia, Bulgaria will observe a correspondingly friendly attitude in regard to the same." <sup>1</sup>

We have here documentary evidence that so early as the year 1909 Russia expected to attain the ends which lay nearest to her heart only by means of a war against Germany and Austria. The policy which was directed towards these ends was taken up again by Isvolsky after the unsuccessful issue of the Russo-Japanese War, as soon as he became Minister of Foreign Affairs. His policy, therefore, and that of his successor, were, according to the admission of the Russian Government itself, directed towards ends which were attainable only by war.

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This is, so far as I am aware, the first publication of this Treaty. Radoslawow printed it in his book *Bulgarien im Weltkrieg* (Bulgaria in the World War), page 39 : but he places it erroneously in the year 1902. In May of the last named year another military convention had been concluded between Serbia and Bulgaria : but this was of a purely defensive character, which after the Bosnian Crisis was not enough for M. Isvolsky. It is printed in the Appendices to the volume *Iswolski und der Weltkrieg* (Isvolsky and the World War) of Friedrich Stieve, page 217.

<sup>1</sup> How bad the conscience of Russia was with regard to this Treaty is shown by Articles 15 and 16, the first of which prescribed that it should be kept strictly secret, while the second bound the contracting parties to destroy the originals in the event of its contents being published. This explains why the Soviet authorities found only the draft of the Treaty in the Russian archives.

That the reunion of Alsace-Lorraine with France, which no French statesman since the Peace of Frankfort had ever left out of sight, was also an end which could only be attained by war, was perfectly well appreciated in France. The Dual Alliance had no other aim.

I have shown in the earlier chapters of this book that all German attempts at *rapprochement* broke down solely because no French statesman was prepared to renounce this aim. Caillaux himself was not prepared to do so : but he was perhaps the only French Premier who was not determined under any circumstances to intervene on the Russian side in the event of a conflict between Russia and Germany. M. Poincaré was firmly determined to do so from the first day of his Premiership. It is for this reason that Isvolsky treated him as an ally. On the day after his appointment as Premier (14 January, 1912), Poincaré called on the Russian Ambassador, and promised him to conduct the foreign policy of France in the closest union with Russia.<sup>1</sup> On the following day (16 January, 1912) Isvolsky indites a panegyric on the statesman from Lorraine.<sup>2</sup> Five months after the formation of the "Grand Cabinet" he was able to induce him to take a step which showed that he had found in the French Premier an ally in his design of provoking hostilities. On 8 May, 1912, Poincaré telegraphed through his Political Director<sup>3</sup> Paléologue to the French Ambassador in St. Petersburg, M. Georges Louis, calling upon him in categorical terms to apply for transfer to another post.<sup>4</sup> It is now proved,

<sup>1</sup> Diplomatic correspondence of Isvolsky, 1911-1914. The German edition, prepared on behalf of the German Foreign Office by Friedrich Stieve, to which reference is made above, will in future be cited as "Isvolsky". The reference in this case is Vol. II, page 25, No. 186.

<sup>2</sup> Isvolsky, Vol. II, No. 187 (dated 16 January, 1912).

<sup>3</sup> [Permanent Head of the French Foreign Office.]

<sup>4</sup> Judet, *Georges Louis*, page 28. Paléologue says in this telegram that the Premier has to his great regret learnt that the Russian Government would like to see France represented by an Ambassador who would display



by the publication of the Diary of M. Louis, who died in 1917, and by the book published by his friend Judet with the design of saving his honour from the aspersions put upon it, that the assertions of Fernand Gouttenoire de Toury in his book *Poincaré a-t-il voulu la guerre?* (Did Poincaré want war?), which appeared as long ago as 1920, were correct. De Toury in his book asserted that throughout the years 1912, 1913 and 1914, Poincaré was the champion of Isvolsky's policy and the opponent of the policy of Georges Louis, and that the latter's policy in St. Petersburg was aimed at preventing France from becoming the tool of the ambitious projects of the Russian Pan-Slav Movement, which were unattainable without war, whereas the policy of Poincaré consisted in unreserved support of these warlike projects by the whole strength of France in the hope of attaining thereby his own aim of the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine. M. Georges Louis was well aware that the Pan-Slav policy of the Russian Grand Dukes and of the military element in Russia—which Sazonow (though he was already converted to it) was only prepared to translate into action with the utmost caution, whereas Isvolsky was its ardent champion—contained in itself the greatest dangers for the peace of Europe: and he was one of those Frenchmen who, like Caillaux, was not prepared to precipitate these dangers. It was for this reason alone that he had to be removed.

The proposal to remove him failed at the time, because M. Louis resisted, and both the Russian Foreign Minister, Sazonow, and the Premier Kokowtzw disavowed Isvolsky. They did not consider that at this time (Spring of 1912)

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more political activity, and would extend his social connections. He continued: "M. Poincaré invoque donc votre patriotisme pour mettre votre Ambassade à sa disposition, en se réservant de vous chercher le plus tôt possible un autre poste" (M. Poincaré accordingly appeals to your patriotic feelings to place your Embassy at his disposal: he will take the earliest possible opportunity of finding you another post.)

the moment had yet come to take so conspicuous a step as the recall of an Ambassador who was well known in the diplomatic world as the opponent of the warlike policy of the Pan-Slavists. Although therefore Sazonow had telegraphed in April (1912) to Isolvsky that he was dissatisfied with Louis,<sup>1</sup> when the latter took the bull by the horns and asked the Russian Premier whether it was true that the Russian Government had asked in Paris for his recall, Kokowtzw replied that whoever had said that had told a lie.<sup>2</sup> M. Louis thereupon proceeded to Paris, and there cut the threads—for the time—of the intrigue concerted by Poincaré, Isvolsky and Sazonow against his person. It was not till a year later that Poincaré succeeded in effecting M. Louis' recall. It was his first act in the field of foreign politics after his election as President of the Republic. As successor to M. Louis at St. Petersburg he appointed the creator of the "entente cordiale", M. Delcassé.

In the account which Poincaré himself gives of these events, at a time when he had no reason to fear that Isvolsky's correspondence and M. Louis' papers would one day be published, he attributes M. Louis' recall to the fact that the friendly relations between the two Allies had been troubled by the fault of the French Ambassador. He does not say that, if M. Louis had become unpopular in St. Petersburg, it was because he would not allow France to be carried along in the wake of the warlike policy of the Pan-Slavs, and that this was sufficient to damn him in his (Poincaré's) eyes as well.

Looking back after the outbreak of the war, Georges Louis told Jules Cambon, the former French Ambassador in Berlin, who asked him whether the war could have been prevented: "Not at the end of July. But we should have avoided it, if our Government in 1912 had been in other hands. To become President of the Republic, Poincaré made himself the tool of Isvolsky, exploiting his visit to

<sup>1</sup> Isvolsky, Vol. II, page 85, No. 254.

<sup>2</sup> Judet, *Georges Louis*, page 42 (telegram of Louis to Poincaré).

St. Petersburg to the full, and controlling the Press with the help of secret funds.”<sup>1</sup>

On 14 January, 1915, M. Louis noted in his Diary the following conversation with M. Pichon, the former French Foreign Minister :

“PICHON : ‘ Ah ! If they had left you as Ambassador in St. Petersburg, and I had still been Foreign Minister, we should never have had war.’

“LOUIS : ‘ Assuredly ! If you had been at the Quai d’Orsay, and Fallières at the Elysée, there would never have been war. I have often said so to my friends.’

“PICHON : ‘ Dutasta, who was in St. Petersburg a fortnight ago, told Sazonow that, if Fallières and Pichon had still been in office, there would have been no war : and Sazonow answered, “ Perhaps, yes ! ” ’ ”<sup>2</sup>

Poincaré, Jules Cambon and Pichon have all denied these conversations in vague terms, which carried conviction with no one. MM. Bourgeois and Pagès on the other hand pass over the entire story of the intrigue against Georges Louis without a word. If the Louis diaries were not known to them when they compiled their book, they knew at any rate of the work of Gouttenoire de Toury, to which reference is made above ; and they would have been bound to adduce evidence to refute its allegations, if they had been able to do so.

It is now established beyond dispute that the removal of M. Louis was the first step on the fatal path on which the two allies Isvolsky and Poincaré were now set out in the pursuit of their political aims. And they knew that the path pointed towards war.

The step taken by the French President and the Russian Ambassador (with the secret support of Sazonow) towards

<sup>1</sup> See the periodical, *Europe*, of 15 November, 1924, page 278, in which extracts from Louis’ Diary are published.

<sup>2</sup> See the periodical, *Europe*, of 15 November, 1924, page 279.

the attainment of their ends had been preceded by another cognate action, for which Russia alone was responsible. This was the founding of the Balkan League. The war for the possession of Tripoli had shaken—so it seemed—the crumbling edifice of Turkey to its foundations ; and Russia believed the moment to have come, by a confederation of the Balkan peoples, to drive the Turk out of Europe and to attain the goal of her ambitions for so many centuries past, the transformation of the Dardanelles into a Russian waterway. Article 5 of the Russo-Bulgarian military convention, the terms of which have already been quoted, does not stand alone as proof that the Russian statesmen were aware that their aims could be achieved only by the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Side by side with the justifiable desire for freedom of access to the Mediterranean was the pressure of the Pan-Slav idea, the most influential representatives of which at the Court of the Tsar were the Grand Dukes married to the daughters of the King of Montenegro. The creation of the Pan-Serb State, as it has finally emerged from the war, was the chief object of the Pan-Slav Movement. In the Bosnian Crisis Isvolsky had formed the firm resolution to proceed, if necessary, across the wreckage of the Danubian Monarchy to the realization of his ideal. On 10 March, 1909, the Serbian Minister in St. Petersburg reports that Isvolsky had said to him that Serbia would remain condemned to a mean and exiguous existence until the moment of Austro-Hungarian dissolution. The annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina had brought that moment nearer : when the time came, Russia would raise the Serbian Question and effect its solution. The struggle with the Germanic races was inevitable.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> German White Book of 1919, Sub-Annexe 9 to Annexe VI. The Serbian archives published in the White Book fell into German hands during the war, like the Belgian archives. It is significant of the bad conscience of the Entente statesmen that this White Book was prevented, until quite recently, from being reproduced. It was not until April, 1925,

Gutchkow, the leader of the Cadet Party in the Duma, dispensed similar consolation to the Serbian Minister. Russia, he said, must first complete her armaments : then would come the reckoning with Austria-Hungary.<sup>1</sup> Similar consolatory remarks were reported to Belgrade by the Serbian Ministers in Paris and London in despatches giving accounts of conversations with Isvolsky on the occasion of the latter's visits to the capitals of the Western Powers.<sup>2</sup> The Tsar himself told the President of the Duma, Chomjiakow, on 14 March that he felt the conflict with the Germanic races was inevitable, and one must make preparations to face it.<sup>3</sup> The founding of the Balkan League was nothing else than a preparation of this kind. Its basis was the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty of 13 March, 1912. Poincaré, it is true, did not know of the conclusion of this treaty until it was an accomplished fact : but he could learn from the reports of M. Louis, who never ceased to paint the dangers to the peace of Europe which his information from Pan-Slav quarters indicated as imminent, that Russia would take advantage of the shock to the Ottoman Empire as the result of the Turco-Italian War to take some step of a highly dangerous character.<sup>4</sup> When, on

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that R. Mennevée, the editor of the *Politische Dokumente* (Political Papers), published a French version of it. The contents, which had been common knowledge in Germany for six years, had the effect of a revelation on their belated appearance in France. Victor Margueritte in the *Ere nouvelle* of 5 April, 1925, announced their publication under the title, "Une révélation!"

<sup>1</sup> German White Book of 1919, Sub-Annexe 8 to Annexe VI.

<sup>2</sup> Conversations of Vesnié in Paris and Gruié in London with Isvolsky on 5 and 17 October, 1908, respectively. German White Book of 1919, Sub-Annexes 1 and 4 to Annexe VI.

<sup>3</sup> German White Book of 1919, Sub-Annexe 10 to Annexe VI (Report of the Serbian Minister in St. Petersburg of 19 March, 1909).

