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## **The Genesis of the Great War**

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# The Genesis of the Great War

In the Light of  
the Official Documents published by the  
**Governments of the Triple Entente.**

By

**DR. KARL HELFFERICH.**



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Das Bergbuch - Lenz.

1) Es folgen folgende bei Bergsträsser, die Höhenunterschiede Längen von  
Höhensunterschied, zehnter Maßstab: (60)

BB 10, 13, 23, 35.

BB 9, 14, 18, 26, 42, 51 anl. 1, 51 anl. 2, 53, 54, 56, 57, 81, 84, 93, 96,  
105 anl. 3, 119, 120, 124, 125.

BB 1 anl. 2, 2 anl., 5, 14, 23, 34, 37, 39, 41, 53, 54, 63, 66, 75, 85, 92, 113,  
104, 106, 107, 115, 119, 137.

BB 3, 10, 14, 28, 34, 36, 42.

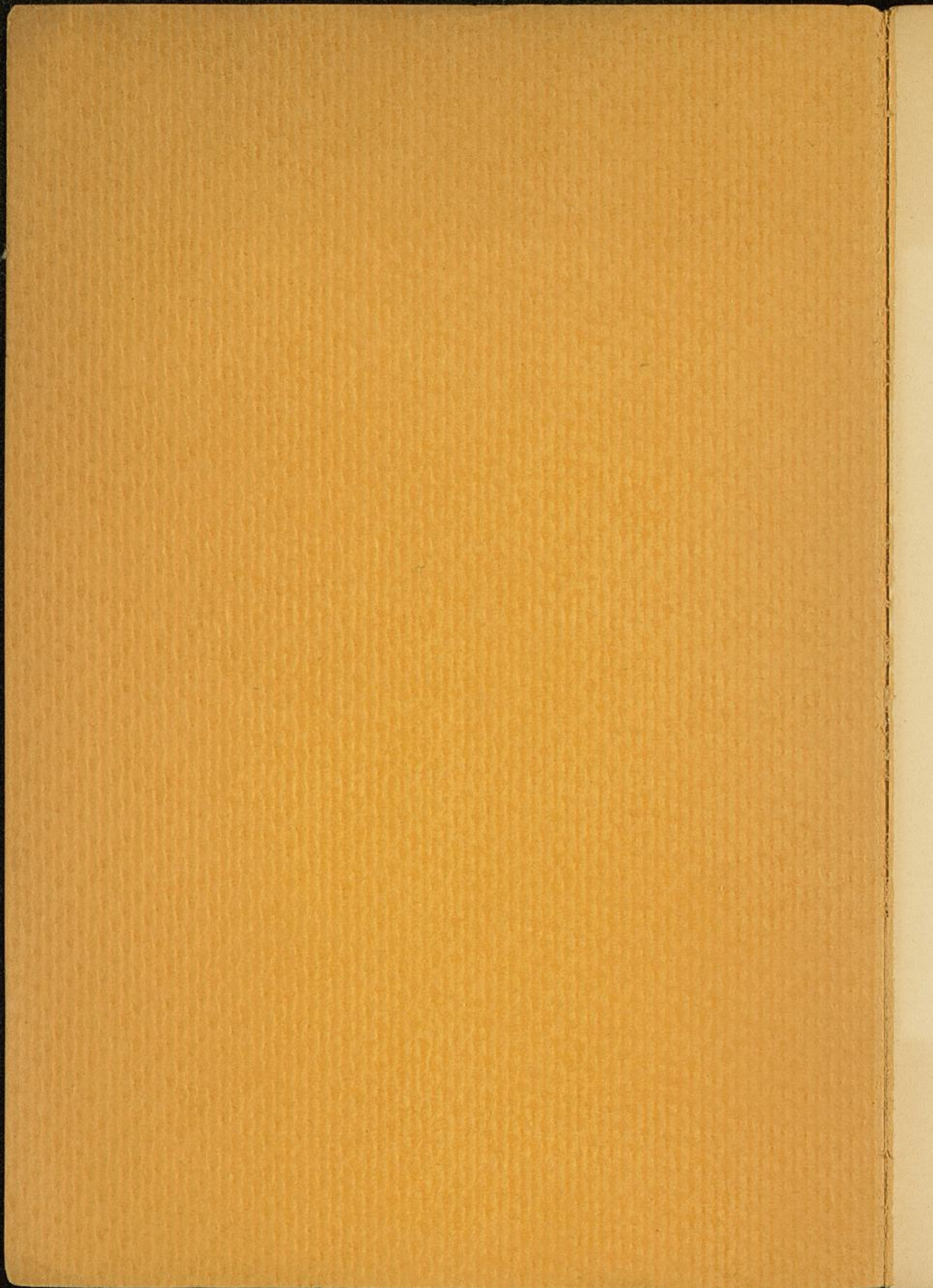
BB 21, 22, 30, 52.

BB 9.

2) Es folgen folgende bei Helfferich, die Höhenunterschiede Längen von  
Höhensunterschied: (17)

BB 115 anl. 3, 119, 124, 153.

BB 5, 38, 63, 66, 85, 95, 102, 103, 104, 112, 118, 121, 159.



# THE GENESIS OF THE GREAT WAR

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THE GENESIS  
OF THE GREAT WAR

BY  
THE AUTHOR

OF THE HISTORY OF THE  
EMPEROR OF THE EAST

AND  
THE HISTORY OF THE  
EMPEROR OF THE WEST

In publishing the diplomatic correspondence of the days preceding the outbreak of the Great War, the Governments of England, Russia and France have entertained the hope of proving in the eyes of their own people as well as of the whole civilised world Germany's exclusive responsibility for the most terrible bloodshed, the world has ever seen, and they hoped further to show that they have spared no effort in order to avoid this catastrophe. England has published a Blue Book, Russia an Orange Book, and France a Yellow Book. Several things seem to indicate that those publications which pretend to contain the full facts are incomplete in capital points, and in the particular case of the French Yellow Book it must be held to have been indisputably proved that certain of the documents reproduced have been expressly manufactured for the purpose.\*) Nevertheless these publications are deserving a careful comparative study.

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\*) An example: Chapter I of the Yellow Book, entitled: — "Avertissements", contains a number of documents which, beginning from March 1913, are intended to demonstrate the growth of bellicose spirit in Germany. One of them, No. 5, is a note dated the 30<sup>th</sup> of July, 1913, addressed to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, which contains the following passage: —

" . . . . M. de Kiderlen fut l'homme le plus haï de l'Allemagne, l'hiver dernier. Cependant il commence à n'être plus que déconsidéré, car il laisse entendre qu'il prendra sa revanche".

(Transl: . . . . Mr. von Kiderlen was the most hated man in Germany last winter. Nevertheless, he is beginning to meet with disdain only (instead of being hated), for he is letting it be understood that he will take his revenge (for Morocco).

Secretary of State von Kiderlen who had, according to the preceding statement, in the month of July 1913 begun to think of taking his revenge, died in December 1912, a fact which had evidently escaped

We will not attempt to dwell on all the intricacies of the extremely complicated diplomatic game that preceded the outbreak of the war. We will merely endeavour to present to the world the more important incidents which brought about the conflict, and we will present them on the strength of the evidence supplied by the Powers of the Triple Entente.

With this end in view we will first of all define the steps to which must be ascribed the immediate cause of the war. From there, we will resume the course of events.

### THE INCENDIARY.

There can be no question as to the immediate cause of the war. It was the general mobilisation of the Russian

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the notice of the functionary of the Quai d'Orsay to whom the concoction of this Yellow Book document had been entrusted.

A similar mishap attended a note which, according to the English Blue Book, was handed to the English Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs by M. Paul Cambon, French Ambassador at London, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July, 1914, and which refers to Germany's military preparations on the frontiers of Alsace-Lorraine. (See Blue Book No. 105, Annexe 3.) By dating this note from the 30<sup>th</sup> of July it was intended to create the impression as if on that day, and already previously the German troops had been standing close to the French frontier and, besides, that the frontier had even been crossed by patrols. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Blue Book the note begins as follows, viz.: —

*"L'armée allemande a ses avant-postes sur nos bornes-frontières, hier par deux fois des patrouilles allemandes ont pénétré sur notre territoire".*

(Transl.: The German army has its advance posts on our frontiers, yesterday German patrols twice penetrated into our territory.)

"Yesterday" naturally means the 29<sup>th</sup> of July in a note which is dated from the 30<sup>th</sup> of July. The 29<sup>th</sup> of July was a Wednesday. But the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the Blue Book was reading "hier, vendredi" (yesterday, Friday); some time later, when the discrepancy had been noticed, the word "vendredi" was eliminated. This shows that the note which is alleged to have been presented on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July, could not have been drawn up before Saturday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, quite apart from the fact that neither on the 29<sup>th</sup> nor on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July the frontiers had been crossed anywhere.

army and navy which had been ordered by the Czar in the early morning of the 31<sup>st</sup> of July, and Russia's refusal to countermand that step, as Germany had requested.

