

Ann.

Welwyn

x Mr. Cecil says Serbs have pledged

Dear Brewster,

I wish I had seen you lately, but I am off to Montreux tomorrow for the election.

I saw Nicholson at the F. O. the other day. He was frank no pledge has been given to anyone about the Balkans, Greeks & Italians are both jelling for Smyrna against each other & my idea of cultural autonomy on the Millet basis was rather welcomed as a way out. N. said that the whole F. O. wanted to give the uncontented zone to Bulgaria, but feared public opinion. I asked him whom *l'opinion* is for, if it can't manage that? I left him more anxious about Albania than Macedonia, for I gathered that *l'opinion* is as good as given to the Greeks.

I want to see Lippmann about the Balkans, but he is in Paris still. The New Republic had a bad article on Macedonia - I will do what I can about that, but hardly know how to manage it with the election on. (I'm perplexed is a

troublesome constituency to work, and
there was little organization to start with
in the biggest of them (Arbroath). The
smaller ones, Brechin & Montrose, are
magnificent & as keen as can be.

I think that the whole Eastern
Settlement will really be left to
more or less expert Commissioners,
that gives a chance for influencing
the members, both American & British,
but I think (or at least hope) that
the moment for that will be somewhat
later.

Yours ever

H. N. Brailsford

I dared not venture to write to
Wilson Direct, but I will certainly
get something over to Ripmann.

12, RUTLAND GATE,
S.W.7.

28th September 1922

My dear Brailsford,

May I ask for your attention to the enclosed Memorandum on the Near East crisis and the attitude of the Party?

It is, of course, necessary to attack the Government and to be on the alert against any aggression on their part. But if Labour is of the opinion, as seems to be the case, that while retiring from the Asiatic shore, we should prevent the Turks from crossing the Straits, ought not some public declaration be made to that effect. Such a declaration would be useful in discouraging the Turks from attacking, and would show our resolve to prevent the continuation of the war, as well as rebut the charge that we are not concerned with the sufferings of the menaced populations.

Yours
W. Brailsford

Yours ever

H. N. Brailford

HARMER GREEN,

WELWYN,

HERTS.

11 December

My dear Boston,

I have been down with an
 attack of influenza, as I should
 have answered you sooner. I
 have ~~been~~ seldom been so much
 touched as by your generosity
 in giving this help to the
 book, and more than touched
 by your confidence in its
 usefulness is an immense
 encouragement at a time
 when it is so easy to sink
 into depression. You will
 be glad to hear that the
 Workers Educational Association
 anticipates a great sale for

the book, & considers that the
difference between 1/2 & 2/3 will
be tremendous in its effect.

I would like to help with
any move about Bulgaria. But
I am not quite sure whether
you mean an argument
for a separate peace with
them, or an argument
bearing on the settlement
when it comes. Perhaps
we shall meet at lunch
tomorrow. I don't imagine
that the Bulgars are thinking
of a separate peace just
now, with the possibility of
Success coming in quickness.
But you are likely to know
more of that than I. I could
see you after lunch anyhow
- indeed I think we made an
appointment.

15 November 1917

HARMER GREEN,
WELWYN, HERTS.

My dear Buxton,

I let pass two busy days
because I wanted to write
to you at leisure. You
have done what no one
has ever done to me before,
and the sense of pleasure
that I have from your gift
is overwhelming. I have
the box before me. Some
of the words in it bewilder
me because they are

2

so much too generous,
but they are and will
be for me all my life
an encouragement and
inspiration. It is twice
seven years since I began
working with you for
Macedonia. I may say,
I think with more reason,
what you say of me,
your example helped
me more, I think, than
that of any man living.
There was only one

other who influenced
 me as much, & he is
 dead - old Felix Volkovodsky
 whose faith in the freedom
 of Russia, which he never
 lived to see, was a miracle
 and a lesson to my too
 sceptical nature.

I am proud and grateful
 beyond words for this
 last of your many kind-
 nesses. I do not know
how to express myself
 when anything so
unexpected happens to
 me. But let thee

"Debt" of which ^{if you} ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~cancelled~~,
only speak be cancelled,
for I owe to you more
than I think you can
possibly owe to me, for
your friendship & example
& help during these
years.

Yours ever

H. N. Brailford

We had made, both as to your
wishes, & in leaving our reply
to the Secy) was entirely anxious
that you should remain a member
of the C. C. & ~~felt~~ ^{hoped} that we had
~~understood~~ you were
not (as we had thought)
determined to leave it.

Meanwhile, I had gathered from
Mallock that a formal ~~decision~~
had better wait till after the
holidays. We felt ~~that~~ that the
~~committee~~ of yesterday was hardly
a formal one, being hastily called
& in holiday time, & also that
our report to you should be from a
real committee. Those therefore
you can accept as apology,
& the unanimous desire of those
present that you should not leave us.
You received great provocation, but I
hope you will realize that our
feeling throughout was one of friendship
& loyalty alone.

May I explain how things
appeared to us? We all felt the
~~our feeling~~ ^{honestest sympathy} with you, & gratitude
~~you would be for all you work.~~
& We believed ourselves to have
received from you a positive
request that your resignation should
be accepted without any delay
or question, coupled with
an offer, which we appreciated
as we have all your self-sacrificing
enthusiasm, to help us in
any way you could.

I am entirely to blame for
not writing to you myself.
& the fact that I was
overwhelmed with ~~answering~~ my

Start in Pelt, is no excuse,
Nor it was the cause.

I only now learn that our
expression of profound gratitude,
for and deep regret, ~~was~~ not
conveyed to you as we wished.

We owe you, & offer you, the
fullest possible apology,
& I am to blame for the
~~particular~~ fact that an
imputation was given you,
who was the very last we
wished to convey.

The Committee y'day (wh. I
summoned as soon as I
had any intelling of the mistake

32 Well Walk
N.W.
Thursday

Dear Buxton,

I am sorry that I cannot accept your invitation to lunch tomorrow. I had already invited a friend to meet me here.

I understand that the Ballan Committee has been rediscussing my resignation but came to no decision. I hope that the

subject will not be raised
again. It is most painful
to me to have it debated
& re-debated in this way.
There are good reasons
for accepting the resig-
nation, and unless the
Committee had unani-
mously wished to disre-
gard them I should
prefer you to leave the
matter as it stands.
If you ever want
any information or
opinion from me it is

at your service at any
time, though I am
afraid Moore's suggestion
that I should attend
meetings as an outsider
does not commend itself
to me.

Yours sincerely
H. N. Brailsford

32, WELL WALK,

HAMPSTEAD, N.W.

Delegals arrive.

But it is even more important that the Balkan Committee should say & do something effective.

Can you tell me where the Delegals will be lodged? I should like to call on them on behalf of the Daily News before I scold them in print in order to make sure that they have no

Explanation to offer. But
what explanation can
there be? I have followed
all the news & the
debates in "Stamboul".

You know me well
enough, & my hopes in
the Young Turks, to realize
that I have not come
lightly to this decision.

I do not care to
attend the banquet if
it is to be mere eulogy.
But perhaps some
speaker will manage

tactfully to convey
a lesson. ~~No~~

If they wish punish
the Adana massacre
there is ^{no} security for
Christian life there
under the old régime.

I am not surprised
to read that the number
of ~~refugee~~ refugees in Cyprus
still increases daily.

By the way what has
happened to our report?
If not yet printed, could
you strengthen the too

with reference in its
to Adana.

Yours ever

H. W. Brailsford

Wrote to

Bry

32, WELL WALK,

HAMPSTEAD, N.W.

21 May

Dear Burton,

In view of my trial
which is due on the 23rd =
I think it due to the
Balkan Committee to
tender my resignation.
I beg that you will accept
it and with it this
Expression of my profound
regret for any discredit
which my indiscretion
may bring to the Macedonia

Cause.

I need hardly add that I shall always be ready to serve the Committee in any way it may desire, though I fear my power to serve it will be seriously diminished.

If you think it desirable I hope you will intimate my resignation to the press.

Yours sincerely

H. N. Breilsford

Noel Buxton Esq.

Chairman of the Ballantyne

A
32, WELL WALK,

HAMPSTEAD, N. W.

19 May

My dear Buxton

But for your preoccupations in Whitby I should have written before to tell you about a trouble of mice, but after all I should not like you to hear of it first from the newspapers —

In October last at the request of a Russian friend I agreed to provide three English passports to

name of McCulloch.
Enguris followed &
I arrived what I had
done. I am now sum-
moned in a charge of
conspiracy to Bow St.
on the 23rd, & a
trial "at bar" will follow.
I have no defense in
the facts, & in the
present state of the
law of conspiracy I

presume I shall be
~~acquitted~~ convicted.

I am sorry for the
discredit which all this
may bring to the Ballan
Antea & the Relief Fund.
The worst of it ^{is} that the
prosecutions are convinced
that Macedonia is in
Russia! But I will try
to keep this out as far
as I can.

Yours ever

H. N. Brailsford

enable three Russian
refugees to return to
Russia. It was said that
they were busy over
peaceful & legitimate
political work, and I
extracted a promise that
they would not engage
in terrorism. In March
a man bearing me of
these passports (how he
obtained it, I do not
know) was blown up
by his own bomb in
St. Petersburg under

32, WELL WALK,

HAMPSTEAD, N. W.

2 October

Dear Burtin,

Your letter was most
useful and I was heartily
glad to see it. I had
myself been on the brink
of telegraphing to you the
day before to suggest that
it would do good for you
to write.

No, I don't think you
shd have written to
annul the Committee.

3

cannot hope to refo
claim any influence
with the Bulgars, after
such articles as these.

But still in substance
I agree with the 'Times'.
Bulgaria is flagrantly
wrong, Austria is the
real danger, & by what
ever means, the pair
of them must somehow
be suppressed. But

4
at this early stage it
is well not to throw
away all our hold on
Spa. The tone of your
letter was exactly right.