<sup>4</sup> Judet, *Georges Louis*, Chapter 5 ("La politique de Georges Louis"), page 131 *et seqq.* From January, 1912, onwards we find Louis calling his Chief's attention again and again to the Russo-Italian policy inaugurated by Isvolsky. On 14 February, one month before the conclusion of the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty, he transmits a questionnaire of Sazonow to Paris, the object of which was to concert common action on the part of France

his visit to St. Petersburg in August, 1912, he learnt the text of the Treaty, he at once perceived the great dangers which it involved. There can be no stronger evidence of the fact that it was Russia, and not Austria, still less Germany, which threatened the Peace of Europe in 1912, than the report which Poincaré sent at the time to Paris with regard to his conversation with Sazonow. This man, who in the speech with which he opened the Peace Conference in Versailles on 19 January, 1919, solemnly accused the Central Powers of having long prepared and consciously provoked the war, is found in this report making the following admission : “ The treaty carries the germ of a war with Turkey, and also with Austria. It further creates a Russian hegemony over the two Slav Kingdoms, as Russia is to be the arbitrator on all questions. I remarked to Sazonow that this agreement did not at all correspond to the explanations which had been given me with regard to it. It was in the strictest sense of the words a Treaty for war : it revealed not only *arrière-pensées* on the part of the Serbs and Bulgars, but also suggested the apprehension that Russia was endeavouring to encourage the expectations of these races and to excite their cupidities with the prospects of partition.”<sup>1</sup>

Poincaré was indeed conscious that this admission was not consistent with the charges of the Note of 16 June, 1919, and that it placed Russia at least in the position of having been as guilty as the Central Powers of heaping up the inflammable material in Europe ; he accordingly maintains in his book that Austria and Germany were wrong in asserting that these treaties were inspired by Russia. They first became known in St. Petersburg, he declares, after their conclusion : their contents were

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and Russia in the three following cases : (1) in the event of a constitutional crisis in Turkey ; (2) in the event of active intervention of Austria in the Sandjak and Albania ; (3) in the event of armed conflict between Turkey and one of the Balkan States. Judet, *op. cit.*, page 174.

Poincaré, *Les origines de la guerre*, page 126.

communicated by the Bulgarian Premier, Danew, and by the Russian Minister in Sofia : it was not till much later that they became known to France. Since M. Poincaré made this assertion, by which he calculated to exculpate Russia, convict Germany and Austria of falsifying history, and so maintain the War Guilt Lie intact, the world has been given the Note in which Sazonow informed the French Premier of the conclusion of the Treaties. Its text reveals beyond the possibility of refutation that, in putting forward this assertion to exculpate France and Russia, M. Poincaré was saying what he knew to be untrue. On 30 March, 1912, Sazonow telegraphed to Isvolsky : " An Alliance has been concluded, in accordance with our desires, between Serbia and Bulgaria for mutual defence, and for the protection of common interests in the event of any alteration in the *status quo* in the Balkans or the attack of a third Power on either of the contracting parties. I request you to take what you consider the appropriate opportunity to inform M. Poincaré verbally, and for his personal information, of the above circumstances, while drawing his attention in the most earnest possible manner to the absolute necessity of the preservation of secrecy as to the conclusion of this Alliance." <sup>1</sup>

It was not many days later before Isvolsky considered " the appropriate opportunity " to have arrived for informing Poincaré : for we learn from a telegram of Sazonow's dated 6 April, 1912, that Poincaré passed on the information he received from Isvolsky with regard to the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty by cypher telegram to M. Louis.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Isvolsky, Vol. II, page 76, No. 243.

<sup>2</sup> Isvolsky, Vol. II, page 79, No. 248. It is significant of the deep anxiety of Russia to prevent the publication of this Treaty, containing as it did the seeds of grave danger to peace, that Sazonow in this telegram voices his indignation at Poincaré's retransmission of this piece of information communicated for his personal use alone. " Be good enough ", he wires to Isvolsky, " to draw Poincaré's attention to the fact that such action in regard to an international secret of the first water gives rise to grave apprehensions as to the possibility of preserving its secret character in the future."

M. Poincaré was thus aware, *fourteen days after its conclusion*, that the Treaty, which was to be the basis of the Balkan League, had been concluded, not merely with Russia's knowledge, but in accordance with Russian desires. If therefore in his book he nevertheless asserts the contrary, with the design of creating the belief that Russia was confronted by Serbia and Bulgaria with a *fait accompli*, he is guilty of a conscious falsehood. In his desire to maintain intact the fabric of the War Guilt Lie, he is actually providing those who seek the truth, against his will, with valuable material for the demolition of that Lie. It is particularly damaging for his case that the French Foreign Minister, knowing all the while from his own archives and from his personal recollection that the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty had been brought into being under the protecting aegis of Russia, should rely, in his attempt to prove that it was not so, on the book of the Bulgarian Premier, Geshow, *L'alliance balkanique*, which appeared in 1915, a work which stands revealed by the publication of the documents as a polemical piece of writing which has lost all value.

If any one can still doubt, in spite of the words "in accordance with our desires" in the above telegram, that Russia was responsible for the founding of the Balkan League, he will certainly be convinced by the telegram of the Russian Ambassador in Vienna to Sazonow of 8 October, 1911, in which it is explicitly said: "Geshow told me that our [*i.e.*, the Russian] Ministers in Sofia and Belgrade are insisting vigorously on the conclusion of an Alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria under the ægis of Russian protection."<sup>1</sup> This crushing evidence does not prevent the authors of the Senatorial Report, with the support of Poincaré's authority, from including in that document the following sentence: "It is therefore certain that France knew nothing before the month of August, 1912, of the

<sup>1</sup> Von Siebert, *Diplomatische Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der Entente politik der Vorkriegsjahre*, page 152. The *ex post facto* account given by Geshow in 1915 (see preceding paragraph) is thus refuted out of his own mouth.



treaties which had been signed many months earlier between the Balkan States ; that Russia herself at this time was not aware of the agreements between Greece on the one side and Serbia and Bulgaria on the other side ; and that, in replying to the efforts which were again made by England and France to get behind the secrecy with which these agreements were shrouded, and to gauge their extent, Sazonow could still in October assert his complete ignorance of the aggressive intentions of the Balkan States thus leagued together against Turkey."

Upon which MM. Bourgeois and Pagès proceed with what in the circumstances can only appear as an astounding piece of effrontery to ask the question : " Where then is the documentary evidence of the great conspiracy, which is alleged to have been set on foot with the co-operation of England and France, and with the assistance of the Balkan peoples ? " And in conclusion they complete these demonstrably false assertions with the suggestion that the Government of the Tsar was involved, without previous knowledge, in an enterprise in which the Balkan peoples had combined against Austria.<sup>1</sup> The suggestion is inexcusable : for, even before the publication of the documents, only very foolish persons can have believed that the founding of the Balkan League came to Russia as a surprise. Poincaré himself admits, in the report to which reference is made above, that the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty conferred upon Russia the right to arbitrate in all cases of dispute arising under that instrument : and to suggest that two Powers in concluding an Alliance with one another would nominate a third Power as arbitrator, without having first ascertained whether the latter would accept such office, is an incredible assumption.

The attempt of Poincaré to acquit Russia of responsibility in this matter fails, therefore, completely. The French Premier himself shows that a Treaty, for which Russia was responsible, contained in itself the germ of a war not

<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois and Pagès, *op. cit.*, page 353.

only against Turkey, but also against Austria ; in other words, that, with the founding of the Balkan League, a step was taken on the way leading in the end to the conflagration in which all Europe was involved. Well might he say so : for the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty, though it professed to aim at the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Balkans, had in reality no other object than to produce a modification of the *status quo*. It was obvious that the contracting parties, no less than their powerful protector, were well aware that neither Serbia nor Bulgaria nor Greece nor, as it ultimately turned out, Montenegro—having bound themselves to one another by a series of analogous treaties on the model of that between the two first named Powers—would hesitate, in the consciousness of the strength of such alliance, to modify the *status quo* in the Balkans in the direction of expulsion of the Turks and creation of the Pan-Serb empire, which had been for decades their most ardent ambition.

But M. Poincaré's alarm at the founding of the Balkan League was not due to the fact that he at once saw it to be an agreement involving war, but to the fact that he found a violation of the Franco-Russian Alliance in the circumstance that these treaties, involving as they might the *casus foederis* for France, should have been concluded without the knowledge of France, and should have been communicated to France only after they were an accomplished fact—though, it is true, only fourteen days after they were an accomplished fact, and not, as he would have the world believe, many months after their conclusion. It was not long, however, before M. Poincaré recovered from his alarm. For, when the inevitable and intended consequence of these agreements occurred, and the Christian States in the Balkans mobilized on 30 September, and on 8 October King Nicholas of Montenegro declared war on Turkey, his Allies falling into line on 17 and 18 October and inflicting on the Turks a series of unexpectedly rapid and victorious blows, Poincaré was so far from alarm at the prospect of

the *casus foederis* arising that of his own initiative, without having been asked to do so, he assured the Russian Ambassador that France would fulfil her obligations as an ally in the event of a conflict between Serbia and Austria which could not be localized.<sup>1</sup> M. Poincaré gave M. Isvolsky assurance to this and similar effect on a number of different occasions in the course of November and December,<sup>2</sup> although Russia had no belief whatever in aggressive action by Austria against Serbia. These assurances of Poincaré are significant when it is remembered that, after the victories of the Allied Balkan States, it was not Austria which was aiming at a modification of the *status quo* and threatening the peace, but Serbia with her demand for an Albanian port on the Adriatic coast. Neither Austria nor Italy were prepared to allow Serbia to settle on the Adriatic. It was Austria and Italy that were defending the *status quo*, and Serbia that was endeavouring to disturb it. Had armed conflict arisen out of these divergencies, Austria beyond a doubt would have been the Power attacked. And yet Poincaré declared again and again, of his own initiative and without being asked to do so, that he was prepared for armed intervention. He made protestations to this effect, not only to Russia, but also to the Italian Ambassador, Signor Tittoni, who did not conceal the fact that Italy was under obligation to Austria to defend the inviolability of Albania, and he told Tittoni that, if the Austro-Serbian conflict should lead to a general war, Russia could rely entirely on the armed support of France.<sup>3</sup>

One of the strongest charges which Germany's accusers

<sup>1</sup> On 4 November, 1912, he proposed, on his own initiative, co-operation between Russia, England and France to prevent any annexation of Turkish territory by a Great Power: and, in reply to Isvolsky's question whether he had considered the consequences of such a proposal, he said that he was very well aware that France might be involved thereby in military action. Isvolsky, Vol. II, page 336.

<sup>2</sup> Isvolsky, Vol. II, page 346, No. 567; page 347, No. 569; page 376, No. 603.

<sup>3</sup> Isvolsky, Vol. II, page 350, No. 573.

have put forward in support of the War Guilt Lie is the assertion of the fact that the German Government on 5 July, 1914, informed its Austrian Ally that, if the conflict with Serbia should prove impossible to localize, Germany would fulfil her duties as an Ally. This statement of the German Government, it is argued, shows that Germany desired war, since otherwise Germany would have declined to come to Austria's aid, and would have prevented the latter from sending the ultimatum to Serbia. The attitude of Poincaré during the Serbo-Austrian crisis in the winter of 1912, as revealed by this correspondence of Isvolsky, deprives this charge of all justification, and cuts the ground from under one of the principal supports of the War Guilt Lie. We gave our Ally a free hand in demanding adequate satisfaction, when the assassination of Sarajevo had revealed as with a searchlight the monstrous perils which threatened the very existence of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at the hands of this Pan-Serb movement with its readiness to stoop even to the most terrible of crimes. France in 1912 promised her armed assistance to her Ally, without any demand for the same on the latter's part, in a conflict which involved no kind of vital interest of her Ally, and which arose only out of the latter's support of the expansionist ambitions of a Balkan State, with whom disturbance of the *status quo* and menace to peace had become a matter of habit.

The events of 1912 were the prelude to the catastrophe of 1914; and it was not France's fault if Europe was not involved in war in 1912. That there was no European war in 1912 was due to the fact that Russia was not ready with her armaments, and the Dual Alliance was not sure of England's intervention. Otherwise these repeated assurances of French readiness to support her Ally would certainly have tended to provoke a conflict in arms.