It is important to state that the Russian Government had no reason to entertain the slightest doubt that the order of a general mobilisation in Russia, and the maintenance of this measure, were bound to make war with Germany inevitable. Officially as well as inofficially the Russian Government was earnestly and in time given to understand that a general mobilisation on the part of Russia would be tantamount to the German mobilisation, and further, that the latter was identical with war.\*)

The reasons are as evident as they are convincing. Germany could not possibly, in view of the imminent danger of a war on two fronts, relinquish the start which the more rapid mobilisation of her own forces secured for her as soon as the situation would reach the critical point of a general mobilisation by Russia. For imperative reasons of self-preservation Germany could not for a moment accept the idea that a mobilisation on both sides was to be followed by a temporising attitude.

That this view was admitted as evident even by the Allies is shown by the telegram of Sir George Buchanan, British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, of July 25<sup>th</sup> (see Blue Book No. 17). Buchanan reports on a conversation with M. Sazonof, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs:

“I said all I could to impress prudence on the  
“Minister for Foreign Affairs, and warned him that if  
“Russia mobilised, Germany would not be con-  
“tent with mere mobilisation, or give Russia  
“time to carry out hers, but would probably  
“declare war at once.”

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\*) According to the German White Book, the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg was instructed on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July to make the following statement to the Russian Government:

“preparatory military measures on the part of Russia will force us  
“to take counter-measures which must consist in the mobilisation of the  
“army. But mobilisation means war.”

In the eleventh hour the German Emperor has in his telegram of the 30<sup>th</sup> of July, 1 o'clock a. m., personally pointed out to the Czar "the dangers and serious consequences of a "mobilisation".

There could not have remained uncertainty in the minds of the Russian Government and of the Czar that, when they issued the order for the general mobilisation on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July, war was meant.

And, while this accounts for the immediate outbreak of war, the question arises as to the reasons which have prompted the general Russian mobilisation.

It is but fair to those on whose shoulders rests the responsibility for the decision, that we should examine the reasons which they themselves are advancing.

Let us first hear the Czar.

In his telegram to the German Emperor of the 30<sup>th</sup> of July, 1.20 o'clock p. m., there is not yet any allusion made to the impending general mobilisation; it contains merely a reference to the preparative measures directed against Austria:

"The military measures now being put in force were  
"decided upon 5 days ago, for reasons of defence  
"against the preparations of Austria."

This telegram had crossed the German Emperor's message mentioned above, which drew the Czar's attention to the serious consequences of a Russian mobilisation, and which further expressed the fear that a mobilisation, even if solely directed against Austria, would threaten, if it did not make actually impossible, the part of the mediator which the German Emperor had accepted upon the Czar's express desire. The Czar replied on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July, at 2 o'clock p. m., after the order for the general mobilisation of the whole of the Russian forces had already been issued:

"It is technically impossible to stop our military  
"preparations which have been necessitated by Austria's  
"mobilisation."

There are two possibilities: If the expression "our military preparations" meant but a partial mobilisation against Austria, the

Czar passed over in silence the general mobilisation for which orders had already been issued and which was directed against Germany – a simple expedient, indeed, for avoiding the justification of this measure. On the other hand, if “our military “preparations“ were intended to mean Russia's general mobilisation, then, in the attempt of justifying this decisive measure, the Czar was merely able to draw attention to Austria's military measures.

Let us turn to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of July the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg sent the following report to his Government regarding the reasons advanced by M. Sazonof:

“En raison de la mobilisation générale de l'Autriche  
“et des mesures de mobilisation prises secrètement, mais  
“d'une manière continue, par l'Allemagne depuis 6 jours,  
“l'ordre de mobilisation générale de l'armée russe a été  
“donné . . . . .“

(Transl.: On account of the general mobilisation of Austria, and of the measures of mobilisation taken secretly but continuously by Germany during the last 6 days, the general mobilisation of the Russian army has been ordered. Yellow Book No. 118.)

On the same day the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg telegraphed to Sir Edward Grey (see Blue Book No. 113) that the general mobilisation had been ordered in consequence of a report received from the Russian Ambassador at Vienna to the effect that Austria was determined not to yield to an intervention of the Powers and that she was moving troops against Russia as well as against Servia. It is added that “Russia “has also reason to believe that Germany is making active “military preparations, and she cannot afford to let her get a start“.

But the Russian Orange Book will be vainly searched for a reason for the general mobilisation. Though communication of this decisive step must assuredly have been supplied to the Russian Ambassadors abroad, it has found no place in the Orange Book, and were it not for the communiqué by which

M. Sazonof notifies the Russian representatives abroad of Germany's demand for a suspension of Russia's military measures, the reader of the Orange Book would not know anything about it.

What is there to be said as to the reasons for Russia's general mobilisation which may be drawn from English and French official reports and from the Czar's telegram to the German Emperor?

### **1. Russia's general mobilisation as a retort to Austria's military measures.**

To guard herself against Austria's alleged military preparations, Russia had mobilised 13 army corps as early as on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July (Report of French Ambassador at St. Petersburg of July 29<sup>th</sup> Yellow Book No. 100). Mobilisation in the districts of Odessa, Kieff, Moscow, and Kazan had been notified to the German Government by the Russian Ambassador at Berlin, with the explanation that these measures were intended as a reply to Austria's declaration of war against Serbia which had taken place on the previous day, and as a reply also to "mesures de mobilisation déjà appliquées à la plus grande partie de l'armée austro-hongroise" (Yellow Book No. 95). In reality, Austria had, up to the time of Russia's general mobilisation, mobilised only 8 army corps. Contrary to the statement contained in the report of the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg of the 31<sup>st</sup> of July (Yellow Book No. 118) general mobilisation had not been ordered in Austria-Hungary.\*) This order was in fact only issued in reply to the general mobilisation of Russia in the course of July 31<sup>st</sup> (Blue Book No. 127). Russia's mobilisation (on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July) of no less than 13 army corps was, viewed as a reply to the mobilisation of but

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\*) This allegation of a general Austrian mobilisation — a statement which has never been sustained by Russia — that is stated to have prompted Russia's general mobilisation, is repeated in several places of the French Yellow Book, so f. i. in a telegram of M. Viviani to M. Paul Cambon of 1<sup>st</sup> of August (No. 127):

" . . . . l'Autriche a, la première, procédé à une mobilisation "générale."

(Transl.: Austria has proceeded to general mobilisation, being first to take such action.)

8 Austro-Hungarian corps, in itself an exaggerated and provoking step. After the date of the 29<sup>th</sup> of July nothing was done by the Dual Monarchy which could have furnished Russia with a pretext to extend her partial mobilisation into a general one and make war thereby inevitable.

## **2. Alleged military preparations by Germany against Russia.**

At this critical period the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs has daily received repeated visits from the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg. If the Russian Government really believed in measures of mobilisation alleged to have been taken by Germany "during the last six days", i. e. since the 25<sup>th</sup> of July (Yellow Book No. 118), then nothing would have been more natural for M. Sazonof than to ask Count Pourtalès for information, pointing out to him that such "measures" would necessarily call forth reprisals on the part of Russia. A hint from M. Sazonof to those professed German preparations would have been the more natural, taking into account that Count Pourtalès has in those days repeatedly mentioned the dangers of the Russian military preparations. So on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July, with the result that M. Sazonof confined himself to the statement "que les préparatifs russes sont motivés: d'un côté, par l'intransigeance obstinée de l'Autriche; d'autre part, par le fait que huit corps austro-hongrois sont déjà mobilisés". (Transl.: . . . . . that the Russian preparations are caused, on the one hand, by the persistent obstinacy of Austria; and, on the other hand, by the fact that eight Austro-Hungarian army corps have been already mobilised (Yellow Book No. 100). On the 30<sup>th</sup> of July Count Pourtalès again reverted to the Russian preparations, and again M. Sazonof failed to seize the favourable opportunity of interrogating Count Pourtalès regarding the alleged German measures of mobilisation (Yellow Book No. 103). Neither did the Czar in his telegrams to the German Emperor at any time make the slightest mention of German military measures which his Government represented to be one of the motives of Russia's general mobilisation.