I am glad to hear
that Bruce & Evans
may go. Don't abandon
the idea of stepping in
Spa - but you will have
to make them a strong
speech.

Yours ever

H. V. Brailsford

There is all the difference
in the world between
such a letter as yours
✓ the formal official one
that Westlake wrote, un-
der there was no urgency
in his case, ✓ there is
in this.

I have not liked the
Jines' tax. It is too brutal.
* It repeats the provocation
given in the Guedoff
incident, and it is
palpably influenced by
an anti-German suspicion
which seems to me
rather far-fetched. One

Act when Moore ret

P. Achmet Dya says
I wish to say that
open sympathy is be welcome
My wife pleased w 5 men

Trilakely
County Wicklow
11 August

Dear Buxton,

We have been here spending a fortnight's holiday in this remote Irish village among some very various and beautiful moorland scenery. So, I am afraid, my answer will come rather belated.

I wish we had issued a declaration friendly to the Young Turks at a moment when they had still to win the goodwill of English opinion. Now, I don't think a declaration would have much practical importance. Still, to omit to issue it might seem ungraceful. The only practical gain now

would be to ²impress the Bulgarians.
The people in Sofia are obviously
much chagrined by the turn
events have taken. I always did
battle for their disinterestedness,
& tried to believe that they were
not pursuing a policy of oppression
and agrandisement. Their
mood since this revolution has
persuaded me that I was partial.
The Greeks have been cleverer
in adapting themselves more
rapidly to the new situation. It
really might do good if the
Balkan Committee were to tell
Sofia that we should condemn
a wretched game.

What to say? In effect, I think
to congratulate the Army Juchs,
to assure them that no difference
of religion will cause us to

be slow in welcoming the
 essentially liberal character
 of their movement - to assure
 them that only it was only
 the long years of the Palace reaction
 which ~~to~~ cooled the traditional
 sympathy of England for Turkey
 - to declare that we should
 prefer a renaissance of the
 Ottoman Empire on a basis
 of liberty & liberation to any
 partial solution which might
 have freed certain of the
 Christian races - and thus
 to say that we congratulate ^{Americans}
 Bulgars Greeks & Serbians on the
 promptitude with which they
 have welcomed the new
 régime - that while so long
 as the pledges of equality

tolerance are observed European
 interventions have become
 obsolete & would be mischievous
 — & to say that any race or
 organisation which attempts
 to trouble this harmony, will
 deserve ill of civilisation and
 must assuredly need meet
 with no sympathy from us.

X I had a long talk with
Achmet Riza a day or two
 after our last committee. He
 made on me a most favourable
 impression. He represents the more
 conservative section. He is
 against home rule & federalism
 but Saba-eddin & his society
 are for it, & they of course will
 work with the Christians for this

end, when the Parliament meets. On the whole I'm inclined to think they may succeed, for the capital is obviously behind the provinces & they may prefer to go ahead on their own lines. But we have no active rôle to play in all this.

My policy, I think, if I were in Grey's place, would be to pick up a suggestion which Midhat Pasha made to Lord Derby in 1876. He offered to make the Constitution an international document, of which the Powers should be in a sense the guarantors. That is probably too large a proposal. But I think we might very well

6.

barter the special rights of
intervention given by the
Berlin & Cyprus treaties, in
return for a general pledge
based on the permanence of
the constitution, that the
Christians shall enjoy all the
civil & political rights which
it guarantees to Ottoman
subjects.

By the way, you prefer to
enclose the letter from Paris
of which you spoke. We shall
be back in London on Saturday
Night,

Yours ever,
A. N. Brailford.

Bilinski
Sept 20

Simahely
County, Wicklow
14 August

My dear Brewster,

Pear's letter is interesting, and I dissent from it so strongly, that I hasten to give you my views on it. I am not surprised at his attitude. The whole situation is so novel, that it is hard enough for any of us to adjust ourselves to it promptly, and an old man whose active career began with the Bulgarian campaign, is the last person whom we would expect to react quickly in response to this startling stimulus.

One has to ask at such a juncture, why, treaties apart, we claim a right to interfere in Macedonia at all. I intend no disrespect to the treaties, but they

are, after all, only a crystallisation of certain reasons for interfering, and had their origin in historical conditions which have changed. I presume we interfere, fundamentally, simply to protect the lives & the more elementary rights of our fellow Christians. Unless the tyranny had been so gross as to mena-
 ce life honour & property, we should not in the first instance have inter-
 fered at all. Of this elementary position we must never lose sight. It is true that after a long & futile experience of lesser interventions, we have ended in Crete & Macedonia & the Lebanon by asking for some sort of autonomy. But this was largely a counsel of despair. We meant that by no other means could we really hope to secure the elementary

rights on which we were insisting. The sort of autonomy which we ask ^{now} for Macedonia is really little more than a police measure. "You have failed", we say, "to keep order, let us put in gendarmes or Civil Agents or a Governor to do it for you." We should have no excuse for this kind of intervention, unless the country were really in misery & anarchy.

But the new situation robs us, while it continues, of this pretext for interfering. So long as Christians are not being killed or maltreated or denied elementary justice, through the fault of a feeble or culpable government, I don't think we have a moral ~~or~~ right to interfere. I assume, in all that follows, that the King & Serbs keep their word about

assuring equal conditions to
 Moslems & Christians. If they
 drift, they deserve no consideration.

Can we ^{now} say that ~~an~~ Home Rule
 for Macedonia is the only possible
 condition of a reasonable measure
 of tranquillity & civil liberty? I
 think that would be an
 extreme position. There might be
 a state of things resembling that
 of Ireland, when every good liberal
 will wish for Home Rule, but
 no sane man could say that
 the subject race is really persecu-
 ted.

I am with Pears & yourself in
 desiring Home Rule for Macedonia.
 I go further & think it inevitable.
 But I no longer wish to see it
 imposed by diplomacy or by force.

I think it must come, because I believe that the Arab & Albanian Questions, no less than the Macedonian, will force the Turks to accept a federal constitution. I think the same about Russia. But if there is no actual anarchy, I do not feel that the Powers have the right to impose their positive opinion.

The only real obstacle to Home Rule for Macedonia, is the fear of patriot Turks that it would be a preparation for dismemberment. That is not an unreasonable fear in view of the history of Crete and E. Roumelia. I am sure that any European intervention would only tend to aggravate this fear. The Turks rightly suspect Russia, & they don't trust the Balkan Committee. If the Parliament is really

elected, I think we may bring
 Bulgars, Arabs & Albanians to
 represent these centrifugal tenden-
 cies forcibly enough. I cabled with
 Achmet Riza about this. He is
 against federalism but Prince
 Sabedin is simply for it. The
 result was that the Paris Congress
 was neutral on the subject, and
 decided to leave the Parliament
 to decide the point. Even if it
 says 'no' in the first session, the
 question is bound to recur. I
 am clear that we should do
 nothing to hurry things on. If
 we can get equal civil & political
 rights for all Christians, that is
 an advance so immense, that
 any further pressure would be
 seen hostile.

Once you begin to work diplomatically

for Home Rule, you must be prepared to go to some lengths. But, assuming murders & massacres & gross oppressions to have ceased, with what face could we send our ships to coerce a Parliament? The thing would be shameful & insane.

I personally I am ready to argue for Home Rule in my writings, & all of us may well do the same. But I doubt if the Balkan Committee ought to take public & official action in this sense. That would encourage the Bulgars to be intransigent, & to hope that England would support them in repeating the E. Roumelia game.

I would even go to the extreme length of withdrawing the foreign officials from Macedonia, after a term of trial for the new régime, if

the Turks were prepared generally to accept European experts in Turkish service, at the centre. We argued for executive powers only because there was no good will at the centre. That has changed. We wanted autonomy in order, as Evans used to say, to cut the wires to Kildiz. The King Turks have cut them.

I found that Achmet Riza is firmly convinced that the Balkan Committee subsidised Sarafop. That makes me doubt - though I am doing my best to enlighten him - whether it can do much just now, except in the lines of keeping the Bulgars quiet. Apostol's camp at Tenidje Vardar makes me very nervous about their attitude.

I get back to Laidan tomorrow night.

Yours ever
H. N. Brailsford

You may be refused to
interview even privately.

32, WELL WALK,

HAMPSTEAD, N.W.

1909

Dear Buxton,

I see your name given as
one of the organisers of
the welcome to the Turkish
deputies. Shall we of the
Balkan Comtee have any
chance of meeting them
quietly? We have things
to say & things to hear
which cannot be said
with full effect in public.
Could we invite them to
a joint sitting, at
which we of us might

be charged to say certain
necessary things about
Adana etc. also to ask
how best we can help
them - & they should reply.

Now as to Adana. It
passes all tolerance. They
have punished none of
the really guilty. They
have hanged a few Turkish
sympies & as many Armenians.
They have arrested all
the heads of the Armeni-
an community - Bishops
priests editors etc. The
guilty officials are all
at their posts. The

American member
of the Commission of
Enquiry has resigned.

The record of the
Chamber in legislation
as far as I can put it
together is this -

1. a law to abolish flogging
 2. a repressive press law
 3. a law restricting the rights
of meeting.
 4. a law prohibiting the
formation of trade unions
& punishing all workmen
who strike !!!
- Testers have been ~~rest~~
reintroduced. The Govt has

refused to fulfill the Army
Turk pledge to admit Chris-
tians to the army.