In order not to make British intervention on the side of the Dual Alliance impossible in similar cases in the future, Poincaré had induced Sir Edward Grey in February, 1912,

to reject the demand for a neutrality agreement, which was put forward by Bethmann Hollweg as a condition for an Anglo-German understanding in the matter of naval construction, and had thus made it impossible for us to break through the encirclement. This we learn from a report of Isvolsky with regard to conversations which he had during the critical months of November and December, 1912, with Poincaré. "In my conversations with Poincaré and Paléologue", he writes, "I was enabled to learn in strict confidence that on the occasion of Lord Haldane's celebrated visit to Berlin [in February, 1912] Germany made a quite definite proposal that the London Cabinet should undertake in writing to observe neutrality, should Germany be involved in a war in which she was not the aggressor. The London Cabinet informed Poincaré of this *démarche*, and apparently hesitated whether to accept or decline the proposal. M. Poincaré expressed himself in the most positive terms against any such obligation. He pointed out to the British Government that the signature of such an agreement with Germany by England would put an end *ipso facto* to the present Anglo-French relations, since there existed no written agreement between France and England of a general political character. This objection had the success which might have been expected. The London Cabinet rejected the German proposal, which caused lively dissatisfaction in Berlin." <sup>1</sup>

In order therefore to prevent any relaxation of the international tension, such as would have resulted from an Anglo-German Neutrality Agreement, Poincaré had brought his heaviest gun into action, the threat to make an end of the *entente cordiale*. This "written agreement of a general political character", which at the time did not exist, came into being, as all the world knows, at that very time during the first Balkan War when Poincaré was continually repeating that he was ready to fulfil his duties as an ally. It was given documentary form in the correspondence

<sup>1</sup> Isvolsky, Vol. II, page 377, No. 608.

between Grey and Cambon in November, 1912, by which, as Lloyd George admitted in Parliament on 7 August, 1918, England incurred an obligation of honour to come to the aid of France in the event of a Franco-German conflict.

I by no means desire to affirm that Russia wished, at the time of the Balkan War, to provoke a European conflagration in order to attain the ends at which Isvolsky's and Sazonow's policy was directed. On the contrary, she endeavoured at the time to prevent such a conflagration. It is however extremely significant that the regard for the maintenance of the peace of Europe, which was apparent in the Russian attitude towards Austria, went a great deal too far for the man who was responsible for French policy. Although France was only interested indirectly, in respect of her liability to extend military aid to Russia in the prevention of any change in the *status quo* in the Balkans to the advantage of Austria and the disadvantage of Serbia, the French Premier displayed considerably more alarm in regard to Austrian expansionist ambitions than Sazonow. I have already noticed that Poincaré on his own initiative proposed on 4 November, 1912, that France, England and Russia should come to an agreement as to the attitude they would take up in the event of Austria displaying a desire for territorial aggrandisement in the Balkans, and I have shown that he was fully aware in so doing that his proposal might involve warlike complications, into which France might be drawn. Sazonow replied that Russia, like France, would not stand idly by in the event of Austria's territorial aggrandisement: but he added that, for the moment at any rate, Austria did not appear to be aiming at territorial gains.<sup>1</sup> Poincaré was not satisfied with this assurance on the part of the Foreign Minister of the State most interested in the Balkans. He was much more concerned for the security of Russia than the Tsar or his counsellors. On 11 December Isvolsky reports a conversation with Poincaré, which can have had no other aim than to

<sup>1</sup> Isvolsky, Vol. II, No. 566, page 345.

induce Russia to make military preparations. Poincaré told the Russian Ambassador that, according to his information, Austria was making intensive preparations for war, and would take action against Serbia in the immediate future : in the face of this activity on the part of Austria, Russia (he said) was maintaining complete indifference, and taking no counter measures of any kind.<sup>1</sup> When, on the top of this, the French Military Attaché in St. Petersburg, on inquiring anxiously of the Russian General Staff as to Russia's military action on the Austrian frontier, received the assurance that Austrian activities on the Russian frontier were confined to defensive measures, that Russia did not believe in an Austrian attack on Russia, and considered an Austrian attack on Serbia extremely improbable, and that even in the event of an Austrian attack on Serbia Russia would not go to war, and was in fact so firmly persuaded of the maintenance of peace that it was the War Minister's intention to leave on a visit to Germany and the South of France, Poincaré fell into a fit of extreme excitement. Isvolsky reports thereon on 14 December<sup>2</sup> : "Poincaré and the whole Cabinet are much upset and excited as a result of this information, since, as I have already telegraphed, everyone here is convinced of the warlike character of the Austrian preparations, and is afraid that we shall be taken by surprise, and the attack of France by Germany will be facilitated. I have done all I could to appease Poincaré : I have pointed out that two months ago, when the crisis in Russia was at its inception, serious steps were decided upon with a view to bringing our military forces on the Austrian frontier to a state of as much readiness as possible, that since then all troops had been kept with the colours, and so forth. I venture, however, to suggest that it would be very desirable to inform the French Government, which seriously reckons with the

<sup>1</sup> Isvolsky, Vol. II, No. 620, pages 383-4. Isvolsky's Report of 11 December, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> Isvolsky, Vol. II, No. 630, page 388.

contingency of war, both in regard to the war measures which we have taken and in regard to our views as to the possibilities of the situation, since the present ignorance in regard to these two points is undoubtedly causing nervousness here, which is beginning to extend to the public and Press, and I have increasing difficulty in keeping feeling here favourable to us. I urgently beg for instructions to discuss matters fully with Poincaré.”<sup>1</sup>

On the same day the Russian Military Attaché, Ignatiew, had a conversation with Millerand, in the course of which, Ignatiew having observed that Russia had no desire to provoke a European war or to take any action which might kindle a European conflagration, the French War Minister replied : “Then you will be obliged to leave Serbia to her fate. That is your affair : all that we are concerned about is to be sure that it is not our fault. We are ready ; and that is a point to take into consideration. Can you not at least say what your attitude in the Balkans is ?” Ignatiew answered that the Slav question was always near Russia’s heart, but history had taught her to think before everything of her own interests as a State, and not to sacrifice these to abstract ideas. Upon this Millerand went so far as to say : “But you must know, Colonel, that it is not a question of Albania, or Serbia, or Durazzo, but of the hegemony of Austria throughout the Balkan peninsula. . . . I presume you are doing *something* in the military sphere.”<sup>2</sup>

It is impossible, in view of this almost stormy insistence on the part of Poincaré, Millerand and Isvolsky, to reject the supposition that France was afraid Russia might let slip an opportunity, which might never recur, of a European war, and with it the recovery of Alsace-Lorraine. At any

<sup>1</sup> There was the less justification for these apprehensions on the part of the French Premier in that Count Berchthold had informed Paris and St. Petersburg on 6 November that Austria did not propose to claim any territorial compensations for herself. Isvolsky, Vol. II, Nos. 549 and 550.

<sup>2</sup> E. Adamow in *Isvestija*, No. 171 of 29 July, 1924.



rate these reports of Isvolsky show that France was firmly resolved, as far back as 1912, to fall upon Germany, as soon as Russia should give the signal, in the event of Russia attacking the Dual Monarchy as a result of a conflict between Austria and Serbia, and Germany coming to the aid of Austria, which Paris in view of its knowledge of the Triple Alliance regarded as certain. It was considered necessary finally in St. Petersburg to calm the French Premier, "more Tsarist than the Tsar"; and he was accordingly informed that the statement reported by the French Military Attaché in his despatch of 18 December, 1912, that Russia would not fight even in the event of an Austrian attack on Serbia, could not have been made by any responsible person, and that, if the Government had really decided on such a course, France would have received information with regard to it through channels other than that through which the statement, which the French Ambassador had thought fit to pass on to his Government, had been conveyed.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from this last communication that Russia also was prepared in 1912 not to leave Serbia in the lurch, should the latter, by her action against Albania, move Austria to armed attack. Russia had two reasons only for endeavouring to prevent a conflict between Serbia and Austria on this occasion. The first was the fact that she was not sufficiently prepared for war: and the second was the fact that the Serbian desire to expand towards the Adriatic, which was the primary danger to the peace of Europe in this crisis of 1912-1913, had met with the same determined opposition in Italy as in Austria.<sup>2</sup> Sazonow for these reasons, unlike Poincaré, was very satisfied when

<sup>1</sup> Isvolsky, Vol. II, No. 640, page 400.

<sup>2</sup> In treating Austria's opposition to Serbian territorial settlement on the Adriatic as a proof of warlike intentions on Austria's part, as MM. Bourgeois and Pagès do, they are logically bound (as in previous cases) to apply the argument to Italy, which throughout the crisis supported Austria's opposition to the Serbian pretensions. The fact that they do not do so is the measure of the untenable character of their accusation.

Austria did not allow herself to be provoked into taking military measures by the action of Serbia, in invading Albania in disregard of all warnings, pushing through to the Adriatic coast and occupying Durazzo. Austria indeed expressly asserted that she would not tolerate a permanent settlement of Serbia on the Adriatic, but was prepared to treat the temporary occupation of Albanian coast towns as a justifiable war measure, and proposed of her own initiative to give Serbia an avenue of commercial approach to the Adriatic by the construction of a railway from the Danube to the Adriatic. In this attitude, as has been indicated, Austria was in complete agreement with Italy.

In asserting, as they do, that at the end of 1912 France and England had united their efforts to prevent a general conflagration, in contrast to Austria who at the same time was mobilizing her troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina—the inference of course being that it was only the love of peace of France and England which prevented war—MM. Bourgeois and Pagès pass over in silence all the steps taken by Austria at the time in the diplomatic field to maintain peace. That she mobilized a part of her Army is intelligible in view of the fact that Serbian troops were standing on the Bosnian frontier and the Serbian Press was using language of a positively threatening character in regard to Austria. We have seen that the military measures of Austria were regarded even in St. Petersburg, where it was natural that they should arouse much greater alarm than in Paris, as defensive in character.

The Red Book on the crises of the years 1912 and 1913, which Austria published after the conclusion of the Third Balkan War, contains documents of which I have not (it seems) made sufficient use in my discussion of the War Guilt Lie. These documents supply proof after proof of the love of peace with which Austria was filled in those critical years, and of her desire to satisfy the reasonable claims of Serbia.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Diplomatische Aktenstücke betreffend die Ereignisse auf dem*

Apart from the telegrams cited in the foot-note, I propose to quote only a single letter out of the wealth of material, which is available from this source. It is a letter of Count Berchthold to the Austrian Ambassador in London, dated 15 December, 1912, in which the Austrian Foreign

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*Balkan vom 13 August, 1912 bis zum 6 November 1913, Vienna, 1914 (Diplomatic Papers with regard to Events in the Balkans from 13 August, 1912 to 6 November, 1913), Telegram No. 84 of 10 November, 1912, from Count Berchthold to Baron von Giesl in Cetinje: "According to information at my disposal the occupation of Alessio and San Giovanni di Medua by Montenegrin troops is to be considered in the light of action for the benefit of Serbia. However that may be, you will be good enough to inform His Majesty King Nicholas in my name that we do not desire to do anything to interfere with Montenegrin military operations, but that a permanent territorial settlement on the Adriatic coast would not be consistent with the design which we have in view of the creation of an independent Albania."*

On 8 November Count Berchthold telegraphed to the Austrian Minister in Belgrade: "Austria-Hungary has given evidence by her attitude since the outset of the Balkan War that she harbours sentiments of the greatest goodwill towards the Balkan States in general and Serbia in particular. In this connection it is sufficient to recall that we did nothing to interfere with Serbia's military operations in the Sandjak, which extended to the neighbourhood of our Bosnian frontier. In my recent statements to the Delegations I further defined this attitude of goodwill, when I said that we desired to take into account in the fullest manner the situation created by the victories of the Balkan States. In the same spirit we propose to raise no obstacles for our part to a considerable extension of Serbia, provided that our commercial and transport interests are not adversely affected. We recognize the justice of Serbia's desire for an assured connection with the sea as an outlet for her trade. In this connection we draw attention to the transversal line from Serbia across Bosnia to the coast of Dalmatia, to the connection with the Adriatic through the Sandjak and Montenegro, and to the possibilities of developing a connection from the Danube to the Adriatic across Albanian territory." Only territorial acquisitions by Serbia on the Adriatic are rejected in this telegram on the ground that the territories involved are purely Albanian, and any such division of Albanian territory would make impossible the Austrian and Italian designs for Albanian independence.