The insincerity of the attempt of excusing the Russian general mobilisation with German preparations is obvious, admitted

that the French Yellow Book (No. 102) contains confirmation of the fact that the Chief of the Russian General Staff gave the German Military Attaché on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July his word of honour that Russia's mobilisation was aiming solely at Austria, and not also at Germany. If Russia really believed to have knowledge of military measures on the part of Germany, would the Chief of the Russian General Staff have had the slightest reason for pledging his word of honour? And if the Russian Government had subsequently received news of German preparations — as M. Sazonof told the French and English (though never the German) Ambassadors — would not the Chief of the Russian General Staff then have had most serious reasons for speaking to the German Military Attaché about the altered situation? And should he not have done so before the inalterable decision of the Russian general mobilisation had been taken? Nothing of the kind happened. While Russia in her intercourse with third powers made Germany responsible for Russian mobilisation the German Emperor, the German Ambassador, and the German Military Attaché, have received none but reassuring promises from that quarter.

### **3. Austria's refusal to suffer an intervention of the Powers.**

This particular reason which had been transmitted to London by Sir George Buchanan, produces a curious effect if associated with the fact, on the one hand, that a new proposal at mediation, as suggested by Sir Edward Grey, had been submitted by the German Government to the Austro-Hungarian Government on the previous day, and that Austria's reply to the proposal was still pending. That, further, a conversation had taken place in Vienna in the afternoon of July 30<sup>th</sup> between Count Berchtold and the Russian Ambassador concerning which the French Ambassador at Vienna at once telegraphed to Paris, signalling it as a conversation of high importance ("un entretien de haute importance"). In the French Ambassadors opinion, this permitted to believe that all prospect of localising the conflict had not yet been lost ("permettait de croire que toute

"chance de localiser le conflit n'était pas perdue"). (Yellow Book No. 104.)

Sir Edward Grey's suggestion of mediation of the 29<sup>th</sup> of July ran on the following lines: Austria-Hungary shall bind herself not to advance further after taking Belgrade and the Servian territory in the region of the frontier while the Powers would try to arrange that Servia should give Austria-Hungary sufficient satisfaction. The territory occupied by the Austro-Hungarian army was to be subsequently evacuated. Sir Edward Grey notified this proposal to the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July, adding: "I suggested this yesterday as a possible relief to the situation, and, if it can be obtained, I would earnestly hope that it might be agreed to suspend further military preparations on all sides". (Blue Book No. 103.)

This suggestion was transmitted, and recommended, by Germany to the Austro-Hungarian Government, and the French and British Ambassadors did the same in St. Petersburg. (Yellow Book No. 112.) Austria was not even allowed time to reply to this suggestion, and Russia herself had not yet taken up her position in the matter, when suddenly orders for the Russian general mobilisation were issued. The statement that Russia's general mobilisation had been necessitated by Austria's refusal to yield to an intervention of the Powers (see Blue Book No. 113) is therefore in open contradiction with the facts mentioned in the English and French documents.

That Russia played the trump of general mobilisation at the very moment when her Government and that of Austria-Hungary had the English proposal of mediation still under consideration, is far surpassed in importance by a direct conversation between M. Schébéko, Russian Ambassador at Vienna, and Count Berchtold, which took place on the eve of Russia's general mobilisation. It may be recalled that, after the failure of Sir Edward Grey's first conference proposal M. Sazonof himself had taken the initiative in favour of direct negotiations with Vienna, and that this suggestion had been declined for the moment by the Austro-Hungarian Government. (Blue Book No. 74.) In the conversation of the 30<sup>th</sup> of July all difficulties

which stood in the way of direct communication were removed. In the said report of the French Ambassador at Vienna (Yellow Book No. 104) who was duly informed, in the same way as his English colleague, by the Russian Ambassador immediately after the conversation, it is stated, that M. Schébéko and Count Berchtold had carefully considered the present difficulties, with equal willingness to find solutions for them, acceptable to both sides (" . . . avec une égale bonne volonté d'y adapter des „solutions réciproquement acceptables“). The Russian Ambassador explained that the Russian military preparations had no other purpose than to meet the Austrian measures and to indicate the intention and right of the Czar to have a voice in the settlement of the Servian question. Count Berchtold replied that the measures of mobilisation taken in Galicia did not themselves imply any aggressive intentions. It was commonly agreed not to allow the measures taken to be interpreted as hostile steps. The French Ambassador's report then continues in the following terms:

“Pour le règlement du conflit austro-serbe, il a été  
“convenu que les pourparlers seraient repris à Peters-  
“bourg entre M. Sazonof et le comte Szapary; s'ils ont  
“été interrompus c'est par suite d'un malentendu, le  
“comte Berchtold croyant que le Ministre des Affaires  
“étrangères de Russie réclamait pour son interlocuteur  
“des pouvoirs qui lui permettraient de modifier les termes  
“de l'ultimatum autrichien. Le comte Szapary sera  
“seulement autorisé à discuter quel accommodement  
“serait compatible avec la dignité et le prestige dont les  
“deux Empires ont un souci égal.

“Ce serait donc, pour le moment, sous cette forme  
“directe et réduite aux deux plus intéressées qu'aurait  
“lieu l'examen que Sir Ed. Grey proposait de confier  
“aux quatre Puissances non directement intéressées.

“Sir M. de Bunsen, qui se trouvait chez moi, a  
“aussitôt déclaré à M. Schébéko que le Foreign Office  
“approuvera entièrement cette nouvelle procédure.”

(Transl.: — Concerning the settlement of the Austro-Servian conflict, it has been agreed that the pourparlers

shall be resumed at St. Petersburg between M. Sazonof and Count Szapary; if they have been interrupted, it was due to a misunderstanding, Count Berchtold believing that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs demanded for his interlocutor powers which would enable him to modify the terms of the Austrian ultimatum. Count Szapary will only be authorised to discuss what arrangement would be compatible with the dignity and the prestige of which both Empires are equally anxious.

For the moment, therefore, the examination which Sir Edward Grey proposed to confide to the four Powers not directly concerned will take place in this direct form and will be confined to the two most interested.

Sir M. de Bunsen, who happened to be with me, at once declared to M. Schébéko that the Foreign Office would thoroughly approve this new procedure.)

On the following day the Russian Ambassador at Berlin received information that the Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg was confirming Count Berchtold's statement to M. Schébéko, with the explanation that the Austrian Government were ready to discuss with the Russian Government the note presented to Servia, even as regards its material contents (" . . . . que son Gouvernement était prêt à discuter avec le Gouvernement russe la note "à la Serbie, même quant au fond". Yellow Book No. 121).

Thus, the Austrian Government had on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July taken a decisive step in a conciliatory direction by resuming direct negotiations with Russia and declaring itself ready to enter into a material discussion of the note to Servia, a condition which had until then been obstinately declined. The reason for this declared spirit of accommodation on the part of Austria which was bound to deprive the crisis of its acute character for the moment, will be easily understood upon reference to the German White Book. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of July the German Emperor had telegraphed to the Czar:

“True to the cordial friendship which has firmly  
“united us both for a long time, I shall use my entire  
“influence to induce Austria-Hungary to come to a frank  
“and satisfactory understanding with Russia.”

And in his telegram to the Czar of the 29<sup>th</sup> of July the German Emperor said:

“I believe that a direct understanding is possible  
“and desirable between Your Government and Vienna,  
“an understanding which — as I have already wired  
“You — my Government will endeavour to foster to the  
“best of their ability.”

The Kaiser, it ought to be remembered, added the words:  
“Of course, military measures on the part of Russia which Austria-  
“Hungary might regard as a threat, would accelerate a calamity which  
“both of us desire to avoid, and would also undermine my position  
“as mediator which I have — upon Your appeal to my friendship  
“and aid — willingly accepted.”

This state of affairs is confirmed by a telegram of Sir Edward Grey to the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg of the 31<sup>st</sup> of July (Blue Book No. 110) according to which Sir Edward Grey had heard from the German Ambassador at London that, “as a result of suggestions by the German Government” a conversation had taken place at Vienna between Count Berchtold and M. Schébéko, and that the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at St. Petersburg had also been instructed to see the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and to give him explanations concerning the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Servia. Sir George Buchanan was further to discuss any suggestions and questions affecting the Austro-Russian relations. Sir Edward Grey added, that he had learnt with great satisfaction that direct negotiations were being resumed between Austria and Russia.

In open contradiction with the statement contained in the French Yellow Book that Germany had never earnestly advised Vienna to yield, it is therefore proved that upon the German Emperor's intervention the Austro-Hungarian Government has, in

the afternoon of July 30<sup>th</sup>, actually given up its former resistance to discuss its note to Belgrade with Russia. On the authority of the French Yellow Book it further appears that the Russian Ambassador at Vienna attached the highest importance to this conciliatory statement made by Count Berchtold, which he communicated at once to his French and English colleagues. We have it further on the same authority that from Count Berchtold's conciliatory spirit, the French Ambassador at Vienna drew the hope of localising the conflict and that the British Ambassador, without first asking for instructions, declared spontaneously the entire approval of the Foreign Office of the agreements between Count Berchtold and the Russian Ambassador.