I don't know how you
feel about this. I said
in print & in my own
mind that I should finally
judge the new régime by
its conduct at Adana.
Well, the old Hamidian
Govt. could not have done
worse. I must keep my
word. I am preparing
with a very heavy heart
& a very reluctant pen
to write a highly critical
article when the

TURKEY AND THE ROADS OF THE EAST

By

H. N. BRAILSFORD

Author of THE WAR OF STEEL & GOLD



- 1.—THE HIGHWAY
OF THE STRAITS.
- 2.—THE ROAD TO
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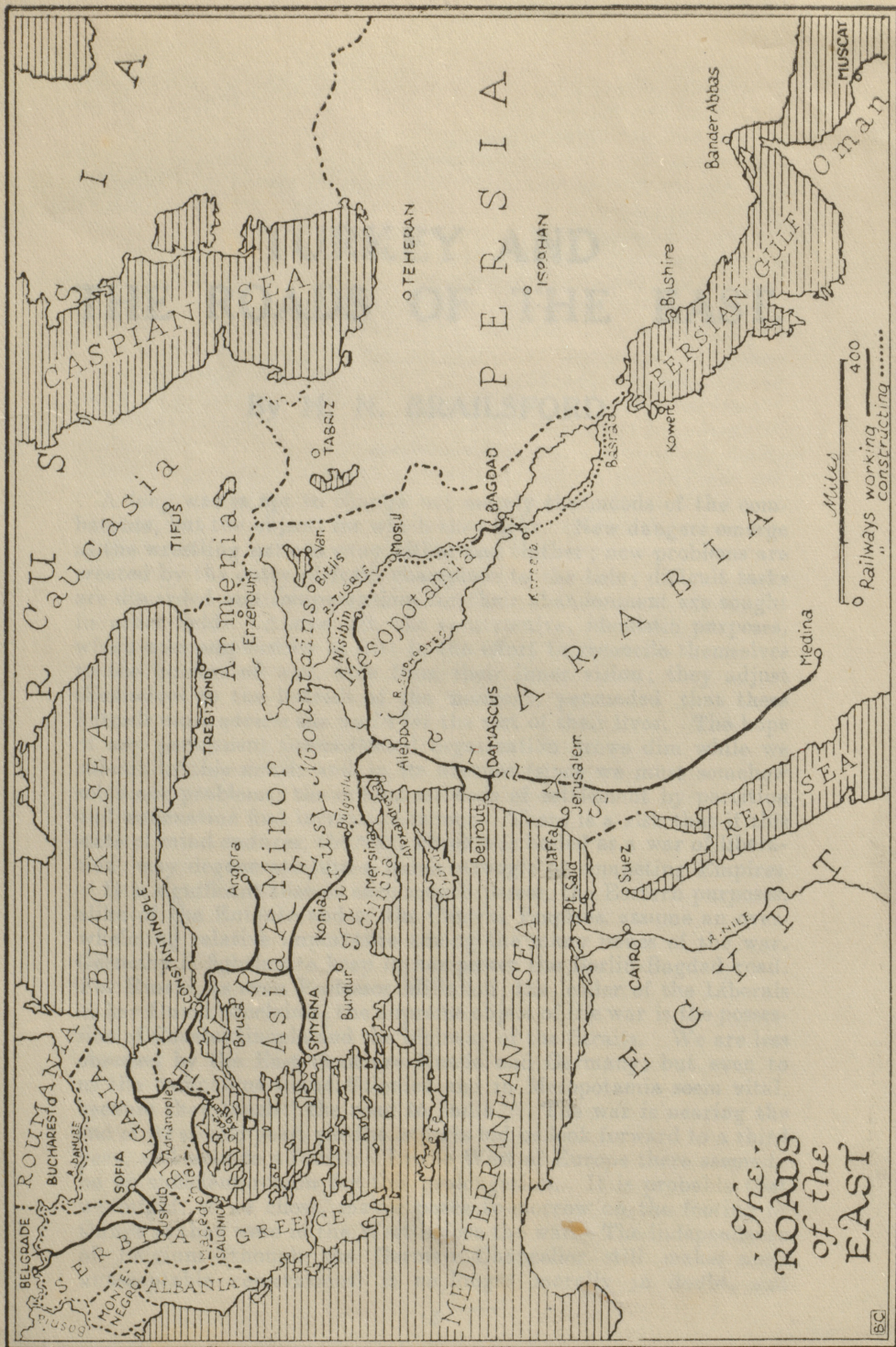
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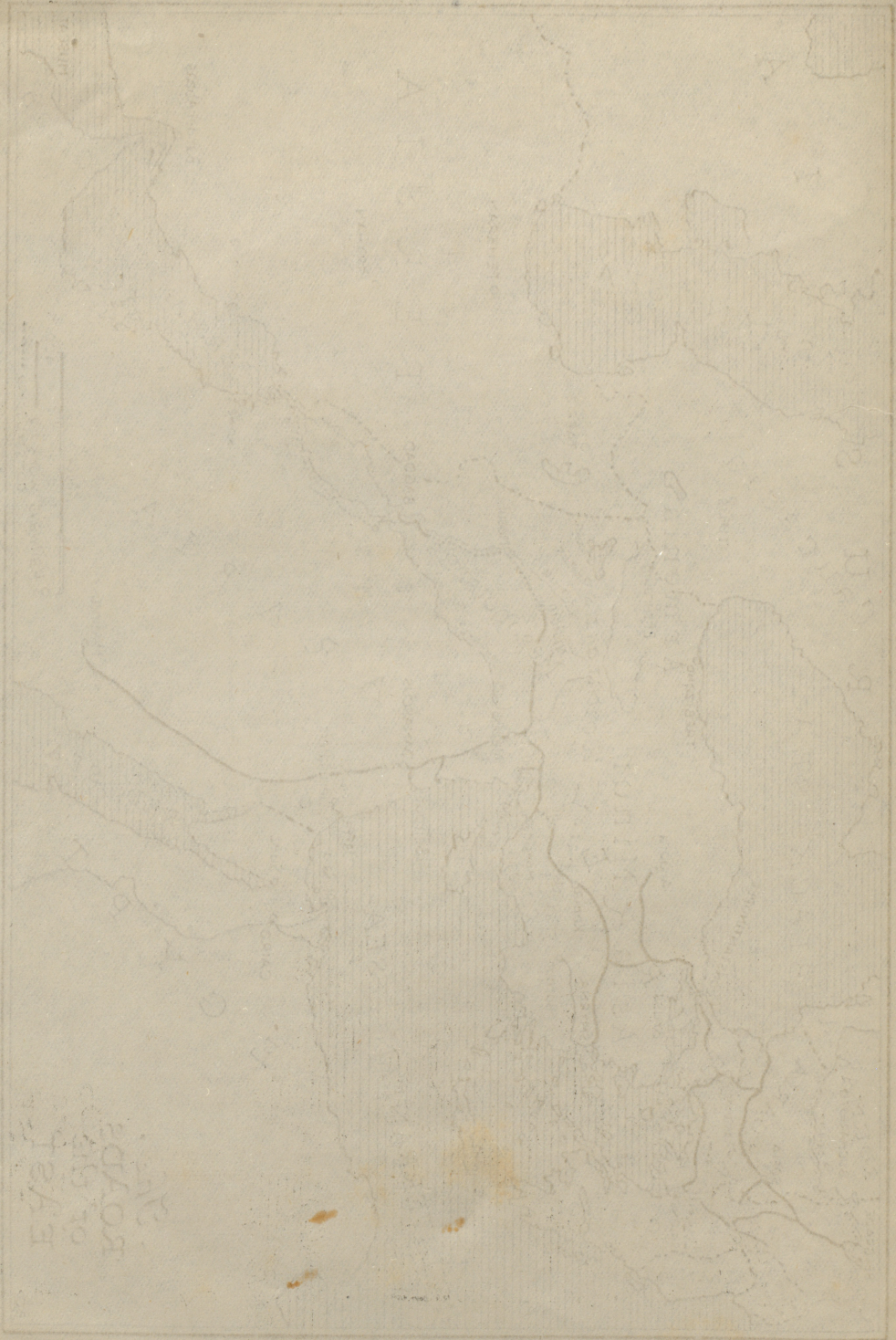
NOTE.

The following pamphlet is published by the Union of Democratic Control, because it is a valuable contribution to the discussion of the causes of war and means of its avoidance in future. The object of the Union in its pamphlets is to place at the disposal of the public ideas and information which may create a healthy and informed opinion. But it does not necessarily adopt as its own every statement or opinion therein contained. The five cardinal points are the only principles to which the members of the Union are collectively pledged.

BRITISH MADE IN ROYALTY



The
ROADS
of the
EAST



East
of the
Road

L. 11

1870

TURKEY AND THE ROADS OF THE EAST.

By H. N. BRAILSFORD.

A long war is apt to change not merely the moods of the combatants, but the objects for which they fight. New dangers emerge as the wrestling nations sway hither and thither; new problems are created by the entry of fresh champions to the lists; difficult tasks are discarded and compensations for their abandonment are sought in other fields. Above all, the constructive, idealistic purposes, which men emphasised at first in the effort to reconcile themselves to the horrors of war, fade from their inner vision; they adjust themselves to the hatreds of the moment, persuaded that these hatreds must govern the world for the rest of their lives. The hope of any permanent international organisation grows dim while we submit to this mood, and in its absence (since we must somehow solve our problems) the cruder methods of settlement by partition and annexation find increasing favour. There is a risk that if this state of mind endures, the war, which was hailed as a war of liberation, may degenerate into a harsh struggle of competing Empires.