See further Telegram No. 95 of 12 November, 1912, to Count Mensdorff, in London, and No. 107 of 17 November to Herr von Mertey in Rome.

Minister expounds his Balkan policy with great clearness. It was written on very nearly the same date as the already quoted Report of Isvolsky, in which the latter describes Poincaré's alarm in regard to the military preparations of Austria. It says with regard to the question of Serbian access to the Adriatic, the only question which still threatened peace, exactly the same as its author had already telegraphed to Belgrade. It continues : " As regards the provision of an assured economic outlet for Serbia to the Adriatic, we are not only prepared to enter into discussion of the question : we want to use the opportunity to put an end once for all, by the display of every possible goodwill on our part, to the fable that Austria is anxious to throttle the neighbouring kingdom economically. In our view Serbia might obtain the connection with the sea which she desires through Bosnia by building a short stretch of line on her own territory ; and in regard to transport across Bosnia to the sea we are prepared to grant her the necessary guarantees. The construction of the so-called Donau-Adria-Bahn [line from the Danube to the Adriatic] might also be considered in this connection."

In view of such utterances, breathing as they do a sincere love of peace, it is not possible to maintain the assertion that Austria-Hungary was a menace to peace in the winter of 1912. Then, as subsequently, the menace to peace came from Serbia, intoxicated with her victories ; and the danger of European war arose because the desires of this disturber of the peace for territorial acquisitions on the Adriatic found support in St. Petersburg and Paris, where it was thought that their satisfaction would prove the prelude to the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy. The accusations brought against Germany in this connection are particularly absurd. The possibility that the Serbian desire for an Adriatic port might involve a world war so alarmed the Emperor William II that, against the advice of Bethmann Hollweg and Kiderlen-Waechter, he was anxious to advise Austria to let the Serbians have what they wished : and he

declared that he was even less inclined to undertake a war with France and Russia for a port on the Adriatic than he was for the Sandjak. The Triple Alliance, he said, covered the existing territory of the Allies, and not new claims. "I could not be responsible for that," he wrote on 7 November, 1912, to the Foreign Office, "either to my people or to my conscience." The difference on this occasion between the Emperor and his Ministers nearly led to a Ministerial crisis. The Chancellor hurried to Letzlingen, where the Emperor was staying. But the Emperor persisted in his view that a war on two fronts, in which England would probably take part on the other side, was an undertaking which would mean staking everything, and might mean the end of everything for Germany. Such a war could not be begun for the sake of Albania and Durazzo. The Alliance did not imply that the German Army and the German people were to be at the disposal of another State for the purpose of gratifying the whims of its foreign policy, or that they must be prepared to be the blind instruments of such a policy. The Emperor's objections were so far successful that Vienna was given to understand that Austria must act so as to appear the injured party.<sup>1</sup>

The danger of war, which hung over Europe during the Balkan wars, was not only not provoked by the Central Powers, but was regarded by them with alarm, and countered by every means in their power compatible with their vital interests. So much is proved by the above-cited documents.

If the storm-cloud did not break at the time, that was due largely to an occurrence without which it would probably have been impossible to check the Serbian craving for expansion.

The occurrence in question was the remarkable conflict which broke out between the brother Slav nations over the spoils of the Turkish war. This conflict once again arrested Russia's advance to the Straits. It is true that it

<sup>1</sup> Erich Brandenburg, *op. cit.*, pages 368-9.

aroused new apprehensions in Austria with regard to the Pan-Serb ambitions of her neighbour, by now intoxicated by her military successes. Serbia, thanks to the Peace of Bucharest and the astonishing anti-Austrian policy of Roumania, had become the strongest State in the Balkans. It was in consequence of these apprehensions that Count Berchthold in August, 1913, made representations to Rome, which were revealed by Giolitti in the Italian Parliament, during the war. It was mainly due to Germany that Austria-Hungary was prevented at this time from taking armed action against Serbia. MM. Bourgeois and Pagès ascribe to Italy the credit for preventing such action : to admit that Germany had any credit for the preservation of peace would affect the validity of their War Guilt contentions as a whole. They attribute to the negative reply which San Giuliano at Giolitti's instigation sent to Vienna the fact that Austria abstained from execution of the scheme, which was at the back of her inquiries. In the fact that the German White Book of 1919 contains none of the papers which form the correspondence between Vienna and Berlin from May to September, 1913, they see something like an admission of the German desire for war : and they represent the desire expressed in Giolitti's telegram to San Giuliano that Germany should advise Austria against political adventures as an expression of doubt on the part of the Italian statesman as to Germany's love of peace.<sup>1</sup> The demand of MM. Bourgeois and Pagès for the publication of the letters and telegrams which passed between Vienna and Berlin at that critical period will shortly be satisfied by the publication of the German Foreign Office Papers. The non-publication of these letters and telegrams in 1919 was not due to the fact that they would have revealed Germany's desire for war, but to the fact that consideration for Austria still made it impossible to tear all veils from the history of events. Long before San Giuliano's negative answer reached Vienna, Vienna was

<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Giolitti, *Memories of my Life*, London, 1923, page 373.

very well aware that she could not count on Germany for the purpose of armed intervention against Serbia.<sup>1</sup>

Once more the danger of war passed. But it was a breathing-space only! The embers still glowed on the Serbian hearth; and the Russian Minister at the Court of Belgrade, M. von Hartwig, who shared Isvolsky's views, was there to fan them into flame. The two great dangers to the peace of Europe, the craving of Russia for the Straits and the firm resolve of France to get back Alsace-Lorraine, as soon as the flames of the Serbian conflagration should once more force their way through the cinders with which they had been damped down, remain unchanged. At the beginning of 1914 the warlike intentions of Russia actually assume concrete form. Three documents constitute our authority for the statement. One is a Report of Sazonow to the Tsar of 8 December, 1913: the second is the Minutes of a Special Conference of the Russian Ministers which was held on 31 December, 1913, under the Presidency of Kokowzew: and the third is the Minutes of the Conference of the Russian Council of Ministers with the heads of the Army and Navy on 8 February.

In reading the Report to the Tsar of 8 December, 1913<sup>2</sup>, regard must be had to the peace-loving sentiments of the Monarch for whom it was designed. The Report was designed to convince Nicholas II of the necessity of armed intervention for the protection of Russian interests

<sup>1</sup> On 3 July, 1913, a month before the representations in Rome of August 9 of which Giolitti spoke, the Austro-Hungarian Government had made similar representations to Berlin, giving full particulars of the dangers to Austria-Hungary which the Pan-Serb Movement entailed. The Emperor, who was at the time absent from Berlin, on receiving a report of the Austrian representations from the Secretary of State, Zimmermann, signified his agreement to steps being taken to calm Vienna, and to Austria being asked to do nothing without previously informing Berlin. See Report of Count Montgelas to the First Sub-Committee of the Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry in *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* No. 123 of 2 March, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> Isvolsky, Vol. III, No. 1,157, page 374 *et seqq.*

in the Black Sea, without permitting him to have any doubts as to the peaceable intentions of his Ministers. For this reason the Report abounds in assurances that Russia has the greatest interest in the integrity of Turkey, and has no wish to take any steps calculated to hasten Turkey's dissolution. At the same time it is clearly indicated that the chances of Russia being able to maintain this attitude are very small, while it is openly asserted—which is the most important thing—as had already been done in Article V of the Russo-Bulgarian Military Convention, that the problem of the Straits could not be solved without European complications. After this preamble a programme, complete in every detail, of political and military measures required in the event of such complications is set out. In this Report Sazonow abandons the reserved policy, which he had followed in 1912 in presence of Poincaré's insistence, and adopts with full consciousness the policy of world war as the means of finally attaining the end which Peter the Great designated in his testament as the supreme goal of Russian policy.

The Minutes of the two Conferences of 31 December and 8 February read to-day like reports on a war which it will be difficult to avoid, and which is necessary for the attainment of Russian ends.

The Conference of 31 December<sup>1</sup> was held to consider the position created by the fact that the German Emperor had complied with the request, which had been addressed to him, to appoint General Liman von Sanders as Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish land forces.

In agreement with France and England, Russia had resolved not to tolerate the command of the troops in Constantinople being handed over to German officers. She was assured of the support of France in objecting to German commands in Smyrna and Beirut. The discussion at the Conference of 31 December turned on the question

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Stieve, *Iswolski und der Weltkrieg* (Iswolsky and the World War), Annex page 234 *et seqq.*



of what was to be done should Turkey and Germany not defer to the Russian objections.

The proceedings at this Conference show that Russia was not indeed prepared to provoke a war, but was prepared to let matters go so far, if assured of the support of France and England. This crisis also passed without war as a result of German readiness to give way. General Liman von Sanders was not made Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish forces, but was merely given a position of full powers as General Inspector of the Turkish Army, to which Russia had no objection to urge.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless the second Conference was held on February 8. The subject of discussion was Sazonow's Report to the Tsar of December 8 ; and the Conference went so far as to agree to a detailed plan for seizing the Straits. This Plan, as appears from statements made at the Conference by Sazonow and the Chief of the General Staff, was drawn up with full consciousness of the fact that the struggle for Constantinople would not be possible without a general European war.

Since Poincaré's visit to St. Petersburg in 1912, Russia had bound herself still more closely to France by a Naval Convention, while in June she completed the plan of campaign against the Central Powers by a Naval Convention with England. Behind all these preparations for war there was latent the idea, which Sazonow had voiced a year before on 6 May, 1913, in a letter to the Russian Minister, Hartwig : "Serbia's Promised Land lies within the boundaries of what is now Austria-Hungary, and not in the direction to which her aspirations are now directed, where the Bulgars block her way." From all of which it appears that in the summer of 1914—although on the surface, in view of the negotiations of Germany with England for a colonial agreement, the international situation might seem to be more favourable—the interlacing treaties

<sup>1</sup> German White Book, Sub-Annexe I to Annexe IX, No. 14, von Jagow to the German Ambassador in St. Petersburg on 6 January, 1914.

of the Triple Entente and the Pan-Serb Movement, which derived its inspiration from these treaties, had contrived to accumulate so many powder casks round about the Central Powers that a simple match, and not a burning torch, such as was the assassination of Sarajevo, would have sufficed to cause an explosion and set the world in flames.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE SARAJEVO ASSASSINATION THE POWDER CASKS EXPLODE

IF it is a fact, as I have endeavoured in the preceding ten chapters to show, that the German Governments and the German people, since the founding of the Empire, had made the maintenance of peace the principal object of their foreign policy, that they had given proof of their love of peace just before the outbreak of the war in connection with the limitation of General Liman von Sanders' position which Russia demanded, that amongst the aims of their policy was none which was unattainable except by war, and that they were conscious of the enormous superiority of the Armies and Navies of the Triple Entente over those of the Triple Alliance (see Chapter VII) and knew that they could not count on Italy's support . . . if all these contentions are true, it follows that it is a sheer impossibility that the murderous act of Sarajevo could ever have been regarded in Germany as a welcome opportunity for the kindling of a world war. Apart altogether from considerations of human sympathy with the cruelly murdered victims and the aged Emperor Francis Joseph, on whom this new blow of fate descended, it could not have been regarded as anything but an appalling misfortune, for the reason that it involved a danger of war greater even than those which had threatened the peace of Europe during the Balkan wars. For those who have been convinced that

Germany after the Peace of Frankfort was not anxious for, but afraid of, war, the assertion that she found in this occurrence a long desired opportunity to set the world in flames will appear to be what it is, sheer nonsense, without further ado.

I do not think, therefore, it is necessary for me, if I have given proofs of Germany's love of peace, to give proofs also of the fact that the German Emperor and the German Government, or for that matter the German people, endeavoured during July, 1914, to prevent and not to provoke war. I will, confine myself therefore to citing the facts which show that neither the Emperor nor any of his advisers can have made use of the Austro-Serbian conflict arising out of the assassination of Sarajevo to kindle a world conflagration, and that in all the diplomatic utterances which emanated from the German Government between 28 June and 1 August there is no trace to be found of desire for war or hope of war, whereas the enemies of Germany, and above all Russia, were working, by their unjustifiable interference, to turn the conflict between Serbia and Austria into a European conflict.