The Russian Orange Book contains, it must be stated, no trace of this decided pacific intention shown by Austria-Hungary, and which was frustrated by Russia's general mobilisation.

Russia's general mobilisation came as a complete surprise to her two Entente partners who, as resorts from their own documents, had received the news of Austria's conciliatory disposition with great satisfaction, as a hope for peace. At 7 o'clock in the evening of the 31<sup>st</sup> of July the German Ambassador at Paris called on M. Viviani, French Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, in order to inform him that Germany was in consequence of Russia's general mobilisation compelled to proclaim the so-called "state of danger of war" and to demand that Russia should demobilise. To this M. Viviani replied that he was absolutely uninformed as to a pretended total mobilisation of the Russian army and navy (" . . . nullement renseigné sur une prétendue mobilisation totale "de l'armée et de la flotte russes . . ." Yellow Book No. 117). Also, the British Ambassador at Paris reported late in the evening of July 31<sup>st</sup> to the Foreign Office that his colleague, M. Iswolsky, was not aware of any general mobilisation of the Russian forces. (Blue Book No. 117.)

If, therefore, the reasons advanced by Russia for her sudden general mobilisation have been nothing but bare pretexts, and if Russia is guilty of having, without even informing England and France, wantonly precipitated the course of affairs, when a most

promising suggestion at mediation had been submitted by England, and at the very moment when Germany's advice tending to remove the acute danger had produced the desired effect at Vienna, then there remains but one possible conclusion:

The persons who were at that moment deciding the fates of Russia hastened to destroy all bridges towards a pacific solution and to render war inevitable, once it had become clear that Austria-Hungary was showing inclination to yield to Germany's representations in favour of an amicable settlement.

If any further proof were required, it will be found in Russia's conduct, subsequent to the presentation of the German ultimatum.

While Germany, having declared the Russian general mobilisation to be a "casus belli", contented herself for the moment with proclaiming the "state of danger of war" which is not yet identical with mobilisation, and while she allowed Russia 12 hours, expiring at noon on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, to retract her military measures, Russia has left the German Ambassador without any reply, neglecting all attempts to avoid catastrophes by an appeal to third Powers, and opened hostilities in the night from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August at three different points of the German frontier.

Notwithstanding the French Government does not hesitate to give the following account of events (see Circular note of French Government of 1<sup>st</sup> of August, Yellow Book No. 120):

Austria-Hungary has at last declared herself ready to discuss with Russia the content of her ultimatum to Servia. Russia is ready to enter into negotiations on the terms of the English proposal ("... le Gouvernement russe est prêt à entrer en négociations sur la base "de la proposition anglaise"). Unfortunately these chances of a peaceful solution are being destroyed by Germany's ultimatum which demands demobilisation by Russia. This ultimatum is not justified since Russia has accepted the English proposal implying the cessation of the military preparations of all Powers ("... puisque la Russie

"a accepté la proposition anglaise qui implique un arrêt  
"des préparatifs militaires de toutes les Puissances").  
Germany's attitude proves that she wants war. —

History could not be treated with a lighter heart.

It is here to be admitted that Austria-Hungary showed a disposition to yield, and thereby held out the hope that peace would be preserved. But the French Circular note conceals the fact that this inclination had to be ascribed to German influence; while the French Minister for Foreign Affairs even went so far as to declare in the Chamber of Deputies on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August that Germany (between the 24<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup> of July when she sent her ultimatum to Russia under the pretext (!) of the latter having issued orders for a general mobilisation) had no positive share in the conciliatory efforts of the Triple Entente! (Yellow Book No. 159.)

It must be denied that Russia had accepted the English proposal to stop the military preparations of all the Powers, and thereby made Germany's Ultimatum appear unfounded. The English proposal (Blue Book No. 103) did not, from the beginning include the condition that all military preparations were to be stopped; Sir Edward Grey had merely expressed the earnest hope that, if his suggestion were accepted, it might be agreed to suspend further military preparations on all sides. Besides, Russia has never accepted the English proposal, neither before nor after the presentation of the German ultimatum. M. Viviani's Circular note (Yellow Book No. 120) which speaks of Russia having accepted the English proposal (in paragraph 4), merely says that the Russian Government are "ready to enter into negotiations "on the basis of the English proposal" ("... prêt à entrer en "négociations sur la base de la proposition anglaise"). There is indeed a difference between the acceptance proper of a proposal and the readiness to enter into negotiations on its content. But in reality Russia's Minister for Foreign Affairs has not even gone as far as to declare himself ready to negotiate; on the contrary, he has made a counter-proposal to the English Ambassador which was differing very materially from the English one.

Let us compare them:

Russian Counter-Proposal.  
(Orange Book No. 67)

“Si l’Autriche consent à  
“arrêter la marche de ses  
“armées sur le territoire  
“Serbe . . . . .”

(Transl.: If Austria consents  
to stop the advance of her  
armies on the territory of  
Servia. . .)

“. . . . . et si, reconnaissant  
“que le conflit austro-serbe a  
“assumé le caractère d’une  
“question d’intérêt européen . . .”

(Transl.: . . . and if, recognis-  
ing that the Austro-Servian  
conflict has assumed the character  
of a question of European  
interest . . . . .)

“. . . . . elle admet que  
“les Grandes Puissances exa-  
“minent la satisfaction que  
“la Serbie pourrait accorder  
“au gouvernement d’Autriche-  
“Hongrie . . . . .”

(Transl.: . . . she admits that  
the Great Powers examine which  
satisfaction Servia could give to  
the Austro-Hungarian Govern-  
ment . . . . .)

“. . . . . sans laisser porter  
“atteinte à ses droits d’Etat  
“souverain et à son indépen-  
“dance, — . . . . .”

English proposal.  
(Blue Book No. 103)

“. . . . . Austria, after taking  
“Belgrade and Servian territory  
“in region of frontier, to pro-  
“mise not to advance further, . . .”

(Sir Edward Grey had not  
asked for such an acknowledg-  
ment and the Austro-Hungarian  
Government had always declined  
to allow her conflict with Servia  
to be regarded as a European  
question . . . . .)

“. . . while Powers endeav-  
“oured to arrange that Servia  
“should give satisfaction suf-  
“ficient to pacify Austria . . .”

— This reserve which, by the  
way, had been already rejected  
by the declarations of the Austro-  
Hungarian Government, did ton

(Transl.: . . . without touching her rights as a sovereign state and her independence . . .)

figure in the English proposal which merely provided that the territory occupied should "be evacuated when Austria was satisfied." —

“. . . . la Russie s'engage à "conserver son attitude expectante".

(Transl.: . . . Russia binds herself to maintain her expecting attitude.)

(Which attitude had till then consisted in pushing on warlike preparations to the point of general mobilisation.)

It is this Russian counter-proposal, worthy to rank among the classical examples of naïveté, which the French Government represents to its diplomatic agents the French Parliament, and the civilized world as the acceptance "of the English proposals". These proposals, we know, included the cessation of military preparations.

Finally, M. Sazonof on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July, while presenting his famous counter-proposal to the English Ambassador, expressly confirmed that Russia did not for a moment entertain the idea of stopping her military preparations. He declared that it was "of course impossible to inhibit a mobilisation which was already in progress."

No misrepresentation, be it ever so frivolous, can therefore obscure the fact that Russia rushed her general mobilisation, without previously informing either her adversaries or her allies of this decision, while Germany delayed her own defence to the limits of selfpreservation. And this precisely at the moment when the success of German representations at Vienna was raising hopes that peace would be preserved. The leading circles of Russia have wanted war, and they have striven for it with enforced brutality as soon as the outlook of a pacific solution had appeared.

## THE ACCOMPLICES.

If the preceding explanations, based without exception upon documentary publications of the Entente Governments, furnish us with the proof that the leading men of Russia have wanted, and fomented, the war, the question arises how this decision, wrought with the most terrible responsibilities, was actually formed.

The imperative motive of self-preservation has to be discarded, for Russia was not threatened by anybody.

The "protection of Servia" is equally illusory, for, apart from the fact that there existed no defensive alliance political or moral, between Servia and Russia, Austria had pledged herself to various Powers to respect Servia's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Not even the preservation of Russian prestige in the Balkans could any longer justify an appeal to arms considering the good intentions of Austria-Hungary.

War therefore had become merely a question of opportunity for Russia.

In the absence of really pressing reasons, the decision to go to war could only be explained by the consideration that the opportunity seemed favourable for the overthrow of those Powers suspected to thwart the political ambitions of Russia's leading men.