It is significant that as each month passes, the Eastern purposes, alike of the Entente and of the Central Empires, assume an overwhelming relative importance among the many issues of the war. Germany is fighting to keep in her power the Berlin-Bagdad road. For Russia, as even Professor Miliukoff, the leader of the Liberals in her Duma proclaims, the supreme object of the war is the possession of Constantinople and the highway of the Straits. We are less obsessed by the East than are Russia and Germany, but even to us the campaigns round Salonica and in Mesopotamia seem vital, because they touch "the road to India." The war is nearing the end of its second year, yet the experts bid us look forward to a third year, and even to a fourth. In the West of Europe there seems to be no sufficient reason for this prolongation. It is probable that we might, if we chose, make peace to-morrow on the footing of things as they were in the West before the war. The independence of Belgium (though the German Chancellor still makes some unacceptable reservations) is no longer morally in doubt, and

France, by the superb gallantry and endurance of her defence, has vindicated her own territorial integrity. It is in the East that all is fluid and uncertain. It is to the East that the German Chancellor looks for expansion and conquest, and his dream of pushing back the frontiers of Russia beyond the Polish provinces is answered by Russian proposals as large and far-reaching for the partition of Turkey. A compromise is possible in the case of Poland; it may emerge from this war neither German nor Russian, but independent. Nor has anything been said officially in Berlin which forbids us to hope that as the price of an early peace the independence of Serbia would be restored. Our control of the seas, our embargo on German trade, the pressure of want in Germany, and our occupation of all her colonies give the Entente assets enough with which to secure a good settlement of all these European questions, and even, it may be, of more than these. But outside this nearer region, in which the lines of a reasonable settlement are already visible, there lies the Turkish problem. For this the war is prolonged, and if either side insists here on its extremer claims, it may well last for one or two years more.

If the claims of the Allies were only to some of the border provinces of the Turkish Empire the Turks might, sooner or later, acquiesce; they are used to the process of amputation. But no nation abandons its capital until it is driven from it. The most optimistic forecasts do not anticipate that the various campaigns in Armenia, in Mesopotamia, and round Salonica—the first slow but prosperous, the second slow and doubtful, the third stationary and by no means promising—could end in the destruction of a Turkey supported by the whole weight of German power and in the occupation of the Turkish capital in less than one or, more probably, two years. Nor is it likely that successes won by the Allies elsewhere would induce the Germans to consent to a drastic partition of Turkey. She has accepted Turkey as her ally, and stands to her in the same relationship in which we stood during the Crimean War. If honour did not restrain her, a concern for her own prestige and her own interests would forbid her to make a total sacrifice of Turkey, save in the last extremity of defeat.

Let us not prejudice this question. It may be said, plausibly enough, that the possession of Constantinople is only a symbol. If Russia wins it, then Russia has won the war. True enough, but of what sort of success would this decision be the symbol? It would not be easy to bring it into any relation with the professed purposes of the war, the vindication of nationality and public law. To simple minds a prolongation of the war to determine the ownership of the great roads of the East would mean only the settlement of certain questions of strategy and economics in the interest of one Empire or the other. Let us look at these detailed questions more closely, remembering while we examine them, that President Wilson is ready to offer America's mediation, not only to end the war, but to establish that League of Peace which alone can guarantee the world against militarism.

I.—THE HIGHWAY OF THE STRAITS.

The significance in the political geography of the world of the two narrow straits which link the Black Sea and the Mediterranean has become familiar to the simplest English mother, since the lads of Dorset and Lancashire died in vain on the Gallipoli peninsula to cut a way to Constantinople. In Russian history these straits recall more distant memories and older dreams. Since the days of Peter the Great, Russian statesmen and soldiers have held it as the manifest destiny of their Empire that it should one day acquire Constantinople, and in the curious but probably apocryphal document which passes as his "testament," this conquest is defined as the grand object of Russia's national policy. The problem matured slowly, for it was only in comparatively modern times that Russia herself became possessed of the European and Caucasian shores of the Black Sea. The aim was never forgotten, and through two centuries a long series of wars with Turkey brought her always a little nearer to it. Her opponent in Europe has always been the Power which stood behind the Turks as their protector. In that part Germany to-day is the successor of Great Britain. The chief motive which has always influenced the more realistic sections of Russian opinion is, of course, that the Power which holds Constantinople controls the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and with them the highway of the sea that leads to Odessa and Batoum. If this Power were only a weak Turkey, standing alone, and easily overawed by the superior power of Russia, her guardianship of the Straits might be tolerated. But Turkey in modern times has never been left to stand alone. It was Great Britain and France which actively vindicated the Sultan's rights in the Crimean War, and made them an article of the public law of Europe. They even went so far in restricting the naval expansion of Russia as to forbid her in the Treaty of Paris (1856) to maintain a fleet in the Black Sea. She took advantage of the Franco-Prussian War to tear up that oppressive "scrap of paper," and to liberate herself from its prohibitions by a simple declaration, without the assent of the other parties to the Treaty. In 1878 Disraeli, by sending our fleet to the Sea of Marmora, arrested her armies at the very gates of Constantinople, and in the Treaty of Berlin, mainly by British influence, the Sultan's power was again buttressed by the restoration to him of the unhappy regions of Macedonia, which Russia had liberated. In those days the fathers of the men who died at Gallipoli used to sing the "Jingo" rhyme, which swore that "the Russians shall not have Constantinople." We even took Cyprus for ourselves as a naval base convenient to the Turkish coast, in order to prevent the further encroachment of Russia upon Turkish territory. Our traditional relationship towards Turkey came to an end in the 'eighties of last century, partly because British Liberal opinion revolted against a policy of complicity in the oppressions of Abdul Hamid, but mainly because a British Liberal Government had

occupied Egypt. With the consequent decay of our ascendancy in Constantinople, Russian interest in the problem of the Straits perceptibly dwindled. It revived as Turkey fell under German influence. The decisive fact for Russian opinion was the arrival at Constantinople, shortly after the second Balkan War, of General Liman von Sanders at the head of a large military mission, charged with the re-organisation of the Turkish army. The Russian Press took this to mean (rightly, as it turned out) that Turkey had in a military sense definitely entered the German camp. A Turkish control of the Straits might be tolerated, but a German control involved a direct negative to Russian ambitions. Nothing that is Turkish is permanent, but Germans build solidly. The emphatic diplomatic protest which Russia entered against the large executive powers entrusted to this mission (1913-1914) was really the overture to the coming world-war. It was followed by a series of panics and crises throughout the spring and early summer of 1914. At one moment the German Press discovered traces (as it believed) that a secret naval convention was being arranged between Russia and Great Britain.¹ Then the extensive military programme of Russia, her increased peace effectives, her new artillery, and her strategical railways were held to point to a plan for making war somewhere about 1916. At intervals the German Press directed its attention to the efforts of Russian diplomacy to reconstitute the Balkan League, this time as a Slav vanguard against Austria. In the midst of this tension a controversy broke out in the influential pages of the "Preussische Jahrbücher" between Professor Mitrofanoff, of Petrograd, and Professor Hans Delbrück, its editor. The distinguished Russian historian wrote already as though war were imminent and almost inevitable, and his thesis was that Russia must control the Straits, and that unless Germany made terms with this historical ambition, then the road to Constantinople would lie through Berlin. Europe was already in peril of war on the eve of the Serajevo murders, and the issue which dominated both Russian and German opinion was the question of Constantinople and the Straits. When Turkey entered the war (as was indeed inevitable) on the side of Germany, Russia arranged her claims with her Allies. There is every reason to believe that in March, 1915, Great Britain and France gave their full consent to a Russian annexation of Constantinople. So much is known. What is not known is whether our statesmen pledged their two countries to continue the war until Constantinople has been conquered, or whether they merely declared that they have no objection to the realisation of Russia's ambition.

It is not easy to decide how far this ambition is a strategical demand, prosaic, intelligible, and eminently natural, and how far it springs from sentiment and romance. The foundations of Russian civilisation were Eastern, and throughout the East Constantinople has always been regarded as the Imperial City, "Tsarigrad," the

¹ See Schiemann. Die Letzten Etappen zum Weltkrieg, ss. 151, 224.

New Rome, the goal of conquerors, and the centre of world power. It is, moreover, the seat of the Œcumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, and though his authority and prestige is far less than that of the Pope in the more centralised Western Church, the possession of his seat and the planting of the Cross once more on the dome of St. Sophia would mean far more to the Russian Church and to the simpler sections of Russian opinion than the opening of the Straits. It was the question of the Holy Places of Palestine which led up to the Crimean War, and there is still a vast Russian world, not merely in the villages, but at Court, which makes pilgrimages, believes in modern miracles, and venerates sacred places. It was especially the native reactionary school which kept alive the dream of acquiring Constantinople. It was an obsession for Katkoff, and Skobelev, and especially for Dostoevsky, who popularised the Slavophil doctrines in the 'seventies and 'eighties of last century. Their whole view of life was based on a fundamental opposition of East against West. Russia stood for the believing spirit against the Liberal West, firmly based on the three fundamental Slav institutions—the autocratic Throne, the Orthodox Church, and the village commune. This creed, which mingled an elevated Christian mysticism with a crude racial Chauvinism and a deplorable intolerance,² blended readily with Panslavist schemes of political expansion, and for both these allied schools of thought the possession of Constantinople was the symbol of the great destiny to which Russia was called as the Power of the future, and the mistress of the East. The dream is woven into the hereditary sentiment of the Russian people, and its romance is probably a subconscious influence even with Russian Liberals, who reject the whole Slavophil tradition as mediævalism and reaction.