One of the most important of these facts is the absence, on the side of the men responsible for Germany's entry into the war, of any war aims. It is an incredible supposition that any man in his senses would purposely provoke a war without having first deliberated what he is to get out of it. But it is in vain to look for any document or utterance of German princes or statesmen before the war, in which such deliberation finds expression. On the other hand we have a whole series of documentary proofs that Russian and French statesmen, before the war, had agreed amongst themselves as to what they would demand for their countries in the event of a European conflict. I propose to call attention at this point to one irrefutable document, which is to be found amongst the papers of Isvolsky.

In a telegram which Isvolsky sent on 13 October, 1914, from Bordeaux to Sazonow, he stated that he had discussed

in detail with Delcassé the war aims of Russia and France. What these aims were, I have indicated again and again in the preceding chapters. Russia demanded the Straits and Constantinople, and France wanted Alsace-Lorraine; and the Russian Ambassador and the French Foreign Minister were agreed that the German Empire must be made an end of, and the military and political strength of Prussia weakened as far as possible. England was to ask for the re-establishment of an independent Hanover and the German colonies: and Schleswig-Holstein was to be ceded to Denmark. Having indicated in these terms the war aims of the Allies, Isvolsky continues: "I here called Delcassé's attention to the negotiations which took place in St. Petersburg in 1913, and begged him earnestly to call your attention to the fact that the claims and wishes of France are the same now as then, with the addition of the necessary desire for the break-up of the political and economic strength of Germany."<sup>1</sup>

A year before the outbreak of war, therefore, M. Delcassé, who was then French Ambassador in St. Petersburg, had negotiated with the Russian Foreign Minister as to the war aims of the two countries. There is no logic in a State provoking a war, or even hoping for a war, without having first an exact picture of what it hopes to gain thereby. The above report of Isvolsky proves that France and Russia had a clear picture of what their war aims were, and how they would formulate them, at least a year before the assassination at Sarajevo. Those who have no war aims cannot want war. Those who negotiate over their war aims in peace-time, and whose policy is shaped for half a century by the endeavour to attain them, invite at least the suspicion that they hope for war.

A particularly convincing documentary proof that the Emperor William II, on whom our accusers have passed sentence as the chief criminal, did not promote the war, and cannot have been working for its outbreak, is to be found

<sup>1</sup> Stieve, *Isvolsky und der Weltkrieg*, pages 267-8.

in the comment which he wrote in the margin of the Serbian Reply to the Austrian ultimatum. It runs as follows: "A brilliant achievement for a time-limit of 48 hours! It is more than could have been expected. A great moral victory for Vienna: but with this all ground for war goes, and Giesl should have waited quietly in Belgrade! I would never have ordered mobilization on such a Note."

Is it conceivable that a man, who for five-and-twenty years has been thinking day and night how he can best kindle a European war (as the authors of the Covering Note of 16 June, 1919, suggest of my father), who with the murder of the Austrian Archducal pair sees the moment at length arrived for the fulfilment of his wish, who a week or so before in the famous Crown Council of 5 July (which never took place!) has decided to begin . . . is it conceivable that such a man should pen such a marginal comment on a paper which he thinks puts an end to his hopes? Would not the Emperor, if he had really been preparing for war for a quarter of a century and only been waiting for the opportunity to begin, rather have expressed his satisfaction, on reading this document which did not meet the principal Austrian claim, that Austria had at any rate mobilized? Would it not have been in keeping with his train of thought, if he had done as Austria did and said that such an answer made war a sheer necessity? Instead of this he at once notes that with this reply all ground for war goes, and adds that on such a Note he would never have mobilized. He goes further, and writes immediately a letter to the Secretary of State with his own hand, which begins with the following words: "On reading the Serbian Reply, which I received this morning, I am convinced that the wishes of the Dual Monarchy are on the whole met. The few reservations which Serbia makes in regard to particular points can very well be cleared up in my opinion by negotiation. The capitulation in the most humiliating form is there, and is proclaimed

*urbi et orbi*; and thereby all ground for war goes.”<sup>1</sup> The last seven words are underlined by the Emperor. It is true that in the same letter he suggests, in view of the untrustworthiness of Serbia, that Austria might occupy Belgrade as a pledge for the execution of the Serbian promises—a suggestion which in the light of later knowledge was eminently essential—but, when the Emperor made it, he was firmly convinced that the demand could be put through by negotiation without a declaration of war. In the same letter he desires Herr von Jagow further to inform Vienna that there is no longer any ground for war, since Serbia has been compelled to retreat in very humiliating circumstances, and to congratulate the Austrian Government on its success. It is quite inconceivable that a sovereign whose design it is to kindle a world war, should congratulate the ally, whom he hopes to use for the purpose, on the danger of war being at an end, and should suggest (by the assurance that there is no longer any ground for war) that a declaration of war should not be made. In Austria, as all the world knows, this optimistic view of the Serbian Reply was not shared; and before the Emperor William’s instructions to Herr von Jagow could be carried out, war against Serbia had been declared. . . .

The Austrian ultimatum of 23 July has of course been treated as one of the chief proofs of Austria’s warlike intentions, and the fact that Germany did not prevent its despatch has been treated as a proof that Germany was also for war. I will not make much point of the fact that the text of the ultimatum was not known in Berlin at the time it was despatched, since it is undeniable that information as to its substance was available and that it was expected that Serbia would reject it. The report of the Attaché of the Bavarian Legation in Berlin, Herr von Schön, to his Government (which Kurt Eisner published in a contemptible manner, omitting all the passages in which the firm resolve

<sup>1</sup> *Deutsche Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch* (German documents relating to the outbreak of the war), Vol. II, page 18, No. 293..

of the German Government to localize the Austro-Serbian conflict appeared) also shows, when read in its unmutilated form, that it was known in Berlin that the ultimatum would contain the demand that Austrian representatives should supervise the judicial examination of the Serbian accomplices to the murder of the Archducal pair. The question is not whether Germany knew of the text or only of the substance of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, but whether Austria was justified in sending such an ultimatum. And the answer to this question, in view of the complicity of the Serbian Government in the act of Sarajevo, which the Austrian Government then assumed as a fact but which is now proven,<sup>1</sup> can only be in the affirmative.

I have shown in the preceding chapters that the expansionist ambitions of Serbia threatened the Austrian State in its vital interests. The murder of the Heir to the Throne and his wife disclosed to the whole world the vast danger of the Pan-Serb Movement. It showed that the hatred of Serbia for her neighbour had passed all bounds.

In self-preservation Austria was compelled, by war if there was no other way, to dam the flood of this movement once and for all, and by some more solid barrier than the Serbian promise of 31 March, 1909, had proved itself to be. None of those States, whose statesmen treat the Austrian ultimatum instead of the Sarajevo murder as the cause of the Austro-Serbian war, and the German declaration of war instead of the Russian mobilization as the cause of the world war, would have been able in Austria's place to act differently. It is probable indeed that they would have taken much more abrupt and much more severe measures against a State on whose territory the idea of murder of the Heir to the Throne had been hatched.

<sup>1</sup> If Vienna was not at the time in possession of complete information as to the complicity of the Serbian Government, they knew at any rate that the Serbian Government in defiance of all promises and undertakings had left the secret societies in Serbia, by which the assassination was planned and organized, to continue their operations unmolested, and was therefore indirectly responsible for the assassination.



I put the following case. Assume that the English Heir to the Throne with his wife had visited Cape Colony at some period before the Boer War, and had been assassinated in Capetown with bombs manufactured in the Transvaal by British subjects of Boer nationality. It would have been in the highest degree probable that the British Government would have sent no ultimatum at all, but would have despatched the Fleet to South Africa, and invaded and subjected the country, while at the same time informing the world that they would regard any interference with their action, which was a matter affecting England alone, as a hostile action. I put it to any Englishman on his honour and conscience whether such action would not have been expected by him of his Government, and whether any English Government which tolerated the interference say of Germany—if one may suppose for the moment that the Boers in such a case would not have immediately forfeited the sympathies of the entire German people—would not have been turned out of office by the indignation of the British people. No honourable Britisher will answer this question in the negative, although the Boer agitation threatened at most an English colony, whereas the Pan-Serb Movement threatened the existence of the Austrian Monarchy. The Austrian action against Serbia in 1914 seems mild and considerate in comparison with what Great Britain would have done in the case I have imagined in the Transvaal. We now know the kind of satisfaction which England demands in the case, not of her Heir Apparent, but of one of her Generals, from a people which is incapable of doing any greater injury to the British world empire than a fly can do to a giant. Three days after the assassination of Sir Lee Stack, the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in the Sudan, the British Government addressed an ultimatum to the Egyptian Government, making the latter responsible for the murder and advancing the following claims: (1) extensive apologies for the crime; (2) conduct of the

search for the authors of the crime with the utmost energy and without regard for persons, and punishment of the criminals, whoever they might be and of whatever age; (3) prohibition and energetic suppression of all political demonstrations; (4) immediate payment of a fine of half a million pounds; (5) the withdrawal of all Egyptian officers and purely Egyptian units from the Sudan; (6) the issue of instructions to the competent authorities to the effect that the Sudan Government will increase as required to an unlimited extent the district to be brought under irrigation near Gezira; (7) abandonment of all opposition to the wishes of the British Government in respect of the protection of foreign interests in Egypt.

For the pretensions contained in claims 5 to 7 there is no parallel in the Austrian ultimatum. Professor Kern remarks with complete justification<sup>1</sup> that, if the Austrian ultimatum had been inspired by the spirit of these demands, Austria-Hungary would have required Serbia to withdraw all officers and men within 24 hours from the Sandjak in Novibazar, the latter to be thereupon occupied by Austro-Hungarian troops, and to instruct her officials that the Austrian and Hungarian frontiers would in future be closed as required to Serbian imports and exports to suit the interests of the Dual Monarchy: Serbia would have been left no possibility of creating for herself any alternative outlet for the trade thus arrested, and would have been required to abandon all opposition to the wishes of the Austro-Hungarian Government in respect of foreign interests in Serbia.

One may imagine what would have been Great Britain's claims, had her Heir to the Throne been murdered in the Transvaal by the Boers. One may surmise that she would not have hesitated before a world war, if her claims were not fulfilled, and if the Transvaal had received the same support from Germany that Serbia received from Russia.

<sup>1</sup> *Die Kriegsschuldfrage* of January, 1925, page 44.

The Commission, which was entrusted by the Peace Conference in Versailles with the provision of proof of the responsibility of the Central Powers for the outbreak of the world war, refers in its Report, as evidence of the unjust treatment of Serbia by Austria, to the telegram of 13 July of Herr von Weisner, the Austrian agent sent to investigate the crime at Sarajevo, in which it was said—prematurely, as we now know—that the complicity of the Serbian Government in respect of organizing or giving orders for the murder was not proved, and was indeed excluded by the facts. It is a proof of the insincerity of this Commission's Report that it only prints the first half of this telegram and passes over the second half in silence. In the second half of his telegram Herr von Wiesner said that it was established that the plot was decided upon in Belgrade, and that a Serbian State official and a Serbian Army officer had supplied bombs, ammunition and poison for the purpose of its execution. As a Government is responsible for the crimes committed by its officials, the Austrian claims would have been justified even if the first part of Herr von Wiesner's telegram had been in accordance with the facts. To-day we know that the murder of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand originated with the Head of the Intelligence Service of the Serbian General Staff, Colonel Dragutin Dimitrievic, and that the murderers were hired by him for the purpose.<sup>1</sup> Colonel Dimitrievic was condemned to death and shot, in connection with the trial held behind closed doors in Salonica in 1917 of a band of officers belonging to the secret society known as the "Black Hand", for an alleged conspiracy to assassinate the then Heir to the Throne of Serbia, the present King Alexander. In the course of the trial Dimitrievic said openly that not only the Russian Military Attaché, Artamanow, but also the Russian Minister in Belgrade, von Hartwig, the Serbian Premier (then and now), Pasic, and even the Heir to the Throne, the present King Alexander,

<sup>1</sup> *Die Kriegsschuldfrage* of January, 1925, page 44.

himself were accurately informed as to the proposed attempt on the Archduke Francis Ferdinand's life.

