

TELEPHONE 5181, WESTMINSTER.

9. Queen Anne's Gate,  
Westminster March 4th. 1905.  
S.W.

Messrs. Noel Buxton, Esq.,  
R.A. Yerburgh, M.P.,  
W.A. Moore, Esq.,  
10 Adelphi Terrace,  
Strand, W.C.

Dear Sirs,

I am in receipt of your circular in relation to the Balkan Provinces and the action of the Balkan Committee for which I thank you.

( Strange as it may seem to you, I find that I have quite enough to do with reference to the appalling poverty of large masses of our own countrymen here at home, directly due to the cruelty and the indifference of the Tory and Liberal factions who agree to pay no attention whatever to the inevitable result of the social and economic domination by which their leaders and followers in the House of Commons alike profit. I also consider that British rule in India is in many respects more infamous and more injurious, for an almost infinitely greater number of the human race, than is Turkish rule in the Balkans, about which you and your Committee are so greatly exercised. I do not observe, however, that any member of your Committee has, at any time of his life, devoted any considerable amount of his time to helping the 12,500,000 British people whom Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, Leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons, avers are constantly on the brink of starvation; nor do I note that any of them has ever vigorously endeavoured

endeavoured to put an end to the bleeding to death of our greatest dependency, and to the deliberate manufacturing of famine on an ever-increasing scale for the greater part of the 230,000,000 under direct British rule in Hindustan. ]

I do not deny, of course, that wrongs are being committed in the Balkan States, nor that the Government of the United Kingdom has taken upon itself certain responsibilities in connection with those wrongs. But I should have a great deal more confidence in the candour and honesty of your appeal if I observed that ~~any~~ members of your Committee were taking any steps whatever to remove from the Government of our own country the much more direct and serious responsibility for the infamies to which I call your attention above.

I propose to publish this letter.

Yours faithfully

*W. H. Hudson*

Holt draft.  
To HHA

1st July 1918.

Dear

As we view with grave concern the present state of the public affairs of this country and of the Liberal party - which is the most proper instrument to conduct those affairs - we would ask you to give kindly attention to the considerations which have occurred to us.

In the actual conduct of the war, on the justice of which all are agreed, there can be little question of political principle. This is rather a matter of administrative capacity - a quality in which the present Government has shown itself singularly deficient.

The true corrective - under the British Constitution - for a Government deficient in administrative capacity is an Opposition ready to expose the failures of the Government, and at once able and willing to undertake the conduct of public affairs in a manner more beneficial to the public interest.

It does not appear to us that the Liberal party is doing its full duty in this respect - and we believe it to be of the first importance towards securing the successful event of the war that as regards the administrative conduct of the war it should resume through its accredited leaders the path of an active, vigilant and patriotic opposition.

But when we turn to the consideration of peace is there not a real difference of principle between ourselves and the present Government. So far as regards the evacuation of Allied territory -

Belgium - Serbia - France &c. occupied by the enemy - there is no difference in any section of our community :- there are other conditions however indicated by such expressions as "crushing Prussian Militarism" and "the restoration of the public law of Europe" as to which there is less agreement - many indeed appearing to think that the former expression is the equivalent of "crushing Prussia by Military means".

We suppose that all Liberals will be agreed in repudiating any claims by our Allies if such there be to annex enemy territory contrary to the wishes of the inhabitants, or any projects for carrying on an economic boycott of our late enemies after peace has been arranged but has not the time come when the Liberal party should declare what is the character of that restoration of the public law of Europe (and indeed of the world) to which our enemies must consent as a preliminary to their re-admission as full members of the family of nations.

Closely connected with the conduct of the war and the conditions of peace are two domestic questions on which the Liberal party in the past has held views widely divergent from those of the party which provides the most powerful element in the present Government :- these are Ireland and Free Trade.

How do our leaders stand on these questions. They indeed condemned conscription in Ireland by voice but there was no official party vote and though the Government by their conscription policy have made a colossal and ludicrous failure in Ireland there is still no formal condemnation of their mismanagement.

By participating in the resolution of the Paris Economic Conference our leaders have cast doubts on their own steadfastness as regards Free Trade :- it is obvious to all that the present Government is a protectionist government which by administrative action even more than by legislation is steadily undermining our Free Trade system.

Yet there is no official opposition to these measures.

Nor is it satisfactory to see the Liberal party acquiescing in the encroachments on liberty of speech - writing and conduct made under the powers of the Defence of the Realm Act.

And while the official Liberal party accepts almost in silence a conduct of public affairs which can satisfy no convinced Liberal what are the other parties doing?

The Tory party - observing a truce in form - by controlling almost the whole press and using huge sums of public money under the guise of explaining War Aims are carrying on a persistent propaganda in every part of the Country.

The Labour party by Conference and meetings are doing the same work and have now openly avowed their intention to disregard the truce and contest bye-elections.

What chance has the Liberal party or its principles to find acceptance amongst the electorate when these principles and their application are never explained and the leaders leave it doubtful how far they themselves adhere to them.

A change must come - and come soon - or the political party adorned in the past by many of our greatest statesmen -

during the past century the most powerful instrument of peaceful progress in the world, will be a thing of the past.

We therefore most earnestly invite you to take in hand at once the restoration of the Liberal party to its full share in the activities of Parliament and the electorate and with assurance of our loyal support in such well judged measures as you may decide upon for this object.

We remain,