While this traditional sentiment explains the popularity of the Turkish campaign in Russia, a diplomatist would state the case for the Russian annexation of Constantinople in plain prose. The historical pressure of Russia towards an ice-free port is one of the commonplace of world politics. It carried her across Siberia to Vladivostock and Port Arthur. It has in the past turned her attention towards the Persian Gulf, and it has made Sweden deeply anxious. All the while there was an ice-free port at no great distance from Petrograd. Alexandrovsk, waiting only the building of wharves and the construction of a railway. The plans for its construction lay for years in the official pigeon-holes, and were brought out only in the stress of this war. But an Empire of so vast an extent needs many ports. For commercial purposes, of course, in time of peace the ports of the Black Sea are always open. But this question of a Russian port, like the German demand for "the freedom of the seas," has reference not to peace, but to war. The high seas are perfectly free while the world is at peace, and so is the sea-

² See for a statement of it the curious book by M. Pobiedonosteff, the notorious Procurator of the Holy Synod, "Reflections of a Russian Statesman" (1898).

road to Odessa. The Russian grievance is primarily this, that while the Straits are always open in time of peace to the merchantmen of all nations, the Sultan has the right, and exercises it, to close them both in peace and war to warships. That means that the Russian Black Sea fleet is confined within its waters as effectively as though the sea were an inland lake. During the Japanese War, for example, it could not sail out to reinforce the Russian squadron in the Far East. If at any time Russia wishes to "show her flag" in the Mediterranean, to intervene in some Balkan complication, or to take part in those international naval demonstrations which were common during the reign of Abdul Hamid, her ships must sail from the Baltic ports (closed during part of the winter) and pass on their way through the narrow straits of the Sound, Dover, and Gibraltar. This restriction on the movement of her ships (and therefore of her armies) is a serious limitation to the immense potential military power of Russia. It means that she cannot act effectively anywhere to the West of her own territory. It has made her primarily an Eastern Power. She cannot, for example, in this war bring succour to Serbia, though she, and not the Western Powers, was the champion on whom the Serbs relied. Nor can she send reinforcements to France save by way of Vladivostock and the Suez Canal. The ability to use the Straits freely in war time would mean, in short, a doubling of Russia's military range of action, and her entry by a new road into the European system. Such an increase of power would be felt, of course, in peace as well as in war, for in diplomacy the reach of a Government's arm is accurately measured. To this primary reason for the acquisition of the Straits some others must be added. The closing of them in this war has cut off Russian exports to the detriment of her credit, and excluded military supplies to the peril of her armies. Nor are the disadvantages which flow from the Turkish ownership of the Straits entirely limited to Russia's military interests. If Turkey is herself at war, while Russia is neutral, and Turkey is obliged to defend the Straits against a naval attack, she may be compelled to close them, or at least to limit traffic. That happened at awkward moments during the Turco-Italian and Balkan Wars, when the Italian and Greek fleets threatened the Dardanelles. Some vexatious delay resulted in the export of the Russian harvest. To balance all these considerations, the only advantage is that when Russia is at war and Turkey neutral, the Straits are closed against Russia's enemy. That consideration may, however, be dismissed, for if Russia held the Straits herself, the strongest naval Power would not venture, after our experience, to attack them.

The reasons why Russia desires to control the Straits are so eminently intelligible that we need not dwell further upon them. It remains only to add that in the present view of her statesmen no control will be satisfactory, unless Russia is physically in possession of the shores of the Straits themselves. That involves, of course, the possession not merely of Constantinople, but of **some**

territory on both continents. It may mean the whole of Turkish Thrace, including Adrianople. There is even an influential school among Russian soldiers which argues that, in order to hold Constantinople securely, they must have access to it by land. Roumania and Bulgaria close the shorter European road, and they therefore claim the whole southern shore of the Black Sea, in order to link the Bosphorus with the Caucasus. Thus the claim to control the Straits means, on an extreme reading of it, the acquisition of great reaches of Turkish territory. Before the war Russian diplomacy asked for much less. M. Isvolsky, for example, wished to open the question during the Bosnian crisis (1909-10), and at that time Russia would hardly have claimed more than the right to send her warships through the Straits. That right would, of course, hold only while Russia and Turkey were at peace one with another. To-day a Russian would reply that, since Turkey has become the ally or vassal of Germany, such a right would become worthless when it was most wanted. The right to move outside the Black Sea would be a restricted privilege if it could be exercised only at Germany's good pleasure. Finally, to suggestions that the control of the Straits should in some form be internationalised, the prevailing Russian answer is, that Russia wants some better security than "a scrap of paper." She will feel sure that the Straits will always be open to her warships only when her own guns command them.

War is a state of absolute partisanship, and the tendency, while it lasts, is to assume that everything which an ally may claim is a proper object to pursue. But if the world is to be freed from the reign of force, we must school our minds to abandon the habit of thinking strategically. We have to inquire whether we can fit into our ideal of the future Europe this Russian claim for the means to exert power far beyond her own frontiers. We are familiar with the German ambition for *Weltmacht*, the ability to play a great part in the world at large, to strike at a distance, and to say in the Kaiser's phrase that "nothing shall happen in the world without Germany." In a sense it is a proper claim. When the world regulates its affairs by conference, nothing ought to happen in matters of common concern without the voice of every civilised nation. But to bring into the Mediterranean, as a factor in its naval and military balance, a Power which has neither province nor colony on its shores, would be a questionable innovation. The real bearing of this question is primarily on the future of the Balkan States. Mr. Gladstone popularised the watchword, "The Balkans for the Balkan peoples," and that ideal, infinitely difficult to realise, would be best served by a Balkan Federation—a solution, one fears, of the very distant future. In the meanwhile the gravest peril for Balkan liberties would be the establishment of any great Empire in the Peninsula. The same arguments which tell against the establishment of Austria at Salonica apply also to Russia's claim. Entrenched at Constantinople, able to strike at

will by land or sea, holding the exit of the Black Sea, and sending her ships freely into the Ægean and the Adriatic, Russia would control the Balkan Peninsula, and dispose at her pleasure of the destinies of its people. There are many reasons which explain the choice of Bulgaria in joining the Central Empires, and the continued neutrality of Roumania and Greece, but among the considerations which weighed most heavily with them all was their reluctance to see any great Empire established at Constantinople. Roumania is wholly dependent on the Straits for her commerce with the outer world, and, though Bulgaria now has a worthless and isolated port on the Ægean, her commerce still depends entirely on Varna and Burgas, both of them Black Sea ports. Finally, it is well to remember in this war, waged professedly for the doctrine of nationality, that there are no Russians, nor even an appreciable number of Slavs, in the regions which Russia proposes to annex. The Turkish population, which is in a majority, would prefer almost any other foreign rule to that of its hereditary enemy. This consideration, which has weight if only a small strip of territory were annexed, would become very serious if the larger schemes of the military party were carried into effect.

There are several alternative solutions which would give to Russia the free use of the Straits, to which she is entitled. The essential point is really not that Russia should possess the Straits, but that Germany shall not dominate them. Sir Edwin Pears has sketched an ideal scheme—the creation of a small international State, guaranteed by the whole Concert of Europe, under executive officers nominated by it, which would control both shores and guarantee a free passage to all the world. Unhappily, this plan, by far the best of all, would require for its realisation the further prolongation of the war, for it presupposes the expulsion of the Turks. It might be modified somewhat, and would be less difficult of realisation, if the Turks were left in civil control of the land, while the police of the Straits themselves and their actual shores were entrusted to an International Commission, with all the forces of the Powers behind it. But unless we look forward to an eternity of war, could Russia complain if the Straits were subject, under an international guarantee, to the same treaty rights as the Suez and Panama Canals? The treaties which govern them keep them open at all times, in war as in peace, to the warships and merchant ships of all the Powers. The right to close them would belong to Turkey only in case of actual war with Russia. The solution of that difficulty is partly to cut the strategical road between Berlin and Constantinople by restoring Serbia, and further to ensure that war shall not arise. If we believe in a League to maintain Peace, we have in it the key to the problem.

Our attitude towards this Russian claim will depend in the last resort on whether we believe that the future of Europe must resemble its past. If we believe, with Sir Edward Grey, that international questions must be settled by "conference" and "negotiation," we shall have listened unmoved to the greater part of this

argument. If we want to have done with the diplomacy whose success is measured by the reach of the arm behind it, the main item in this case falls to the ground. If, on the other hand, we see nothing before us but a dismal prolongation of the rivalry for a balance of power and a balance of armaments, the struggle always in diplomacy and trade, and periodically in war, of one group of "Powers" against another, then, on one condition, we shall back the Russian demand. That condition is, of course, that we are quite sure that the present grouping will persist, and that Russia will be for all time our ally. The answer of the average statesman would hesitate between these sharp alternatives. "I hope," he would say, "that we shall manage to set up an Areopagus, and all that sort of thing. I am all for conference and negotiation. But I don't trust the other side. I must, therefore, strengthen myself and my friends, so as to be ready for every contingency. I shall, accordingly, build fleets, fortify straits, and, when necessary, annex the shores that control them, but, of course, I hope that we shall all live happily ever afterwards, and arbitrate before we fight." That is the attitude which, above all others, curses life with a duality of purpose, poisons sincerity, destroys confidence, and arrests progress. If a man hopes he must also believe. If he intends he must have faith. If he has turned his back on the evil past, he must discard its calculations. The probability of future war turns largely on the expectations of mankind. If the world believes that war will come, the belief will realise itself. So long as that belief dominates us, our actions will be busied with all the preparations that almost fatally make war, the armaments, and, still worse, the diplomatic groupings. Array Europe in two hostile groups, and it is idle to talk of conference, for no conference could meet in that mood of coolness and impartiality from which alone a just settlement of any conflict can result. What makes the belief of mankind in such a case? Deeds rather than words make it. A whole library of poisonous books by all the Bernhardis of all the nations would do less to create the belief that a future war is inevitable, than the insistence of Russia on annexing Constantinople and the readiness of the Entente to back her claim by months or years of warfare. We could hardly say more plainly that all the talk of "the war to end war" was nothing but self-deluding rhetoric. An international solution is possible, and our answer is that we have no faith in "scraps of paper." That would be an admission that the war had been fought in vain. If we desired to show that our purpose had been achieved, if we meant boldly, like strong men, to imprint our will upon the world's history, we should take the exactly opposite course. We should set up our "scraps of paper" with a defiant and gallant gesture. We should call them a monument more lasting than armour-plate. We should give them validity by our faith, and keep our arms, if need be, to defend them. A coalition which acts on this principle will have destroyed the belief in the next inevitable war, and by so doing, it will have made the intellectual basis of an enduring peace.

II.—THE ROAD TO BAGDAD.