Standing by herself, Russia would, if inevitable, have embarked in a war with Austria-Hungary and Germany for the defence of her most vital national interests, but never would she have done so for the probability of success. Nothing but the conviction of active co-operation by other Powers could have prompted Russia's fateful decision. Therefore, the attitude of the two other Powers of the Triple Entente was bound to exert a decisive influence upon her.

The co-operation of France, not to speak of England, was by no means a foregone conclusion. The Franco-Russian treaty did not bind France unconditionally to join in the struggle, and no precise arrangements of any kind existed between Russia

and England. In the Austro-Hungarian conflict with Servia which had arisen from the assassination of the Austrian Heir Presumptive and his Consort, the sympathies of those not directly interested could be only with Austria-Hungary. This fact was fully understood by Russia, with the immediate result that the Russian Government showed a certain amount of reserve after the presentation of the Austro-Hungarian note to Servia.

The French Ambassador at St. Petersburg, to quote an instance, telegraphed to his Government on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July (Yellow Book No. 31), after M. Sazonof had received communication of the Austro-Hungarian note to Servia, that the disposition of the Czar and his Ministers was most pacific. And on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July (Yellow Book No. 38):

“M. Sazonof garde toute sa modération:

“Il faut éviter, m'a-t-il dit, tout ce qui pourrait précipiter  
“la crise. J'estime que, même si le Gouvernement austro-  
“hongrois passait à l'action contre la Serbie, nous ne  
“devrions pas rompre les négociations.”

(Transl.: M. Sazonof maintains all his moderation. Everything, he told me, that could precipitate the crisis must be avoided. I think that even if the Austro-Hungarian Government proceeds against Servia, we must not break off the negotiations.)

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of July the French Foreign Office wrote in a Circular note (Yellow Book No. 50):

“De Pétersbourg, nous apprenons que M. Sazonof  
“a conseillé à la Serbie de demander la médiation  
“anglaise. Dans le conseil des Ministres du 25, tenu en  
“présence de l'Empereur, la mobilisation de treize corps  
“d'armée éventuellement destinés à opérer contre l'Autriche  
“a été envisagée; cette mobilisation ne serait toutefois  
“rendue effective que si l'Autriche contraignait la Serbie  
“par la force des armes, et seulement après avis du  
“Ministre des Affaires étrangères, à qui le soin incombe  
“de fixer la date, liberté lui étant laissée de continuer  
“les négociations même dans le cas où Belgrade serait  
“occupée.”

(Transl.: We learn from St. Petersburg that M. Sazonof has advised Serbia to ask for English mediation. At the Council of Ministers held on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July in the presence of the Czar, the mobilisation of 13 army corps was considered, ready, if necessary, to operate against Austria; this mobilisation, however, would not be effective unless Austria constrained Serbia by force of arms, and only at the advice of the Minister for Foreign Affairs upon whom rests the duty of fixing the date. He has been given full liberty to continue the negotiations even in the event of Belgrade being taken.)

How doubtful this moderation of Russia has been appears from a statement which M. Sazonof made to the British Ambassador already on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July (Blue Book No. 6): — “ . . . . that “Russian mobilisation would at any rate have to be carried out“. It follows that the Russian mobilisation was being carried out as early as the 24<sup>th</sup> of July, the day on which the Austro-Hungarian note to Serbia became public. On the other hand, the French Circular note of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July (Yellow Book No. 50) represents the Russian Council of Ministers of July 25<sup>th</sup> as taking a partial mobilisation against Austria “into consideration“, and that mobilisation was to become effective only, if Austria began warlike operations against Serbia and after the Minister for Foreign Affairs had been consulted. It is not without importance to state that up to this period the Russian and French Governments were still endeavouring to appear most moderate.

Obviously because the Russian Government was at that time not yet certain of the English, nor even of the French, co-operation. At the interview which M. Sazonof had arranged at the residence of the French Ambassador on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July with this gentleman and Sir George Buchanan (Blue Book No. 6), M. Sazonof urged that England should proclaim her solidarity with Russia and France, whereupon Buchanan very cautiously replied: —

“I could not, of course, speak in the name of His Majesty's Government, but personally I saw no reason to expect any declaration of solidarity from His Majesty's

"Government that would entail an unconditional engagement on their part to support Russia and France by force of arms. Direct British interests in Servia were nil and a war on behalf of that country would never be sanctioned by British public opinion."

It is not fully known in what frame of mind the French Ambassador received M. Sazonof's suggestions, for the French Yellow Book, rather characteristically, contains no report on this important conversation, and Sir George Buchanan contents himself in his own report with the remark that his French colleague gave him "to understand that France would fulfil all the obligations contained in her alliance with Russia." This left the question of France's neutrality in an offensive war on the part of Russia open. And indeed, as will be presently seen, it was only at a later stage that France gave the Russian Government the promise of unconditional armed support.

We will now proceed to examine the way in which France's and England's attitude have developed.

#### FRANCE.

Evidently the French Government found itself in a grave dilemma. First, its whole policy had for years been based upon most intimate relations with Russia. On the other hand, the responsibility of siding with Russia in the bad cause of Servia, the risk of being left alone with Russia, against Germany and Austria, were both heavy.

The French statesmen consequently were moved by two apprehensions. They were afraid of rousing Russia's suspicion and of isolating France after weakening Franco-Russian relations. And again, they were afraid of standing alone in a war with Germany, while Austria-Hungary was fighting Russia.

As a result of these apprehensions the French Government refused to risk any action at St. Petersburg which might have allowed the interpretation that France was breaking away from Russia. The efforts of the German Ambassador at Paris, after the presentation of the Austro-Hungarian note to Servia, to attract the attention of the French Cabinet to the gravity of the

situation and to the fact that the moderating influence of France was much wanted at St. Petersburg, were invariably received with distrust. They were looked upon as attempts to drive the wedge between France and Russia.

When, after presentation of the Austro-Hungarian note to Servia, the German Ambassador at Paris correctly and loyally stated that the German Government regarded the affair as one to be settled between Austria-Hungary and Servia alone, and that Germany sincerely desired to localize the conflict, an intervention on the part of any single Power being bound to have incalculable consequences, there appeared an inspired article in the "Echo de Paris" whose intimate relations with the Quai d'Orsay are well known. The German Ambassador's step was called a "menace allemande" (Yellow Book No. 36).

When two days later, on July 26<sup>th</sup>, the German Ambassador suggested to the French Government an intervention in a pacific sense at St. Petersburg, adding that Austria-Hungary had already declared to Russia that she wanted neither territorial aggrandisement nor to encroach upon Servia's integrity, in fact that her sole wish was to secure her own safety, he received the reply that Russia had on her side done nothing to raise doubts in her moderation. That it was for Germany to intervene at Vienna (Yellow Book No. 56). And when at last the German Ambassador after his experiences with the "Echo de Paris", proposed to publish a notice stating that he had in a fresh conversation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs examined the means of preserving peace in a most friendly spirit, the mere idea of a public manifestation of "solidarité pacifique" with Germany created fear (Yellow Book No. 57). The notice proposed by the German Ambassador was subsequently communicated to the Press without the suspicious expression of solidarity and friendly spirit. — "Cette rédaction, volontairement terne, évitait une solidarité avec l'Allemagne qui pourrait être mal interprétée." (Transl.: This purposely colourless wording avoided a solidarity with Germany that could be misinterpreted.) So to read in a Circular note addressed by the French Foreign Office to its representatives abroad on that not unimportant event. (Yellow Book

No. 62.) The same note further states that most likely Baron von Schoen's intention had been to "compromise France in the eyes of Russia ("à compromettre la France au regard de la Russie"). The French Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs in a subsequent Circular note of the 29<sup>th</sup> of July expressed his satisfaction that the German Ambassador had attempted in vain to lure France into a common Franco-German action at St. Petersburg ("a vainement tenté de nous entraîner dans une action solidaire franco-allemande à Pétersbourg"). He repeats the statement that the Russian Government had given the strongest proof of its moderation and that Russia was in no way threatening peace, that, however, something must be done at Vienna where the danger was brewing (Yellow Book No. 85).

No document of the French Yellow Book, and none either of the Russian Orange Book or English Blue Book, contain an indication that France has ever attempted to influence Russia in a pacific sense. Unless we look upon the wish that Russia might avoid every pretext for German mobilisation as an act of peaceful mediation.

We should be just as well entitled to suspect that such wishes as were at all expressed tended rather to secure the necessary time and detain Germany until the military help of England could be secured (Yellow Book No. 102).