The secrets of this trial were revealed by Nikola Nenadowic in the periodical *La fédération balkanique* on 1 December, 1924, and the former Serbian Minister in Berlin, Dr. Boghicevic gave them wider currency in the January number of the *Kriegsschuldfrage* in 1925, remarking that the facts had long been known in initiated circles and considered to be true. As regards M. Pasic the Serbian Premier, and his Minister of the Interior, and through these two the entire Serbian Cabinet, an important witness has arisen to prove that these all had information as to the intention to commit the murder some four weeks before the actual attempt. This witness is none other than a member of the Cabinet, which had this guilty knowledge, the Minister of Education of the time, Ljuba Jovanovic. In a collection of articles published by the Russian *émigré* journalist, Al. Ksunsin, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the outbreak of the war, with the title "The blood of Slavdom", Ljuba Jovanovic had an article entitled "After the Vidovdan<sup>1</sup> of 1914", in which he makes the following astounding statements, which I propose to reproduce here in full:<sup>2</sup> "I do not remember whether it was the end of May or the beginning of June that Pasic told us—generally he discussed such matters with Stojan Protic alone: Stojan had then the Ministry of the Interior: however, this much he told us all—that certain individuals had made preparations to go to Sarajevo and make an end of Francis Ferdinand, who was to visit the town and have an official reception in the forenoon. All this, as I learnt later, was arranged in circles of people who were secretly organized, and patriotic Bosnian-Herzegovinian students in

<sup>1</sup> Vidovdan (St. Vitus' Day) is the anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo Polje, when the medieval Serb Empire was annihilated by the Turks, and was chosen for that reason as the day for the proclamation of the constitution of the new Yugoslav Kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> See *Die Kriegsschuldfrage* of February, 1925, where Ljuba Jovanovic's article is reprinted in a German translation.

in Belgrade. Pasic and the rest of us said that the frontier authorities on the Drin should be given orders to prevent these young men, when they left Belgrade for the purpose, from crossing: and Stojan said he would do so. But the frontier authorities were in the organization themselves, and they did not execute Stojan's orders; they told him—and he told us later on—that his instructions reached them too late, when the young men were already across the river.

“In this way the attempt of the authorities to prevent the execution of the crime failed: as did also the attempt of our Minister in Vienna, Joca Jovanovic, who approached the Austrian Minister, Bilinski, on his own initiative, and endeavoured to get him to prevent the Archduke from starting on the fatal journey. So the deed was done in Sarajevo, on a more terrible scale than could have been foreseen, and with consequences of which no one at that time could have dreamt.” The complicity, which the Serbian Government have always denied, in the most pregnant assassination in the world's history is thus crushingly exposed by the confession of a member of that Government himself.

What did this Government do to prevent the assassination? It sent orders to frontier authorities, who it knew to belong to the organization with which the murder originated, and when the frontier authorities reported that the criminals had already passed the frontier it merely filed their report. The answer of the frontier authorities further shows that even the names of the two students, Prinkip and Kabrinovic, who had been chosen to do the murder, were known to the Serbian Premier: otherwise how could the frontier authorities have been in a position to report that the individuals to be arrested had already crossed the frontier? <sup>1</sup>

Jovanovic says that the Serbian Minister in Vienna, who bore the same name as himself, had on his own initiative warned the Archduke, not through the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, but through Bilinski, the

<sup>1</sup> Jovanovic says also in his article that one of the criminals, the student Prinkip, was personally known to him.

Austro-Hungarian Finance Minister who was responsible for Bosnia, to abandon his journey. But in this warning there was no word of the attempt to assassinate the Archduke: the reasons given for the abandonment of the journey were the fact that the visit would inevitably be regarded in Serbia as a provocative act, and that Army manoeuvres under such circumstances were dangerous: there might be some Serb young man amongst the troops with a live cartridge instead of a blank one in his rifle or revolver, and he might fire it off and hit the Archduke, on the ground that the latter's presence was a challenge.<sup>1</sup> The Serbian Minister in Vienna should have realized that a warning of this kind could not possibly have induced the Archduke to abandon his journey. The abandonment of the visit to Sarajevo would have been treated by the entire Serb population as a pusillanimous capitulation to the Pan-Serb Movement, and the resulting exultation in Pan-Serb circles would have immensely added to the strength of the Movement. But even this warning, of the ineffectiveness of which its author must have been aware, did not come from the Serbian Government but from the Serbian Minister in Vienna acting on his own initiative. The Serbian Government, though it knew the names of the students hired to do the murder, and was accurately informed of the whole of the plan, simply put its hands in its pockets, and thereby not merely outraged the common dictates of humanity but committed an act which the German Criminal Code punishes with imprisonment.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> So the Serbian Minister in Vienna himself told Dr. Boghicevic in reply to the latter's inquiry. See *Die Kriegsschuldfrage* of July, 1924, "The 'Warning' before the Sarajevo assassination".

<sup>2</sup> Ljuba Jovanovic has endeavoured to defend himself in the review *Novi Jivot* against the charges put forward in connection with his confessions by the courageous champion of the opposition to the Serbian crimes, Miss Edith Durham, by Mr. Seton Watson and by Herr Alfred von Wegerer. But his defence, which is translated in *Die Kriegsschuldfrage* of April and May, 1925, does not relieve the Serbian Government by a single gramme of the weight of responsibility which lies upon their shoulders.

How false, after these revelations, is the ring of the statement of the Serbian Minister, M. Pasic, in the Serbian answering note: "The Royal Serbian Government was painfully astonished by the assertions that Serbian subjects are alleged to have been implicated in the organization of the attempt at Sarajevo."

Nor was this all. Even after the assassination the Serbian Government did nothing to lay hands on the promoters of the crime in Serbia, although they well knew that all the threads of the web had been spun on Serbian soil. It is quite clear that the complete inactivity of the Serbian authorities during the twenty-five days, which elapsed between the assassination and the presentation of the Austrian ultimatum, were bound to induce the Austrian Government to believe that effective co-operation on the part of the Serbian Government in the atonement for the crime was not to be looked for, unless the investigations which the Serbian Government instituted were controlled by Austrian representatives. This claim too, therefore, was entirely justified. Our accusers at any rate have deprived themselves of the right to stigmatize such a claim on the part of Austria as an illegal, overbearing and imperialistic interference with Serbian sovereignty, since in the Treaty of Versailles they themselves demanded the delivery of German and other nationals for condemnation by foreign Courts—a procedure which is prohibited in the criminal codes of all civilized nations—and later insisted on the presence of representatives of the Entente to control the proceedings against alleged German "war criminals" before the Supreme Court of the Reich in Leipzig.

Who, in view of the complicity of the Serbian Government and of the vast dangers which the Pan-Serb Movement involved for the existence of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, can hold the claims of the Austrian ultimatum to have been too harsh? Who can take it ill of Austria-Hungary if she seized the opportunity of reducing to comparative harmlessness this neighbour, who sought to

break the Austro-Hungarian State in fragments, and who, having it in her power to prevent the murder of the Heir to the Austro-Hungarian Throne, did not do so? And who can blame Germany if she did not quarrel with her Ally's just action in the matter?

M. Morhardt, the former General Secretary of the Ligue des droits de l'homme, a Frenchman, in his admirable book *Les Preuves* (The Proofs), has the following passage with regard to the justification for the Austrian ultimatum: "At the risk of being contradicted by the majority of the raging idiots who have spoken of the prolegomena of the war, we say that the Austrian Note, which Austria from a feeling of childish fear never wished to call an ultimatum, was infinitely moderate in comparison with the injury received. In any case it was infinitely more acceptable than the brutal ultimatum which England addressed to us in the case of Fashoda, or the ultimatum which the Allies addressed to Greece in order to compel the latter to change her King and enter the war."<sup>1</sup>

The evidence that Austria, at the time she handed in the Note of 23 July, in Belgrade, was contending for her very existence, and that the war against Serbia was an act of defence and not of aggression, is so extensive that it has convinced others than Morhardt, who presumably as a Socialist and pronounced Pacifist, and *pro tanto* a violent opponent of Poincaré, is not a satisfactory witness. Another Frenchman of quite a different camp, Alcide Ebray, a former Consul-General, and Minister and Envoy Plenipotentiary, and later the political Editor of the *Journal des Débats*, a paper which has always been particularly strong on all the War Guilt Lies, has been converted, after thorough study of the documentary evidence, to the same view that Morhardt expresses in *Les Preuves*. In his book *La paix malpropre* (The unclean peace), which he wrote to prove the necessity for a revision of the Treaty of Versailles, he says: "One is bound to admit that

<sup>1</sup> Morhardt, *Les Preuves*, pages 71-2.



Austria-Hungary could not tolerate the aspirations of these [the Jugoslav] races without committing suicide. This centrifugal movement meant the dissolution of the Monarchy into fragments. One has, therefore, the impression, in reading the Austro-Hungarian documents in regard to the war, that the Monarchy was threatened in its existence, and that it was its elementary duty to defend itself, even by a preventative war." <sup>1</sup> He adds, it is true, that Austria-Hungary did not deserve the continued existence which it was her elementary duty to defend: but (to say nothing of the fact that the ground is cut from under the feet of those, who in their hostility to Austria have advanced this unproven contention, by the existence of new States, which they themselves have called into being, suffering from precisely the same defects as the Austria they have destroyed), the admission in any case is there that Austria was acting in self-defence. This the champions of the War Guilt Lie deny, and must deny, if their whole edifice is not to crumble to the ground.

Not less certain than the intention of Austria in her Note to call her neighbour, who for decades had menaced her existence to account, is the fact that neither Austria-Hungary nor Germany desired the extension of the Austro-Serbian conflict, or could have done so. To provoke a world war with immensely superior adversaries without any tangible object in view . . . what is this but the act of a madman? There is no single document to be found in any one of the archives from which, even with the magnifying glass of party prejudice, one can detect any trace of design on the part either of Austria-Hungary or of Germany to extend the conflict with Serbia to the dimensions of a European conflict. There are, on the other hand, innumerable documents, which I need not reproduce here because they are universally known, from which it emerges with a certainty beyond dispute that throughout the whole of July, 1914, the efforts of these two States were directed

<sup>1</sup> Ebray, *La paix malpropre*, page 13.

towards localizing the conflict. And yet the contention that Germany desired to convert the war between Austria and Serbia into a universal war, in order thereby to establish her hegemony over the world, constitutes the principal foundation of the War Guilt Lie. And once again one has to note that this contention was bound to be made, if the whole fabric which has been erected in support of Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles and the commentary thereto was not to collapse.

What on the other hand was the attitude of the Powers that sat in judgment on Germany at Versailles in regard to localization of the conflict? Before they even knew of the contents of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, they had threatened to extend the conflict to the dimensions of a world war. And they had concerted their threat beforehand.

M. Poincaré in the speech which he delivered in the French Chamber on 6 July, 1922, to defend himself against the charges brought against him on the basis of the papers of Isvolsky which had been published in the Black Book, asserted that the visit of himself and Viviani to St. Petersburg in July, 1914, was directed solely to the maintenance of peace, and in this connection he used the following words: "When the ultimatum became known in St. Petersburg, we were already on the way: and so far were we from believing in the possibility of a war that we paid our promised visit to the King of Sweden and the city of Stockholm."<sup>1</sup> The instructions, which the French Foreign Minister himself issued on this Baltic journey, brand these assertions as untrue.

On 24 July, when he did not yet know of the Austrian ultimatum, Viviani sent a telegram from Reval to his representative in Paris, which is of such importance for forming an opinion on what was happening in St. Petersburg during this "Journey of Peace" of Poincaré and his Foreign Minister that I give it here in full. Viviani

<sup>1</sup> The sole reason why the visit to Stockholm was not abandoned was that the French President wished to assure himself of Swedish neutrality.

telegraphed to Bienvenu-Martin, his representative in Paris: "I should be obliged if you would transmit the following information and instructions to M. Dumaine [French Ambassador in Vienna]. In the course of my conversations with the Russian Foreign Minister we found ourselves compelled to contemplate the dangers which might arise should Austria take action against Serbia as a result of the assassination of the Archduke Heir Apparent. We reached a common agreement that we should spare no effort to avert any demand for explanations, or any threats which would amount to interference in the internal affairs of Serbia, or might be regarded by her as an encroachment on her sovereignty and independence.

"We consider accordingly that Count Berchthold should be advised in friendly conversation to pursue a moderate policy. He should be made to understand how unsuitable any intervention in Belgrade would be, in which a threat on the part of the Vienna cabinet might be discerned.

"The British Ambassador, on being informed by Sazonow of the proposed action, expressed his conviction that his Government would undoubtedly associate itself with such a step, where danger to the general peace was involved, and has telegraphed in this sense to his Government.