If the central object of Russia in this war is to open for herself the naval road to the Mediterranean, the Germans are no less bent on securing for themselves unhampered military access to Turkey. Russia's interest in the Straits is mainly strategic, though her strategical thinking is coloured by sentiment. German policy, on the other hand, shows the characteristic modern combination of strategy with economics. Coming very late into the colonial field, and unable to secure for herself any sphere capable of development by white settlers, her attention since the opening of this century has turned increasingly to Turkey. Into this sphere, also, her traders came late, and found it occupied mainly by French educational and financial and British commercial influences. They enjoyed, however, certain advantages. Prussian soldiers, beginning with the great Von Moltke and then with Von der Goltz, had done much for the Turkish army. They had no past to overcome in appealing to Turkish sympathies, and when our policy after the occupation of Egypt became definitely anti-Turkish, they rapidly acquired a predominant position in Constantinople. It was won, like all their achievements, by method, intelligence, and perseverance. Their great ambassador, Marschall von Bieberstein, worked while others idled, and was friendly, accessible, helpful, where others were stiff, contemptuous, and indifferent. The Kaiser's more theatrical methods of proclaiming himself the friend of Islam in general and of Abdul Hamid in particular served their immediate end. From all the demonstrations, reforms, and intrigues that centred round Armenia, Macedonia, and Crete, German diplomacy stood aloof, and if this was bad political morals it was also good business. "We pursue in Turkey only economic ends," was the invariable answer of Baron Marschall to any attempt to enlist his interest in such questions. The answer was true as a statement of motive, but economics cannot in Turkey be divorced from politics. The exploitation of a backward country on the great scale of modern capitalism depends far more upon contracts, concessions, and loan operations than upon the direct pushing of their wares by private merchants. In Turkey, as in China, all these larger operations of finance are the concern of diplomacy, and every alert Embassy persuades, bribes, negotiates, or even threatens in order to push the interest of its country's financiers. The Germans were particularly successful in the sale of their armaments, and with the final granting of the Bagdad railway concession in 1903, they became economically the predominant Power in Turkey. French finance still held by far the larger passive stake in Turkey, but the new and more enterprising power was the Deutsche Bank. This position was not won without careful political nursing. The Young Turks, when first they made their revolution (1908), were anxious to conclude a defensive alliance with Great Britain. Their overtures were coldly received. The despatch of the German Military

Mission to Turkey, after the Balkan wars, meant that Enver Bey's pro-German policy had prevailed over the pro-French and pro-British inclinations of his more liberal colleagues, and shortly after the outbreak of the world-war the Turco-German alliance, already half-concluded, became the decisive fact in the Eastern theatre of war.

The Bagdad railway was not originally a German scheme. In the middle years of last century certain Anglo-Indian engineers eagerly promoted the idea of a railway linking the Mediterranean with the Persian Gulf. It was to have run from Alexandretta by an easy desert route to Basra. A Parliamentary Commission reported in its favour, and the Turks welcomed the scheme. Capital, however, was shy, and after our occupation of Egypt, which gave us control of the Suez Canal, it ceased to interest us. Our concern in it had been purely strategic, for we regarded it as an alternative road to India. While favouring the scheme, the Turks had always tried to induce its British promoters to expand it into a more ambitious project, a Constantinople-Bagdad railway.³ From the Turkish point of view this railway was an administrative and military necessity. Railway builders who considered only the needs of trade would not have been attracted by it. The denser population in Turkey is to be found clustered in limited areas near the coast—round Constantinople, in the big hinterland of Smyrna, in the rich alluvial plain of Cilicia, in Syria, and along the coast of the Black Sea.⁴ The natural course was to drive short railways (of which there are still too few) up from the ports, so as gradually to develop the roadless interior. But for the purposes of government, police, and military concentration, it was precisely through the sparsely-peopled, half-tilled, and inaccessible interior that the Porte most wished to drive a road. Only by this means could the primitive anarchy of some provinces be brought to order, but, above all, such a railway, by shortening the time required for mobilisation, would add enormously to the military power of Turkey, whether for offence or for defence. Commercially, the Bagdad railway is unlikely to be profitable for many years, or even decades. In the northern half of its course it serves a population varying in density from 25 to 10 to the square mile, and the other half of it runs through desert which does not boast five souls to the mile. The greater part of it involves no engineering difficulties, but the mountains of the Taurus and the swamps of lower Mesopotamia present costly obstacles. Nor are the prospects of the railway as a through-route even for passenger traffic particularly good. It is barely possible that it can beat or even equal the time of the P. and O. boats to India. For long-distance goods traffic it can never compete with the sea-road, and the best that can be said for it from an economic standpoint is that it will gradually con-

³ See David Fraser, "The Short Cut to India," p. 33.

⁴ See Hogarth, "The Nearer East," p. 150.

concentrate population along its own course, and bring cultivation to the waste places. This has happened already in the plain of Konia. There was everything to be said for such a railway from the Turkish standpoint, but much less from that of the foreign trader. It followed that the railway could be built only under the usual Turkish system of subsidised profits, by a kilometeric guarantee, and as always happens in the land of backshish, the foreign capitalist drove an unconscionable bargain. The railway may never pay its way, but its promoters have none the less secured a rich return for their outlay. They reckon, also, on larger and more legitimate profits from subsidiary enterprises. A railway concession commonly carries with it the expectation that other large enterprises, mines, harbours, and the like, will be conceded to the same group of capitalists. The promoters secured from the first a monopoly over the rich oil-wells of Mesopotamia, and they reckoned that their undertaking would serve as a basis for a future claim to be founded, first, upon accomplished facts, and, finally, perhaps, on treaty, that the whole region served by the Bagdad railway is a German economic sphere. If this were to include the irrigation of Mesopotamia, it would be probably the most valuable privilege still open in any undeveloped country. It was this indefinite possibility of extension which really made the Bagdad railway an attractive economic opening to German enterprise. Since Germany was in a fair way to make the greater part of Turkey her economic preserve, she had an imperative interest in maintaining its "integrity and independence." Other Powers might wish to partition Turkey. Germany wished to absorb it whole. We had ourselves followed the same logic during the greater part of the nineteenth century, but while we valued our gallant Turkish allies and turned a blind eye to their misdeeds, we were too busy with more promising commercial possibilities elsewhere to concentrate our minds, as the Germans have done, on the economic exploitation of Turkey.

The sinister aspect of the Bagdad railway as a strategical line has been amply illustrated in the present war. It means two things strategically. It is first of all the Turkish military high road, essential to any development of Ottoman power. Turkey, however, is too weak to stand alone, and inevitably the idea of the line has expanded until every German to-day thinks of it as the Berlin-Bagdad connection. The present relationship of Germany with Turkey repeats in all essentials the older Anglo-Turkish tie. Any Power which comes into intimate touch with Turkey is forced to become her protector, and the protector who takes risks on her behalf will naturally wish to use her as an ally, and to pay himself by exploiting her undeveloped economic resources. The risk of a forcible partition of Turkey has been real for the best part of a century. The Tsar Nicholas I. proposed an amicable agreement to partition Turkey on the eve of the Crimean War. The Germans believe that Nicholas II. and Edward VII. discussed some similar

scheme at Reval in 1908, and reached an understanding about it.⁵ That plan (which had some existence in fact, at least as a scheme of reforms to be imposed on Turkey) was abandoned when the Young Turks made their revolution to escape it. The Germans allege that it was revived some years later, and that it took the shape of a proposal to delimit the "economic spheres" of the Powers in Turkey on the Persian model. Such plans were undoubtedly in the minds of some of the Allied statesmen, though there was probably no thought of attempting to realise them, save by a European agreement. They revived when the war broke out, and Turkey became involved in it. It is said by those who should know, that the secret compacts of the Allies contemplate a partition on this basis: Constantinople goes to Russia, with the Armenian provinces as a vassal State under her suzerainty; Syria is to be French; Mesopotamia and Arabia, British; and Cilicia, Italian. The Entente offered the greater part of Asia Minor, with Smyrna, to Greece, but failing her acceptance, it is to be supposed that Turkey will be allowed to retain so much of Asia Minor and Anatolia as Russia does not absorb in order to secure her hold on the Straits. The conception of a Turkey protected, developed, and strengthened by German influences stood opposed to these ambitions of the Entente Powers. The issue was simply one of power, a *Machtfrage*, which could hardly be settled without war. It is "the Eastern Question" which distracted the lives of our fathers and grandfathers, with Russia still in her old rôle, and Germany filling the traditional part of Great Britain.

This exchange of parts between Germany and Britain involved a disastrous strategical complication in the Balkans. Our command of the seas enables us to act in the East without possessing a continuous land route. It suffices for our purpose that we hold Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, and Egypt. Our statesmen have always held that the vital interest of our communications justified us in disregarding in these cases the doctrine of nationality. Germany has no such command of the seas, and if in any conflict over Turkey to which we are a party she must be able to reach Turkey, the only route open to her lies by land across the Balkans. An independent and hostile Serbia is a fatal obstacle to any full use for strategical purposes of the Berlin-Bagdad line. Once more, as in the case of the Straits, the problem is not commercial, and has no bearing whatever on Germany's right to use such a road freely for the export of her manufactures. For that purpose the line was always open to her, and, in point of fact, the bulk of her trade has always gone, and is always likely to go, to Turkey by sea. What she required was a road, or, as it is often called, a "corridor," by which she could at all times send troops and munitions from Berlin to Constantinople and Bagdad. Without that facility she could neither protect nor dominate Turkey. It was not necessary that she should suppress Serbia and Bulgaria as independent States, but it

⁵ See Reventlow. Deutschlands Auswärtige Politik. S. 322.

was absolutely necessary for her Eastern policy that they should both be complacent and friendly neutrals, if not actual allies. The obstacle of a hostile Serbia is of recent date, and did not exist when the Bagdad line was first planned. At that time Serbia, under the Obrenovitch dynasty, was a nearly negligible factor in Balkan affairs, the satellite of Austria, and the friend of Turkey. It is a grave mistake to suppose that Serbia had always been the protégé of Russia. Again and again, and for lengthy periods, whenever it suited Vienna and Petrograd to come to an arrangement, Serbia was explicitly recognised (*e.g.*, in the pact of 1897) as within the Austrian sphere of influence. It is too often forgotten that Russia actually agreed to the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as the price of Austrian neutrality during the Russo-Turkish war. The change began with the murder of King Alexander (1903) and the return of the Karageorgevitch dynasty, and it was completed only with the open breach between Austria and Russia, which Count Aerenthal and M. Isvolsky brought about in 1908. From that moment Serbia was the vanguard of Russian influence in the Balkans, an isolated outpost thrown across the route of any Austro-German advance. Austria, after the two Balkan wars, feared the prestige of a victorious Serbia as a disruptive influence among her own numerous subjects of Serb race, and for her this war was partly punitive for the Serajevo murders, but still more preventive. She feared that unless she crushed Serbia now, the little kingdom, with Russian support, would at no distant date unite the Austrian Serbs under her flag, as Piedmont with French aid had united the Italians.⁶ The German motive was partly the desire to strengthen her ally Austria against this danger, and partly the wish to open the military road to Turkey. That object has for the moment been attained by the obliteration of Serbia during the swift autumn campaign of 1915. The Berlin-Bagdad line is to-day wholly under the control of the Central Empires. Control would be permanently attained if, as the result of this war, Turkey and Bulgaria remained the allies of the Central Powers, while Serbia was either annexed to Austria or reduced to a condition of vassalage. So long as an independent Serbia remains, free to ally herself with the Western Powers and Russia, the Berlin-Bagdad line does not exist as a strategical road. The Serbian question is the key to the mastery of the East.