Making sure of the alliance of England, is what the efforts of French diplomacy were concentrated upon in those critical days, and as long as this had not been attained, the last word was not spoken to Russia. May it appear ever so clear from the French Yellow Book that the support of Russia by France was a foregone conclusion, so natural that a special mention of it seemed unnecessary, — the Yellow Book contains no trace of it —, the Russian Orange Book is better informed. It contains a telegraphic instruction of M. Sazonof to M. Iswolsky of the 29<sup>th</sup> of July (Orange Book No. 58), the last of the ten documents of this date, so that it may be assumed to have been sent late in the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup> of July. M. Iswolsky is instructed to express to the French Government "our sincere gratitude for the declaration "which the French Ambassador has given me in their name to

"the effect that we can count entirely upon France's support as "our ally" ("d'exprimer au Gouvernement français notre sincère reconnaissance pour la déclaration que l'Ambassadeur de France m'a faite en son nom en disant que nous pouvons compter entièrement sur l'appui de notre alliée la France"). In the present circumstances, M. Sazonof added, this declaration is particularly valuable to us. ("Dans les circonstances actuelles cette déclaration nous est particulièrement précieuse.")

It results that France has in the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup> of July, neither sooner nor later, given to Russia the explicit and unconditional promise of armed support.

Why not earlier? And why could France definitely arrive at this momentous decision on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July?

The key to this lies by

### ENGLAND.

Since 1905, France's relations with England are officially called "Entente Cordiale". An entente, not an alliance. In the English Parliament the ministers responsible for the foreign policy have continually declared that those cordial relations represented no treaty obligations between the two nations; there was no binding obligation on the part of England, and the free decision of Parliament was in no way interfered with.

To-day we know better.

Between Sir Edward Grey, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and M. Paul Cambon, Ambassador of the French Republic at the Court of St. James', letters were exchanged on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of November, 1912, of which Sir Edward Grey's letter — confirmed by M. Paul Cambon on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November in similar terms -- is here reproduced (Blue Book No. 105, Enclosure 1):

"Foreign Office, November 22, 1912.

"My Dear Ambassador,

"From time to time in recent years the French and  
"British naval and military experts have consulted together.  
"It has always been understood that such consultation  
"does not restrict the freedom of either Government to

"decide at any future time whether or not to assist the  
"other by armed force. We have agreed that consultation  
"between experts is not, and ought not to be regarded  
"as, an engagement that commits either Government to  
"action in a contingency that has not arisen and may  
"never arise. The disposition, for instance, of the  
"French and British fleets respectively at the present  
"moment is not based upon an engagement to cooperate  
"in war.

"You have, however, pointed out that, if either  
"Government had grave reason to expect an unprovoked  
"attack by a third Power, it might become essential to  
"know whether it could in that event depend upon the  
"armed assistance of the other.

"I agree that, if either Government had grave reason  
"to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power, or  
"something that threatened the general peace, it should  
"immediately discuss with the other whether both  
"Governments should act together to prevent aggression  
"and to preserve peace, and, if so, what measures they  
"would be prepared to take in common. If these  
"measures involved action, the plans of the General Staffs  
"would at once be taken into consideration, and the  
"Governments would then decide what effect should be  
"given to them.

Yours, &c.,

E. GREY."

This historical document confirms that the English and French naval and military authorities had for years past worked out, and agreed upon, plans for a joint action on sea and on land. There is no doubt against whom those plans were directed. They were regulated by repeated consultations which took place at regular intervals between the English and French military and naval authorities. The conditions upon which joint action of the two military and naval forces was to become effective were not then formulated; it was to be eventually decided whether such joint action should be taken or not.

The British Government were, therefore, formally right in stating that no treaty obligations were binding them with France. But materially the drafting of plans for joint operation between two Great Powers, and the continual consultations regarding such operations can be no mere waste of time. If only for the intimate knowledge to be gained of the military organisation of the other side, there is already sufficient ground for earnest intention to co-operate. In order to illustrate the material importance of this exchange of letters, it may be stated that France, on the strength of the plan of operation agreed upon with England, concentrated her fleet in the Mediterranean, leaving the protection of her channel and atlantic coasts to the English fleet. Did this really imply no obligations not even moral on the part of England?

It is sophistical to mislead not only others, but even oneself. Sir Edward Grey seems to have prided himself at the beginning of the conflict with full liberty of action which he did not possess. That is the only explanation of the strange part played by Sir Edward Grey, a part which from the very start was doomed to failure: He wanted to be a mediator where in reality he was a partner.

Whether he intended it or not, the ambiguity of his position was bound sooner or later to lead him into insincerity.

One need only refer in the English Blue Book (No. 17) to the answer which Sir George Buchanan gave at the beginning of the crisis, i. e. on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July, to M. Sazonof when the latter pressed him for a declaration of England's solidarity with France and Russia:

"I said that England could play the rôle of mediator  
"at Berlin and Vienna to better purpose as friend who,  
"if her counsels of moderation were disregarded, might  
"one day be converted into an ally, than if she were to  
"declare herself Russia's ally at once."

The word of "honest broker" would be ill-applied to a "mediator" of that sort.

Sir Edward Grey had long lost his disinterestedness and inner freedom in consequence of his "entente" relations with France

and Russia, a freedom which alone would have qualified him for the desired part of the middle-man and arbitrator — a rôle to which he had aspired before and again in the conflict with Servia. Apart from this and presuming the sincerity of his own intentions, he found himself in a difficult position towards his ministerial colleagues whose attitude, through the resignation of three adherents of peace, was by no means unanimous.

At first, Sir Edward Grey offered some resistance to Russia's and France's pressure for an immediate proclamation of solidarity. He thoroughly approved Buchanan's declarations to Sazonof of the 24<sup>th</sup> of July, the most important of which was that England could hardly undertake unconditional obligations to support Russia and France by force of arms, as English public opinion would never sanction a war on behalf of Servia (Blue Book No. 6). Indeed, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July Sir Edward Grey expressly states:

"I do not consider that public opinion here would  
"or ought to sanction our going to war over a Servian  
"quarrel." (Blue Book No. 24.)

This attitude of England created a most painful impression at St. Petersburg and Paris as the tone of the newspapers of those days clearly shows, though the official documents are silent on the point.

Russian and French diplomacy tried to influence Sir Edward Grey by warning of the danger if Germany could safely count upon the non-intervention of England. While as soon as England decided to go with Russia and France, Germany would bring pressure to bear upon Austria-Hungary, and all danger of war would be removed (Blue Book No. 17). Sir George Buchanan on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July gave M. Sazonof the proper answer. His Excellency was mistaken, he said, if he believed that by such proceeding the cause of peace could be promoted. "Their (the German) attitude would "merely be stiffened by such a menace". (Blue Book No. 44.)

While the English Ambassador was merely stating the incontestible fact that an English menace would not only fail in its aim but aggravate the crisis, London was beginning to yield to French and Russian pressure.

To begin with, Sir Edward Grey lent his ear to Paul Cambon who suggested the famous conference proposal in the following form: The English Cabinet was to demand of the German Government the initiative of a proposal at Vienna offering a mediation in the Austro-Servian question of the four Powers not directly interested. (" . . . de prendre l'initiative d'une "démarche à Vienne pour offrir une médiation, entre l'Autriche "et la Serbie, des quatre Puissances non directement intéressées" (Yellow Book No. 32). The proposal was from the outset doomed to failure. For, apart from burdening Germany with a pressure on her ally which France at the same time strictly declined to make vis à vis of Russia, the well-known Austro-Hungarian point of view was, that an intervention or mediation by third parties would be unacceptable in an Austro-Hungarian-Servian-conflict. Moreover, Austria-Hungary would have eo ipso acknowledged, by accepting the Grey-Cambon proposal, that Russia was a "Power "directly interested" in the Austro-Hungarian-Servian conflict. A construction which would have been in direct contradiction to Austro-Hungarian views and intentions. But while Sir Edward Grey was thus let astray, Paul Cambon succeeded in spoiling considerably England's relations to Germany, as Germany's refusal could be confidently expected.

Simultaneously there were certain indications of encouragement being held out to France and Russia in English Government circles. This under-current appears from comparison of two telegrams (Yellow Book No. 63 and 66) which the French Chargé d'Affaires in London sent to his Government on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July, and which may be literally quoted here.

No. 63.

"Londres, le 27 juillet 1914.

"L'Ambassadeur d'Allemagne  
"et l'Ambassadeur d'Autriche-  
"Hongrie laissent entendre qu'ils  
"sont sûrs que l'Angleterre gar-  
"derait la neutralité si un conflit  
"venait à éclater. Sir Arthur

No. 63 (Translation).

London, 27<sup>th</sup> of July, 1914.

The German and Austro-  
Hungarian Ambassadors give it  
to understand that they are  
certain that England will maintain  
neutrality in the event of a con-  
flict breaking out. Sir Arthur

"Nicolson m'a dit que, cependant,  
"le Prince Lichnowski ne pou-  
"vait, après la conversation  
"qu'il a eue avec lui aujourd'hui,  
"conserver aucun doute sur la  
"liberté qu'entendait garder le  
"Gouvernement britannique d'in-  
"tervenir, au cas où il le juge-  
"rait utile.