"M. Sazonow has sent instructions in this sense to M. Shebeko [Russian Ambassador in Vienna]. Without there being any question of concerted collective action by the representatives of the Triple Entente in Vienna, I beg you to discuss the matter with the Ambassadors of Russia and England, and to arrive at an agreement with them as to the means most suitable for each of them to convey to Count Berchthold without delay the counsels of moderation, which the present situation appears to us to require. I may add that M. Cambon [French Ambassador in London] will also be requested to represent to Sir Edward Grey the desirability of this action and to support the suggestion which the British Ambassador in Russia has made to the Foreign Office in this sense. Count Benckendorff [Russian

Ambassador in London] has been desired to advise in the same sense." <sup>1</sup>

What results from this telegram? It appears that during the visit of the French President, which it is alleged had no other object than the maintenance of peace, a concerted plan was evolved between Sazonow, Poincaré, Viviani and Sir George Buchanan, on an issue on which any Great Power, which still retained a trace of self-respect, was bound to regard any intervention by others as a hostile act—it must never be forgotten that the issue was the murder of the Heir Apparent—to put pressure on the Austrian Government for the purpose of protecting a State, whose Government (as we now know) was a passive accomplice in a cruel murder and (as was already known) was a menace to the existence of her neighbour, against demands which she might regard as threats. And men who had concerted such a plan venture eight years later to assert that they left St. Petersburg at the time without having so much as thought of the remote possibility of a war. They not only thought of the possibility of a war: they had resolved—there is no other possible motive for the plan concerted in St. Petersburg—to turn the war into a world war, if the collective action, which they hypocritically said they did not wish to be regarded as such, did not succeed in deterring Austria from the defence of her interests against a monstrous crime.

This design is also apparent in the words used by M. Poincaré in St. Petersburg to Count Szapary, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador: "With a little goodwill this Serbian business is easy to settle. But it might also easily take a turn for the worse. Serbia has very warm supporters amongst the Russian people. And Russia has an Ally, France. What developments are thus possible!" <sup>2</sup>

These words, in which the assassination of the Heir to a

<sup>1</sup> French Yellow Book No. 22.

<sup>2</sup> See Maurice Paléologue, *An Ambassador's Memoirs*, London, 1923, page 19. This conversation, which is based on reports of Count Szapary, is confirmed by the report of the German Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Count,

Throne and his wife is described almost contemptuously as a matter of minor importance, easily to be settled, could only be regarded by the Austrian Ambassador as a threat of world war. It was right so to regard them. They were the answer to the following remark of Count Szapary, a remark thoroughly justified in face of the misplaced warnings of Poincaré: "M. le Président, we cannot tolerate a foreign Government permitting preparations for an attack on our Sovereignty on her own soil."

No stronger evidence is needed to prove that Russia was firmly resolved, if Austria's demands to Serbia appeared to her excessive, to provoke the world war, and that France had bound herself in that event to stand by her.

With the knowledge of the documentary evidence which has now become available, every impartial judge must agree with the conclusion of Morhardt, in the work which has been cited above, as to the origins of the Reval telegram: "Thus the instructions sent on 22 and 24 July from St. Petersburg<sup>1</sup> and Reval to the Russian and French Ambassadors respectively show that, at a moment when neither the Russian, French or English Governments were aware of the results of the inquiry opened at Sarajevo against the organizers and authors of the crime to which the Austrian Heir Apparent and his wife had fallen victims, the Powers of the Triple Entente had assumed the rôle of official protectors of the murder. Such was the beginning of the 'war for Right'."

As proof that Germany desired to localize the war we possess, apart from numerous Notes of the German Foreign Office to all the Great Powers, a piece of evidence from the other side, which is especially valuable because it is a case where the bad conscience of Sazonow has involved

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Pourtalès, of 23 July, 1914 (*Deutsche Dokumente zum Kriegausbruch*, Vol. I, page 152, No. 134) and by Szapary's own despatch of 23 July in the Austrian Red Book.

<sup>1</sup> Sazonow had sent the same instructions to the Russian Ambassador in Vienna on 22 July as Viviani sent on 24 July to Dumaine.

the expurgation of a Russian document. In a despatch, which the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in Paris, M. Sevastopulo, sent on 24 July to his Foreign Minister, the following words occur: "Germany keenly desires the localization of the conflict, since the intervention of another Power might involve incalculable consequences in view of the existing Treaty engagements." *These words do not appear in the reproduction of the despatch which is given in the Russian Orange Book.*<sup>1</sup>

Even then, at the beginning of the war, when the Orange Book was published, our enemies were resolved to put forward the mendacious assertion that Germany wished to provoke the world war. Accordingly, this observation of a Russian Diplomat to the opposite effect must be not made known to the world. It was suppressed: and the revelation of its suppression is an even more crushing refutation of the War Guilt Lie than the fact that it was made.

Our accusers meet the charge that they were resolved beforehand to provoke the world war, if Austria should put forward claims which Russia regarded as excessive, by saying that Russia, no less than France and England, advised Belgrade in the direction of moderation and submission. But all this advice was bound to fail of effect on the Serbian Government, when once the Crown Prince Alexander, the Serbian Regent, had received the Czar's telegram of 27 July. The telegram indeed contained the words: "I do not doubt that Your Royal Highness and the Royal Serbian Government entertain the wish to facilitate this task [the solution of the existing difficulties] and will neglect no action which may lead to a settlement." But at the same time the telegram indicates what would happen, if these efforts should not be successful: "If", it concludes, "we should fail in spite of our sincere desire, Your Royal Highness may be assured that Russia will in no case disavow her interest in the fate of Serbia."

<sup>1</sup> *Fälschungen des russischen Orangebuches* (The forgeries of the Russian Orange Book) by Baron G. von Romberg, page 14.

That such an assurance, which by the addition of the words "in no case" was made unlimited in its effect, was bound to nip in the bud the moderating effect of any warning addressed to a Government which hoped to find in a world war the fulfilment of its dearest aspirations, could not but be known to the sender of this telegram. If his counsels of moderation were meant seriously, if he desired that they should be followed, he should never by this assurance have robbed them of all effect. The omission of such an assurance would still have left him free to be of assistance to his brother Slavs.

The above evidence appears to me to make it unnecessary to defend Germany at length against the charges of our accusers with regard to this period, and in particular against the charges of MM. Bourgeois and Pagès, which are based principally on the marginal comments of the Emperor William. The great excitement which the proceedings of the Entente Powers with regard to Austria aroused in the Emperor, make his expressions of indignation intelligible. But all these marginal comments are insufficient to justify the conclusion that he wished for war: they are due rather to the conviction, which moved him to the depths of his being, that war was to be forced upon him, and fully was he justified in that conviction. The necessity for detailed refutation of our enemies' charges with regard to July, 1914, appears to me no longer to be necessary, since they have already been refuted in thick volumes by German and foreign research; and further (as has already been said) the refutation of the general charge that Germany had been desiring and preparing for war for decades, which is contained in the preceding chapters, implies and contains the refutation of these particular accusations.

The ring of powder casks had been set about the Central Powers in the shape, firstly, of the Pan-Slav aspirations of the Balkan peoples, fomented by Russia, and, secondly, of alliances which had their origin in the ideals of Pan-

Slavism and "Revanche" respectively, and which, by military conventions annually revised, were primed with explosive material of a particularly dangerous character. The murder of Sarajevo set fire to one of these casks: Germany endeavoured to save the others from the conflagration. On 30 July her efforts were on the point of saving Europe from the threatened danger. At 11 in the evening of the day before (29 July), Bethmann Hollweg had informed the German Ambassador in St. Petersburg that he was endeavouring in Vienna to induce the Austrian Government to give an assurance that its military measures against Serbia were directed only towards a temporary occupation, in order to compel guarantees from Serbia for future good behaviour.<sup>1</sup> In the course of the night the German Chancellor sent on two telegrams, one after the other, at 2.55 and 3 a.m. respectively to the German Ambassador in Vienna. The first was the warning telegram of Sir Edward Grey of 29 July, which contained England's first threat of war and also proposed intervention *à quatre*. The second was a telegram of Count Pourtalès from St. Petersburg, reporting that Sazonow had told him that the Vienna Cabinet had met the proposal of direct negotiations with Russia with a categorical refusal. To the first telegram he appended an appeal to Vienna to accept Sir Edward Grey's suggestion of intervention, or to take the responsibility for all the consequences arising out of refusal. In the second telegram he even went to the point of addressing to his Ally a warning, which was hardly to be distinguished from a threat to refuse to admit the *casus fœderis*.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time a telegram of the Emperor (sent off at 6.30 p.m. on July 29) appealed to the Tsar to take no

<sup>1</sup> *Deutsche Documente zum Kriegausbruch*, Vol. II, No. 380.

<sup>2</sup> *Deutsche Documente zum Kriegausbruch*, Vol. II, Nos. 395 and 396. "We are prepared to fulfil our obligations as an Ally, but we must refuse to allow ourselves to be involved in a world-wide conflagration by Vienna lightheartedly and without any regard being paid to our counsels."



new military action, which resulted, as we know, in the withdrawal of the mobilization orders already issued. All these steps on the part of the German Government, which in the course of the following day (July 30) were supported by increasingly insistent warnings to Vienna,<sup>1</sup> and by the request addressed to London to recommend the postponement of further military measures in St. Petersburg until the Vienna Cabinet should have replied to the urgent German representations,<sup>2</sup> were just beginning to have their effect in Vienna. The decision was delayed only by the fact that the Hungarian Premier, Count Tisza, was on the way from Budapest to Vienna, and it was desired to hear his views. At this juncture, on 30 July at 1 o'clock in the afternoon Sazonow, on the appeal of the Chief of the General Staff, Januschkevitch, and the War Minister, Suchomlinow, extorted from the Tsar a second time the order for general mobilization.<sup>3</sup> At 6 o'clock in the evening General Dobrorolski, the head of the department charged with the technical execution of the Russian mobilization, dictated the mobilization order in the Central Hall of the Central Telegraph Office, and thereby flung the burning torch into all the powder casks which had been piled up by the Triple Entente Powers in Europe.

That the Russian mobilization made the world war inevitable, since in accordance with the Russian tradition it was equivalent to a declaration of war,<sup>4</sup> is beyond all doubt.

If the Emperor had really been waiting for years for the opportunity to provoke a world war, it would have been psychologically unintelligible that he should not have

<sup>1</sup> *Deutsche Documente zum Kriegausbruch*, Vol. II, No. 437, telegram of the Emperor William to the Emperor Francis Joseph, and No. 441.

<sup>2</sup> *Deutsche Documente zum Kriegausbruch*, Vol. II, Nos. 409 and 435.

<sup>3</sup> Dobrorolski, *Die Mobilmachung der russischen Armee* (The mobilization of the Russian Army), page 28.

<sup>4</sup> F.O. Papers, Vol. VI, No. 275, page 204 and French Yellow Book, *L'Alliance Franco-russe* (The Franco-Russian Alliance), No. 71, page 95 et seqq.

immediately replied to the Russian mobilization by a declaration of war. The mobilization entitled him beyond all question to take such a step. He did not order immediate mobilization : instead he ordered only the declaration of "danger of war", for which provision is made in the German Constitution, and addressed a request to the Russian Government, in the afternoon of 31 July, to state within twelve hours whether they were prepared to cancel the mobilization. It was not until this request had been answered in the negative that the German declaration of war followed. It was an act of pure self-defence in the presence of vital dangers.

I apprehend that there is no thinking man left who still believes, after the publication of the Isvolsky papers, that France would have remained neutral, if Germany had not declared war on her. The reply, which M. Viviani gave to the question whether she would remain neutral, could only be regarded in the light of our knowledge as equivalent to a categorical negative. As the Schlieffen plan of campaign, which it was absolutely essential to put into operation in the event of a war on two fronts being imposed upon us, included an attack on France, Germany could not wait at the French frontier with grounded arms, until France should declare war on her. To have done so would have been to abandon all chance of victory.

The German declaration of war on France was, therefore, the inevitable consequence of the declaration of war on Russia. The world was then involved in flames.

I now propose, in conclusion, to say a few words on the subject of the breach of Belgian neutrality, although the invasion of Belgium has in reality nothing to do with the responsibility for the outbreak of the war, since it was not a cause but a consequence of the outbreak of war. I do so because it has been utilized by our enemies to swell to yet greater dimensions the flood of indignation which was aroused against Germany by the charge of violation of international law in this connection.