If we aim in this war at a settlement which will assure permanent peace, it follows that the one kind of success which we must labour to prevent is a gain based solely on strategical requirements. The Berlin-Bagdad idea is the obverse of the Russian Constantinople idea, and both of them are based on the conception of a Europe still dominated by force, which our diplomacy in its appeals to the moral conscience of America has formally repudiated. It follows that whatever proposals we may consider as a means of shortening this war, we are bound in policy, as we are pledged in

⁶ For evidence, see my pamphlet, "The Origins of the Great War." U.D.C., 1d.

honour, to see an independent Serbia restored. The doctrine of nationality would lead us all to approve a settlement which would unite the Austro-Hungarian Serbs and Croats of Croatia, Dalmatia, Slavonia, and Bosnia with the Serbs of the kingdom. That gain, however desirable in itself, would not be worth a prolongation of the war which might doom to slaughter, before it could be attained, more Europeans of all races than there are Serbs in the world. An assurance of a more liberal autonomy for the Austrian Serbs would satisfy the essence of this demand. Nor must it be forgotten that the settlement must include free commercial access to some port for landlocked Serbia, whether Salonica or an Adriatic harbour, in order to assure her economic freedom. Two further details demand a brief mention. In the first place, the Italian claims to the greater part of the Adriatic coast ought never to have received the sanction of the Entente. The population of Dalmatia is Serbian, and includes only a fraction over 3 per cent. of Italians. The Italian claim involves a gross over-riding of nationality by strategical considerations.⁷ On the other hand, the Bulgarian claim to Serbian Macedonia is in the main well founded. Its population is not Serbian, and its Bulgarian sympathies were proved by its endurance of long and bitter persecutions at the hands of the Turks. The Serbian occupation of Macedonia, which had lasted for less than two years before the outbreak of this war, had acquired no sanctity as a long-established fact; it rested on a broken treaty, and it had been marred by the denial to the conquered Bulgarian population of some civil and all political rights.⁸ Bulgaria, as the diplomacy of the Entente itself admitted, has an unanswerable moral claim, not, indeed, to all, but to most of the country which she occupied in 1915. There can be no permanent peace in the Balkan Peninsula while its frontiers flagrantly violate nationality. These are digressions. The essential point is that a free and independent Serbia must be restored, and that demand can no more be compromised than our claim for the restoration of Belgium. With the restoration of Serbia, the strategical menace of the Berlin-Bagdad line would be destroyed, and it would become, with the settlement of the world's peace, an innocent highway of civilisation.

There remains the further question whether our opposition to the strategical idea, Berlin-Bagdad, need involve us in a denial of

⁷ See Dr. Seton-Watson's "The Balkans, Italy, and the Adriatic (1915)."

⁸ Further details will be found in "The War and the Balkans," by Noel and Charles Buxton (1915), an invaluable summary; in my own "Macedonia" (1905); and in the Report of the Carnegie Commission on the two Balkan Wars. My statements in the text as to the sympathies of the Macedonian population are based mainly on experience gained during a winter's residence as relief agent in the region of Monastir and Ochrida. The unfavourable verdict on Serbian administrative methods follows the conclusions of the Carnegie Commission (of which I was a member), an international board of inquiry, which included Prof. Miliukoff, leader of the Liberals in the Russian Duma, and M. Justin Godard, of the present French Ministry.

the German ambition to lead the economic development of Turkey. A truly independent Turkey cannot exist by its own strength in our generation. It must either be partitioned or controlled. Partition means the indefinite prolongation of the war, and when it is achieved, a triumph rather for Imperialism than for freedom and nationality. The Turks themselves, or at least their dominant party, have made their choice. They have placed themselves under German direction. To disturb that choice, if we are resolved upon it, we must face an indefinite destruction of the best manhood of Europe. Is the end desirable in itself? No one who knew the mind of Germany before this war can doubt that her ruling class, including her financiers and industrialists, drifted into the attitude which made this war under a sense of thwarted economic ambitions. They saw the greater part of the world that is capable of colonisation divided between Britain, France, and Russia. With an economic development immensely more advanced than that of France and Russia, conscious of great energies and counting their growing population, they had turned restlessly for a generation hither and thither in the search for new outlets, spheres to develop, and "places in the sun." They saw the great empires growing bigger—Morocco and Persia were the last object-lessons—while the combination among the three World-Powers had seemed for a long series of years to forbid their own expansion. This mood undoubtedly eased the sudden plunge into the crime of this war. If European statesmanship had been far-sighted, it would have realised that a nation of such energies and power will sooner or later be tempted to seize a field for these energies corresponding to its power. There were two ways of averting such a catastrophe. If all the Powers could have been brought to treat their dependencies not as estates to be exploited, but as trusts held for the world and their inhabitants; if the tariff walls around most of them had been broken down, and the opportunities for mining, railway construction, and the like, thrown open impartially to the enterprise of all nations, then, indeed, the Germans would have had no reason to desire, still less to conquer, exclusive markets and spheres for themselves. Failing that solution, which our Empire alone had ever approached, and only then in part, the prudent course would have been to further the moderate realisation of German economic ambitions, and by an amicable arrangement to find for her a sphere worthy of her energies which she might develop as her own. That was at two periods the policy of British statesmanship, and for the injury to European concord we must look to the long interval occupied by the Morocco question (1904-1911) which lay between them. Lord Salisbury facilitated the acquisition of the German African colonies in 1886. Sir Edward Grey, on the very eve of this war, had all but completed a treaty which would have met the German claim for the chief share in the development of Turkey. After a decade of friction and jealousy we withdrew all opposition to the Bagdad line, and took precautions in own interest only where it will approach the Persian Gulf. Sir Edward Grey even went so far in

withdrawing from competition with Germany that he declined as a matter of policy to press for concessions to British subjects in Turkey.⁹ The struggle for the mastery of the Near East lay in 1914 not between Germany and Britain, but between Germany and Russia.

The war has destroyed the feeling of good will with which Sir Edward Grey drafted that statesmanlike arrangement over Turkey. On sober grounds of policy there is, however, as much to be said for it as in the days before the war. We know better than we did then what formidable energies are latent in the German people. Now, as then, the chief problem for European statesmanship is to turn those energies into a harmless and productive course. Thwart them, deny them their outlet, and once more they may overflow in a destructive flood; prepare their channel for them, and they will help to turn the wheels of civilisation. The short-sighted anger of to-day takes the form of proposals not merely to strip Germany of all her colonies, but even to exclude her commerce more or less completely from the Allied markets. A peace based on such terms would be merely an angry truce, during which Germany would arm and scheme to renew the war, not for glory or plunder, but simply to win for herself the right to live and breathe and trade. These evil plans may be forgotten when once the moment for negotiation comes. But there are difficulties about the restoration of some of Germany's colonies. The natural field for compensations lies in Turkey. The simplest solution would be at the settlement to revert to the British policy of 1914, and tacitly or explicitly to recognise the "predominant interests" of Germany in Turkey. That is, of course, merely to accept an accomplished fact, or, rather, to refrain from prolonging the war until the fact has been altered. The Straits must be opened under an international guarantee. The railroad through Serbia must be politically under Serbian control in the sense that only by her free consent may it be used for the transit of troops; it might be well to arrange that this and other trunk railways and ports of the East should be subject, like the water-way of the Danube, to an International Commission, whose duty it would be to ensure equality of treatment for the commerce of all nations which use them. There must be no interference with the existing rights (including equal treatment in the Customs house) of other foreigners in Turkey. Armenia, which the Turks have turned into a wasted and depopulated Hell, must be freed from their rule, and receive autonomy under Russian protection. But with these reservations the Powers should agree not to interfere with the informal control which Germany has acquired in Constantinople, and not to oppose such further schemes of railway building, mining, or irrigation as the enterprise of her subjects may promote in Turkey. The development of the country under German guides would bring great material gains to its inhabitants, and their orderly, if too rigid,

⁹ See his speech in the Foreign Office debate, July 10, 1914.

discipline would be a prompt cure for the Turkish habit of slovenly and indolent disorder. The absorption of German energies in this fruitful but very difficult task would in itself be a guarantee for the world's peace. Before we dismiss this remedy for a destructive militarism, let us ask ourselves in all candour how long we should have kept our warships in home waters and our army at Aldershot, if we had lacked the vast estate of India and Africa, Canada and Australia, in which the energies of Empire builders and capitalists, the ambitions of Pro-Consuls, and the high spirits of adventurous youth find an innocent outlet and a beneficent field of work?