"L'Ambassadeur d'Allemagne  
"n'aura pas manqué d'être frappé  
"de cette déclaration, mais pour  
"peser sur l'Allemagne et pour  
"éviter un conflit, il semble in-  
"dispensable que celle-ci soit  
"amenée à tenir pour certain  
"qu'elle trouverait l'Angleterre  
"et la Russie aux côtés de la  
"France."

No. 66.

"Londres, le 27 juillet 1914.

"Sir Ed. Grey a dit ce matin  
"à l'Ambassadeur d'Allemagne  
"que si l'Autriche envahissait la  
"Serbie après la réponse serbe,  
"elle démontrerait qu'elle ne  
"poursuivait pas seulement le  
"règlement des questions men-  
"tionnées dans sa note du  
"23 juillet, mais qu'elle voulait  
"écraser un petit Etat. "Alors",  
"a-t-il ajouté, se poserait une  
"question européenne, et il s'en-  
"suivrait une guerre, à laquelle  
"d'autres Puissances seraient  
"amenées à prendre part.

Nicolson has told me, however,  
that Prince Lichnowsky after  
the conversation he had with  
him to-day, could not any longer  
remain in doubt as to the in-  
tention of the British Govern-  
ment of intervening, should they  
deem it useful.

The German Ambassador  
cannot have failed to be struck  
by this declaration, but, in order  
to bring pressure to bear upon  
Germany and to avoid a conflict,  
it appears indispensable that no  
doubt should be left to her  
that she would find England and  
Russia by the side of France.

No. 66 (Translation).

London, 27<sup>th</sup> of July, 1914.

Sir Edward Grey has told  
the German Ambassador this  
morning that, if Austria invaded  
Servia after the Servian reply,  
she would be proving that she  
was not merely seeking the sett-  
lement of the questions men-  
tioned in her note of the 23<sup>rd</sup> of  
July, but that she wanted to  
crush a small state. "Then", he  
added, "a European question  
"would be raised, and a war  
"would follow, in which other  
"Powers would be led to take  
"part."

“L'attitude de la Grande-Bretagne s'affirme par l'arrêt de la démobilisation de sa flotte. Le Premier Lord de l'Amirauté avait pris discrètement cette mesure dès vendredi, de sa propre initiative; cette nuit, Sir Edward Grey et ses collègues ont décidé de la publier. Ce résultat est dû à l'attitude conciliante de la Serbie et de la Russie.”

The attitude of Great Britain is demonstrated by the inhibition of the demobilisation of her fleet. The First Lord of the Admiralty had discreetly taken that step since Friday (24<sup>th</sup> of July) upon his own initiative. Tonight Sir Edward Grey and his colleagues have decided to publish it. This result is due to the conciliatory attitude of Servia and Russia.

Notice is to be taken of the difference of tone used by Sir Edward Grey and Sir Arthur Nicolson in their respective statements to the French Chargé d'Affaires: Nicolson pretends to have made declarations to the German Ambassador which left no doubt in the latter's mind that England was retaining full liberty of intervention. Grey, however, declares to have confined himself to the remark that also “other Powers” would be led to participate in a war.\*)

But more significant than the difference between the sharper tone of Nicolson who, by the way, is one of the sponsors of the Anglo-Russian rapprochement, and the rather milder tune of Sir

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\*) The French Government has authorised an English translation of the French Yellow Book through “The Times”, this authorisation being expressly confirmed on the title-page of the book. The French original, No. 66, reads:

“ . . . . . et il s'ensuivrait une guerre, à laquelle d'autres Puissances seraient amenées à prendre part”.

This is being translated by “The Times” as follows:

“ . . . . . and a war would ensue, in which all the Powers would take part”.

So the original and authentic version of the French Yellow Book has been forged on the authority of the French Government. By this touching up, a directness and firmness of speech is for obvious reasons attributed to Sir Edward Grey as early as on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July, which in reality he did not employ until several days later.

Edward Grey, is the admission that the First Lord of the Admiralty had upon his own initiative, already on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July, inhibited the demobilisation of the fleet concentrated for manoeuvres. And yet more important is that Sir Edward Grey on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July took the opportunity to inform the French Chargé d'Affaires of this until then concealed measure, explaining it by the conciliatory attitude of Servia and Russia. A similar communication was made by Grey on the same day to the Russian Ambassador. Grey informed Buchanan (Blue Book No. 47):

"I have been told by the Russian Ambassador that  
"in German and Austrian circles impression prevails that  
"in any event we would stand aside. His Excellency  
"deplored the effect that such an impression must produce.

"This impression ought, as I have pointed out, to be  
"dispelled by the orders we have given to the First Fleet,  
"which is concentrated, as it happens, at Portland, not  
"to disperse for manoeuvre leave. But I explained to  
"the Russian Ambassador that my reference to it must  
"not be taken to mean that anything more than diplomatic  
"action was promised."

It is easy to understand the kind of inference which, notwithstanding the reservation made by Sir Edward, was naturally drawn by the Russian and French Governments from the maintenance of the mobile state of the English First Fleet, and from the official notification of that fact. The action of the First Lord of the Admiralty and its sanction and publication by the British Cabinet weighed more heavily than any cautious wording.

In the course of the two following days the war party in the Cabinet must have gained more and more the upper-hand. For on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July Sir Edward Grey took a step which was bound to finally remove any doubt concerning England's stand by the side of her Entente partners. On that day Grey had a conversation with Prince Lichnowsky on which he himself reports to the English Ambassador at Berlin (Blue Book No. 89):

"After speaking to the German Ambassador this  
"afternoon about the European situation, I said that I wished  
"to say to him, in a quite private and friendly way, some-

"thing that was on my mind. The situation was very grave. While it was restricted to the issues at present actually involved we had no thought of interfering in it. But if Germany became involved in it, and then France, the issue might be so great that it would involve all European interests; and I did not wish him to be misled by the friendly tone of our conversation — which I hoped would continue — into thinking that we should stand aside."

The plainness of this statement left nothing to be desired.

Now, outspokenness can be an advantage in grave situations and it can also be useful for clearing them. But if such was Sir Edward Grey's intention, for what earthly reason did he tell the French Ambassador in the morning of July 29<sup>th</sup> that he was going to see the German Ambassador and that he would make that "quite private and friendly" communication to him?

Sir Edward Grey himself reports to the English Ambassador at Paris that he has proceeded in this way (Blue Book No. 87):

"After telling M. Cambon to-day how grave the situation seemed to be, I told him that I meant to tell the German Ambassador to-day that he must not be misled by the friendly tone of our conversations into any sense of false security that we should stand aside if all the efforts to preserve the peace, which we were now making in common with Germany, failed."

France could now be absolutely sure of active armed support by England in the event of her being dragged into the conflict by the force of circumstances. It is significant that the French Yellow Book contains no trace of a report by Paul Cambon concerning this conversation, the most highly important one of all during the entire critical week. And the Yellow Book will be also vainly searched for the instructions which were thereupon hurried from Paris to St. Petersburg. But the bullet which had left the barrel in London in the morning of July 29<sup>th</sup>, hit the mark at St. Petersburg on the same evening:

the immediate consequence is the telegram by which M. Sazonof instructs M. Iswolsky to express to the French Government the sincere gratitude of the Russian Government for the declaration of unconditional armed support (Orange Book No. 58).

The dice had therewith been cast in favour of war. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of July M. Sazonof had already declared to the English Ambassador: "If Russia feels secure of the support of France, she will face all "the risks of war" (Blue Book No. 17). Now the moment had arrived: Relying on the conviction that the participation of France in the war would call England into the arena, France had promised Russia to support her by force of arms, probably adding that England's co-operation could also be relied upon.\*)

To his communication to Paul Cambon concerning the statement which he was going to make to Prince Lichnowsky, Sir Edward Grey has joined a few remarks which at first sight would seem to be analogous to the reservation which he had made when he notified the Russian Ambassador of the maintenance of the mobile state of the Fleet. In fact he pointed out to M. Cambon that public opinion in England regarded the present difficulty from quite a different point of view than the Morocco crisis a few years ago. In the case of Morocco it appeared that Germany, in an attempt to crush France, was picking up a quarrel on a question that was the subject of a special agreement between England and France. In the present case the issue was primarily one between Austria-Hungary and Servia, and even

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\*) A report of Baron de l'Escaille, the Belgian Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburg, of the 30<sup>th</sup> of July, which was seized in Germany after the outbreak of hostilities, contains full confirmation of this connection of things. It is said there: "England at first let it be "understood that she had no wish to be dragged into a conflict. Sir "George Buchanan said so quite openly. To-day, i. e. on July 30<sup>th</sup>, St. "Petersburgh is fully persuaded, nay, it has even received assurances to "that effect, that England is going to side with France. This assistance is "of decisive importance and has very materially contributed to the triumph "of the war party."

if it became one between Germany and Russia, England would not feel called upon to take a hand in it. If France owing to her alliance obligations was drawn into the quarrel, England would have to make up her mind what she would do; it was a question that would have to be considered. England was free from engagements, and she would have to decide what English interests required her to do. He thought it necessary, Sir Edward Grey added, to say this, in order not to mislead M. Cambon into supposing that a decision had been already arrived at.