After the declarations which Herr von Bethmann Hollweg made on 4 August in the Reichstag, and before that to the British Ambassador, it is superfluous to adduce proofs that we were justified in invading Belgium. The whole problem of war guilt is a problem of ethics and not of international law. International law does not regard any declaration of war as a crime. Even the Covenant of the League of Nations does not regard it as a crime : it is only the Geneva Protocol—which will presumably never be ratified—which regards declarations of war as crimes. What the Treaty of Versailles charges Germany with is violation of the moral law by the provocation of a world war. That we were undoubtedly entitled under international law to declare war has not prevented our accusers from branding the provocation of the world war as the greatest crime in history ; and we are not likely to stop them from bringing their accusations in connection with the violation of Belgian neutrality by proving that we were entitled to march through Belgium. The German Government believed, as the statements of the Chancellor show, that it was violating a Treaty when the German troops crossed the Belgian frontier ; and the fact that we had this belief would weigh against us in the moral scale, even if we were able to prove that we had not in fact committed any violation of a treaty and were consequently, in the purely legal sense, innocent. This would be so, were it not for the fact that, in the case of peoples even more than in the case of individuals, the right of self-defence has always been recognized, both in the legal and in the moral sphere.

It was not only our belief, it was a positive certainty that we were bound to lose the war which had been imposed upon us, if we did not march through Belgium.

In the struggle against immense numerical superiority the only chance for us was to secure a rapid and decisive success against one of our opponents. Such a success was only possible in the case of France by means of our flanking

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movement through Belgium. The march through Belgium was, consequently, an act of self-defence.

In the course of the war, the Allies, although in view of their immense numerical and economic superiority there could be no question in their case of self-defence, violated the neutrality of Greece, when despite the protests of King Constantine and his Government they landed troops in Salonica. By this act of violence they involved a State, for the protection of which the three most powerful of them were bound by treaties, in grave danger of war.

But of all the peoples of the earth there is none which is so little entitled to accuse us of acting in self-defence as that people which professedly declared war on us on the ground of our violation of Belgian neutrality, the British people. England, if any Power, in the same position would have acted in the same way. In a situation, which was not one-tenth as dangerous to the existence of England as was the situation of Germany at the end of July, 1914, England displayed infinitely less regard for international law than Germany. In the year 1807 England bombarded Copenhagen without a declaration of war, and annexed the Danish Fleet, because she was afraid that the Danish ships would swell the French fleet. It is not however the fact of England's having committed this violation of international law which deprives her of the right to pour out the vials of her wrath over us for violation of the Treaty of 1839, so much as the grounds on which her King, her statesmen and her politicians defended their action.

Two weeks after the bombardment of Copenhagen and the capture of the Danish fleet the King of England issued a Proclamation, in which he defended the attack on Demark. In this Proclamation he said : " . . . and while He laments the cruel necessity which has obliged Him to have recourse to acts of hostility against a nation, with which it was His Majesty's most earnest desire to have established the relations of common interests and alliance ;

His Majesty feels confident that, in the eyes of Europe and of the world, the justification of His conduct will be found in the commanding and indispensable duty, paramount to all others amongst the obligations of a sovereign, of providing, while there was yet time, for the immediate security of His people.”<sup>1</sup>

This Proclamation was the subject of debate in the House of Commons on 3 February, 1808. A member of the Opposition, Mr. Ponsonby, in support of a resolution which he had himself moved, said that : “No writer on the law of nations, or on any other law, or on common justice, had ever maintained that one Power could be justified in taking from another Power what belonged to it, unless a third Power meant, and was able, to take the thing.” The great majority of the House took the same view.

Mr. Milnes said : “No law of nature could be violated by the measures taken by us to ensure our own safety. It was the most flagitious of all descriptions of morality, that would allow the opportunity of self-preservation to pass by un-improved.”

Mr. Lushington said : “The first law of nature, the foundation of the law of nations, is the preservation of man. It is on the knowledge of his nature, that the science of his duty must be founded. When the feelings point out to him a mighty danger, and his reason suggests the means of avoiding it, he must despise the sophistical trifler who tells him it is a moral duty he owes to others to wait till the danger breaks upon his foolish head, lest he should hurt the meditated instrument of his destruction. Upon this general principle of the law of nature and of nations, I maintain the morality, and certainly the necessity of the Expedition against Copenhagen.”

And Lord Palmerston, then a very youthful M.P., but

<sup>1</sup> For this and subsequent quotations see William Cobbett, *Parliamentary Debates*, London, 1808-1811, Vol. VIII, page 115 *et seqq.*, and page 252 *et seqq.*

later the well-known British statesman, defended the Government in the following terms : " Much had been said by a Right Hon. gent. (Mr. Windham) on the law of nations, on right and policy ; he was as ready and willing as any man to pay his tribute of respect to them, and to recommend their application whenever circumstances would permit it ; he was afraid, however, that although much talked of, they were little understood ; the consequence of which was, that many persons abused the terms, and took one for the other. In the present instance, he was glad to observe, that we did not suspend them without necessity, or, in other words, that we used them in conformity to the law of nature, which dictated and commanded self-preservation."

Finally, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Canning, rose to speak. The words which proceeded from his mouth were such as would have been described as the most insolent expression of immoderate cynicism, had they been employed by a German statesman in defence of the violation of Belgian neutrality. He said : " Was it to be contended that, in a moment of danger and impending necessity, we should have abstained from that course which prudence and policy dictated, in order to meet and avert those calamities that threatened our security and existence, because if we sunk under the pressure, we should have the consolation of having the authority of Pufendorff to plead ? "

How mild, how modest, how restrained is the sound of the German Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg's much-calumniated remark, " Necessity knows no law ! " in comparison with these words of Canning, betraying without false shame of any kind the unbridled arrogance of Albion, Mistress of the Seas !

The resolution of the Opposition, calling upon the Government to lay papers on the table concerning the negotiations with Denmark, was rejected, after this debate, by 253 votes to 108.

I decline to believe that any British statesman to-day entertains any other view of the duty of self-preservation of his country than Mr. Canning and Lord Palmerston had in 1808 ; and I cannot therefore admit that the British Government and the British people have the right to condemn Germany because at a time of supreme national danger she did not regard the Treaty of 1839 as an obstacle, irretrievably blocking the march through Belgium. I share with Mr. Canning the view that it is poor consolation for a people to win the applause of great masters of international law, if by renouncing the right of self-preservation it loses its liberty, its prosperity and its position in the world.

We have lost our liberty, our prosperity, and our position in the world, not because, but in spite of the fact that we did not renounce our right of self-preservation ; we have lost them, because we were confronted by a combination of peoples of such strength as had never before been seen. But we at least prevented these vastly superior adversaries, thanks to the miraculous bravery of our armies and the self-sacrificing endurance of all classes of our people, including not least our women, from destroying our sacred Fatherland. And even this miraculous achievement would have been impossible, if we had waited for the declarations of war of our adversaries, and had not violated Belgian neutrality.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE RESURRECTION OF THE TRUTH

BENEATH the rocky mass of the Treaty of Versailles the truth lies buried with the liberty, the prosperity and the prestige of Germany. But it is not dead. If light and air are let into its dark place of burial, it will begin to bud and sprout in the grave, and slowly but with irresistible force will grow into a tree and burst the rocks which close the sepulchre, like the tree in that strange tomb in the cemetery at Hanover, because it cannot die and its roots draw nourishment from its immortality. Never yet was there a truth, which violence and calumny, and fear and error had murdered, but after its Golgotha—however long that may have lasted—it found its resurrection.

This book has no other aim than to serve as one of the instruments to bore through the rock, in order to let light and air into the grave where truth lies buried.

In all countries of the world, and not least effectively in those whose peoples have been filled by the War Guilt Lie with seemingly ineradicable hate of Germany, such instruments are at work.

The most passionate of the master-workmen in the task of setting free the truth, the Englishman E. D. Morel, whose death in November, 1924, represents an irreparable loss, gave to his last attack upon the War Guilt Lie the title "No peace without truth." In this work he says: "The rejection of conscious premeditated responsibility for



the war is based on material proof which is positively overwhelming. . . . The acceptance of the Dawes Plan is greeted as the beginning of a new era. A more insensate instance of self-deception can hardly be imagined. At most it amounts to an interval for breath. It imposes burdens, and advances claims, it demands the right in perpetuity for the foreigner to intervene in the internal affairs of a great people—a procedure for which History affords no parallel—and to these burdens and these claims and demands an indisputable legal justification is assigned, on the ground that the nation to which they are addressed is alleged to have acted with cold deliberation. The moral brand, which drives the soul under, is thus left intact. . . . The myth of the Germany conspiracy, the postulate of Germany's sole guilt—whatever the thing is called—this disastrous legend is the source of all the trouble, of the tragedy of outraged justice, the tragedy of the denial of justice erected into a system, the tragedy of a Europe arming once again for war."

"The moral brand, which drives the soul under!" To remove the traces of this brand, which was designed to exclude the German people from the community of mankind, as criminals in former and crueller times were isolated from the rest of their fellows on emerging from prison, is the object of this struggle. Prosperity, liberty and prestige may be slowly won again by German efficiency and German love of work; but, unless this brand is wiped out, there can be no real joy in recovery and no real happiness. For this reason the suppression of the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, which have found in the Dawes Plan their crown of thorns, is not the essential object of the struggle. I think that Morel is mistaken in assuming that the burdens, which this newly wrought instrument of humiliation imposes upon us, would be instantly removed from our shoulders, if the truth were brought to light. The first and immediate aim, to which all efforts in the struggle to set free the truth must be directed, is the formal withdrawal of the Covering

Note in explanation of Article 231 of the Treaty, which Clemenceau signed on 16 June, 1919. Formal withdrawal of this Note is in my opinion also an indispensable preliminary to Germany's entry into the League of Nations. It is contrary to all natural susceptibilities that we should enter a society that refuses to accord to the calumniated German people the public witness to its honour which is its due. One does not go into society with a brand on one's forehead.

What consequences will follow from such public witness to our honour it is not possible to foresee. In view of the impotence to which the Treaty of Versailles condemns us, it is extremely probable that we shall have to content ourselves for a long period with the moral victory which will have been won with the withdrawal of the charges of the Covering Note. Whatever logic may indicate, the structure of the Versailles Treaty will not collapse, even if the foundations on which it is based are destroyed completely. Just as with modern building methods it is possible to supply new foundations to houses already standing, so it will be found possible by the diplomats to supply a new foundation for the Treaty of Versailles.

Nevertheless, the Treaty will then be shown up for what it is, a monument in honour of that political axiom, which despite the League of Nations still stands intact, “*Might before Right*”.

The last veil will then be removed from the face of the false pretence that this Peace is a peace of justice : and it will stand revealed to coming generations as the most brutal dictation of terms by the conqueror that human brains ever evolved.

The brand will then be transferred from the German people to this work of outlawry and humiliation.

For these reasons, I do not conceal from myself the fact that between the recognition of the truth, which is already on the march, and the admission of the historic wrong there is a long interval of time to be traversed. Such an admission

will constitute so great a moral depreciation of the Treaty that it will be very difficult, and perhaps impossible, effectively to defend the latter against all the attacks which will inevitably then be made on it. The authors of the Treaty will necessarily be afraid that the moral repercussions of the spectacle of Right in bondage to Might—against which the conscience of the world always has revolted, and will in this case also revolt—may affect the present relation of victor and vanquished, and give Right the power over Might. For this reason it will be hard to bring them to make the admission, which Germany must demand and receive before she associates with them once more.

But the day will come, nevertheless, when the Truth, which I have sought, and to which this book is dedicated, will be as firmly hammered into the heads of millions as the Lie was during the war. Then the admission of the wrong which has been done will fall into our lap like a ripe fruit, for it will then be not Germany alone which will demand it, but all the millions who will have recognized the monstrous error of their former beliefs. For why should the masses of mankind be less honourably minded under the influence of the Truth than they were under the influence of the Lie?

And the consequence of this admission, inevitable though not immediate, will be the destruction of that spirit which pervades the Treaty of Versailles; and only when that spirit, which poisons the atmosphere of our planet, is destroyed will Germany, Europe and mankind find peace and quiet in their time.

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