III.—THE ROAD TO INDIA.

“By the exercise of cool judgment and Christian charity,” the reader may say, “I can just grasp your argument that Germany has, not indeed a right, but a reasonable claim to some share in the work of developing half-civilised countries. Two years ago the idea of a German Turkey might not have seemed more monstrous to the world than the idea of a British India, a British Egypt, a French North Africa and Indo-China, and a Russian Siberia and Central Asia. But you have forgotten that Mesopotamia touches the Persian Gulf, and that the Bagdad line is the short cut to India. If you allow the Germans to hold that line, what security have you that when they have spent a generation in recuperating from this war and in drilling the Turks, they will not lead a Turco-German army to the conquest of India?” There can be no absolute security against such a danger. At various periods between the Battle of the Nile and the Battle of Jutland the French, the Russians, and the Germans (or some aggressive elements among each of them) have coveted India. We have only one security which is nearly absolute, and that is the contentment of the people of India with our rule. If we know how to keep that contentment and to deepen it by the adaptation of our institutions to their progress, we have little to fear from any aggressive Empire. There are other guarantees (apart from the moral guarantee that the Germans have suffered lessons in this war which will not be forgotten for a generation), notably distances, deserts and mountains, and our command of the seas.

Let us consider briefly what a Turco-German attack on India, with Bagdad and Basra for its land and sea bases, would involve. Note in the first place that under the conditions already proposed, such an attack could not take place without the aid, or at least the very friendly neutrality, of Russia. We have restored Serbia in our sketch, placed Russia in occupation of Armenia, and left her

in possession of North Persia.¹⁰ If the Germans, then, are going to march on India, they can do it only with Russian goodwill, for Russia would have to acquiesce in the first stride across Serbia, and then sit complacently neutral while the Turco-German armies, with their flank all the while exposed to Russian attack from Armenia and Persia, prepared their advance by land or sea or both. If anyone contends that a Russo-German combination against us after this war is a likely contingency, he is presumably opposed to our whole European policy since the Anglo-Russian Understanding of 1907, and in particular to the partition of Persia. For in the event of a Russo-German combination our chief object for regret would not be that we had allowed the Germans to get to Bagdad, but that we had furthered the establishment of the Russians in Persia. If, on the other hand, as British public opinion, on the whole, believes, our policy was based on a sound calculation, if the Russo-German antagonism is lasting, if Russia is herself evolving rapidly in a Liberal direction, if she has outgrown the old earth-hunger which used to covet India; if, finally, we have won her enduring friendship in this war, it is out of the question that she should assist, or even connive at, a Turco-German attack on India. Without her connivance it would be a mad and hopeless adventure.

Such fears must be put to the test of a large scale map. There are 3,000 miles of railway from Berlin to Bagdad. From Bagdad by land across Persia there are 1,300 miles before our outer defences could be reached at the frontiers of Beluchistan. There is no railway along the Persian shore; there is no road, and the country is a sparsely peopled desert, arid, torrid, and unhealthy. Or, if the fear is of attack by sea from Basra or Koweit, there are two remarks to be made. In the first place, the naval police of the Gulf must remain in our hands, and with it some guarantees for the free navigation of the Shat-el-Arab. Koweit is and should remain a British protectorate. Secondly, the Turkish ports could not be made into a naval base without long preparation. Such preparation could not be hidden, and it would be a legitimate occasion for protest and interference. The naval use of Basra, a port accessible only to vessels of light draft, might, if necessary, be forbidden by treaty. If the treaty were broken, then ours would be the right to strike first. At the worst, a glance at the map will show that the Persian Gulf is far from offering a favourable base for a naval attack on India. The shore of its narrow entrance is in our recognised sphere, and its ports and islands are at the disposal of our Navy. The Power that holds Bunder Abbas and the islands, could close the Gulf with minefields without so much as exposing its fleet to attack. From the standpoint of strategy, the wiser course, if ever India has to be defended against an attack from the West, is not to expose ourselves far

¹⁰ I am inclined to think that from the standpoint of Persian nationality the establishment of a Russian Protectorate over all Persia (excluding, perhaps, the port of Bunder Abbas) would be preferable to the present partition into Russian and British spheres.

from our own base, whether in Mesopotamia or in Persia, but, on the contrary, to compel the enemy to attack us as far from his own base as possible, and to make of distance and desert obstacles which he, and not we, must overcome. The art of trench warfare developed in this war, and the discovery that defensive lines can be drawn across a narrow sea, ought to leave us few anxieties about our ability at need to close the Persian Gulf and to defend the natural mountain frontiers of India. Our dangers would begin only if we insisted on taking our stand in the plains of Mesopotamia or the deserts of Persia.

Mesopotamia has a long military history, and even for a modern Power the records of Babylon, Assyria, and Bagdad are full of instruction. It was always easy to build up a powerful civilisation between the two rivers. Its wealth made it a dazzling lure to all its poorer neighbours, and its flat plains were never easy to defend. Babylon and Nineveh were forced to expand and to become conquering Empires, simply because they could find security only by holding the distant mountain chains which bar the roads to the Garden of Eden. If we held Mesopotamia—still worse, if we held only its lower half—so far from having made our position in the East secure, we should merely have acquired new frontiers to defend, and given ourselves as neighbours Powers with a greater military organisation than our own. The case for the permanent adoption of conscription would be immensely strengthened, and our new acquisition, profitable to a few financiers and contractors, would prove to be a heavy burden to the masses of our population. It is a dangerous policy for a Sea Power to plant itself on distant coasts with the object of barring the access of Land Powers to the water. We curse the folly which led us to play that part against Russia; let us not adopt it towards Germany.¹¹ The Land Power in such a case will bend its mind to the task of breaking through, and we shall find that we must meet it on land with a great army, and not merely on sea. It is a mad military logic which makes the defence of India a pretext for extending our Empire over unlimited stretches of the earth. We took the Cape, Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Egypt, and South Persia under the spur of that strategical argument. We have roads enough to India.

But is it really the strategical argument which has led our Imperialists to propose to themselves the acquisition of Mesopotamia? They are at least well aware of its vast potential wealth. Restore its ancient canals, and there is little doubt that its deserts would soon attract a population and produce a wealth as great as those of Egypt. It is the granary and the cotton-field of the future. I would urge no moral argument against its acquisition. The Ottoman Empire can plead no right against the civilised world to keep this garden for all time a wasted and disorderly desert. Its native Arabs and Kurds have no loyalty to the Turks, and few moralists

¹¹ The Italian plans for seizing the whole Adriatic coast, the only sea-outlet for Central Europe, are open to the same objection.

would care to defend the right of a handful of degenerate semi-savages to exclude the millions who might live by tilling the soil which they neglect. Mesopotamia must be reclaimed, and will be reclaimed, and the only question is whether the work shall be done by British or German or international enterprise. A strong argument might be put forward for an attempt to set up a system of control and development by international institutions. An even stronger argument, I think, can be advanced for the thesis that a far-sighted prudence would welcome the recognition here of a sphere for German work. In the long run, our children and children's children will have cause to regret our decision if we should insist on adding Mesopotamia to our own Empire. An impartial tribunal, if it were to allot the still unappropriated "places in the sun," would have some regard to "equality of opportunity" among the Powers. It would not always give "to him who hath." It would remind us that we already hold sway over a fourth of the inhabited earth. It would ask us whether with Egypt and India already in our possession, we need another great dependency of the same type. Our people went into this war with a disinterested purpose. History will judge us not by our mind as we went in, but by our hands as we come out. A nation which wages war for an idea must come out of it with empty hands. Its reward must be the triumph of the idea.

President Wilson's offer to help us, first of all to end the war by his good offices as a mediator, and then to endow the world with a League to Enforce Peace, has transformed the European outlook. The ideal with which this country set out in this war seems again possible and within the scope of statesmanship. No one in the Allied countries will openly say that we want no international organisation; that we are content that we and our children should live in a world subject to these recurrent disasters. The danger is not that this scheme will be rejected. Our peril is rather that our statesmen may prolong the war until the will and imagination of Europe is so exhausted that it will have no longer the capacity to construct, until faith is dead within us, and hate so masters us that the enemies of to-day cannot co-operate even for their common salvation. The will to live henceforward without war may be general and sincere. But every nation, when once it has drawn the sword, is disposed to fight on until it has got by force much more than an impartial tribunal would award it. The victors, having snatched by arms all that they desire to-day, will leave the rest to be decided by justice to-morrow. By such means we cannot build a Europe in which force is obsolete. The reign of law and negotiation and conference must begin at the settlement, and not after it. If either side insists at the settlement on terms of which force alone is the sanction, then by force must they be maintained. Not all the prestige of the United States would suffice to create, and to keep in being, a League of Peace if half its members look on the other half as Powers which, even in the settlement, have injured and spoiled them. Wrongs and angers there

are enough in the past. Let us make no more. We can create no Concert by a sullen peace. The wisdom of the old world was to take all you could from your enemy while you had him down. The old world was content to live in a state of constant war, and it was wise in its day. If we aim at an enduring peace we must realise that to leave our enemy with a grievance is to defeat our hopes of peace no less certainly than to cherish one ourselves. The best hope of lasting peace would lie in a general content. We have urged that, while there can be no tolerance for German strategic aims in the East, there should be no refusal to recognise in Turkey the field of work which she has marked out for herself. We have argued that no high purpose can justify the prolongation of the war for the sake of a Russian annexation of Constantinople or a British annexation of Mesopotamia. On the contrary, by insisting on strategic aims we proclaim our disbelief in a future based upon conference and negotiation. The more we insist on these strategic and material aims, the less ability, the less bargaining power shall we have in the settlement to insist upon our ideal purposes and to secure concessions for the rights of nationality. The more we eliminate from our purposes what aims only at our aggrandisement, the more we confine our claims to what aims at the general good of the world, the less need will there be to continue the war. When each side has purged its programme of egoism we shall have peace, and deserve it.

July, 1916.