M. Cambon's reply shows in which way he interpreted these explanations. Sir Edward Grey (Blue Book No. 87) wires to the British Ambassador in Paris:

"M. Cambon said that I had explained the situation very clearly. He understood it to be that in a Balkan quarrel, and in a struggle for supremacy between Teuton and Slav we should not feel called to intervene; should other issues be raised, and Germany and France become involved, so that the question became one of the hegemony of Europe, we should then decide what it was necessary for us to do."

And, indeed, M. Cambon had thoroughly understood Sir Edward Grey, reading moreover between the lines: in deference to public opinion the English Cabinet could not base an intervention on merely a Serbo-Austro-Hungarian or Russo-German conflict; a more important issue, a more imperative one, would have to be and must be found. At any rate, England regarded a conflict in which also Germany and France were opposing each other, as a question involving the hegemony of Europe, and there could be no doubt as to the decisions which the English Government would formally have to take upon that contingency.

M. Cambon, after France had given the promise of armed support to Russia on the strength of his conversation with Sir Edward Grey, lost no time to look out for new "issues" of the growing conflagration. On the following day, July 30<sup>th</sup>, he "presented the bill", drawn on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November, 1912, to Sir Edward Grey, accompanied by a note of the French Foreign Office concerning alleged German military preparations on the Franco-German

frontier\*). With the perspicacity peculiarly his own, M. Cambon anticipated that Germany would now attack France, be it by the demand that she should cease her war preparations or that she should engage to remain neutral in the event of a war breaking out between Germany and Russia. Both of these, France would have to decline (Blue Book No. 105).

Thus, a threatening, attack on France and the menacing of the peace of Europe, the two premises upon which a decision was at once to be taken as to the pre-arranged co-operation of the English and French armies and navies becoming effective, had now set in, at least in the interpretation of the French Government. The ultimate decision of the English Cabinet could no longer be doubtful after the conversation which had taken place between Grey and Cambon on July 29<sup>th</sup>.

Was Sir Edward Grey aware that on that very 29<sup>th</sup> of July France had promised Russia unconditional armed support, a promise upon which Russia had immediately determined to face the risks of war? If so, did he see but the ghost of a chance for the instruction which he telegraphed to Buchanan on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July telling him to urgently recommend to the Russian Government the acceptance of the new proposal of mediation which had resulted from his conversation with the German Ambassador? If Sir Edward Grey really aimed at bringing about a conciliation on this basis in the eleventh hour, and if he was sincere in welcoming Count Berchtold's concession — due to the German Emperor's intervention — to discuss with Russia the material points of the note to Servia, what must his feelings have been when the Russian Government ordered general mobilisation on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July? War had become inevitable, the war into which, considering all that had happened before, England, too, was bound to be dragged? Was it really Sir Edward Grey's wish that Russia should proceed in this way, regardless of the prospects of a pacific settlement, regardless also of his own suggestion?

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\*) This note, in the words published by the English Blue Book, must, for reasons given in the footnote on page 3, have been purposely invented.

If Russia's sudden and responsible step met with any feeling at all in Sir Edward Grey's soul, he must be certainly a master in the art of self-control. In the Blue Book, at any rate, not the slightest trace can be found of any such sentiment, no more than even the suggestion of a protest against Russia's destructive action. Neither is there any endeavour to influence Russia to suspend the mobilisation, or to give satisfactory explanations to Germany.

On the contrary, Grey made the hopeless attempt to keep the negotiations going and to induce Germany to remain inactive, which was flatly refused by Germany. Secretary of State von Jagow declared to Sir Edward Goschen: Russia said that her mobilisation did not necessarily imply war for she could perfectly well remain mobilised for months without making war; this was not the case with Germany. Germany had the advantage of speed, Russia of numbers, and the safety of the German Empire did not permit Russia the time to bring on the masses of her troops from all parts of her wide dominions. (Blue Book No. 138.)

Once the dice had been cast, Sir Edward Grey concentrated all his efforts upon playing the game in a way that an issue might be found which would bring about England's immediate participation in the war, an issue which would seem to justify the war with Germany in the eyes of the still refractory group of the English Cabinet and of English public opinion.

The Blue and Yellow Books, together, prove that since July 29<sup>th</sup> Sir Edward Grey, being morally bound to Paul Cambon by the strongest possible ties, had no easy stand with the British Cabinet in his attempt to represent the mere implication of France in the war as an adequate reason for England's active participation. M. Cambon's contention — which Grey had never opposed (see page 36) — that a war in which both France and Germany were involved meant also a fight for the hegemony of Europe which could not be viewed with equanimity by England, did not meet with sufficient support in the English Cabinet.

The dilemma in which Grey found himself was increased by very far-reaching guarantees which Germany had promised in the event of England remaining neutral. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of July, when

Berlin had no knowledge yet of the "quite private and friendly" declaration of Sir Edward Grey to Prince Lichnowsky (see page 33), the Imperial Chancellor made a proposal to Sir Edward Goschen which was a strong bid for British neutrality (Blue Book No. 85). The Imperial Chancellor pointed out that a Russian attack upon Austria-Hungary would probably lead to a European conflagration owing to Germany's obligations as Austria-Hungary's ally. It was clear, he added, that England would not remain inactive if France were crushed in any possible conflict. This, however, was not Germany's object, and provided that England's neutrality were certain, every assurance would be given to the English Government that Germany aimed at no territorial acquisitions at the expense of France, even if victorious. On being questioned by Sir Edward Goschen, the Imperial Chancellor said he was unable to give a similar declaration in respect to the French Colonies. He further said that Germany would in any case respect the neutrality of the Netherlands provided that the other side would do the same. As regards Belgium, it depended upon the action of France what operations Germany might be forced to enter upon in Belgium; but when the war was over, Belgian integrity would be respected provided she had not been fighting against Germany.

This proposal was violently declined by Sir Edward Grey (Blue Book No. 101). Goschen was instructed to declare to the Imperial Chancellor with reference to the assurances given concerning France: "It would be a disgrace for us to make this bargain with Germany at the expense of France, a disgrace from which the good name of this country would never recover." Neither could England bargain away whatever obligation or interest she had with regard to the neutrality of Belgium.

The violence of Sir Edward Grey's tone when rejecting the German proposal is significant: Sir Edward Grey looked upon England as the ally of France whom Germany wished to entice into a breach of faith. At the same time he was determined to make the question of Belgian neutrality the issue which he needed for pushing Cabinet and public opinion into war.

No. 113 of the Blue Book contains the telegram from St. Petersburg concerning the issue of the orders for general mobilisation of the Russian forces.

No. 114 of the Blue Book reproduces a telegram from Sir Edward Grey to the English Ambassadors at Paris and Berlin as follows:

“Foreign Office, July 31, 1914.

“I still trust that situation is not irretrievable, but  
“in view of prospect of mobilisation in Germany it  
“becomes essential to His Majesty's Government, in view  
“of existing treaties, to ask whether French (German)  
“Government is prepared to engage to respect neutral-  
“ity of Belgium so long as no other Power violates it.”

Thus, Grey's reply to the Russian mobilisation did not consist in a step at St. Petersburg, but in raising the question of Belgian neutrality in Berlin in order to gain an opening for England's interference. The question put to Paris was of course a mere farce.

There was in fact no time to be lost in doing something in that direction. For the French Ambassador who, upon Grey's declaration of July 29<sup>th</sup>, had acted at once and irrevocably engaged France, who had, on July 30<sup>th</sup>, presented the “bill” of November 1912 insisting on its redemption, was showing signs of impatience when Sir Edward Grey, on the insistence of the Cabinet, made a few reservations. Grey wrote to the British Ambassador at Paris on July 31<sup>st</sup> (Blue Book No. 119) that Paul Cambon had produced a telegram from the French Ambassador at Berlin — made to order, apparently, — stating that Germany was being encouraged by the uncertainty as to whether England would really intervene. Sir Edward Grey protested and told Paul Cambon that he had on that same morning definitely refused to declare to the German Ambassador that England would remain neutral and that he had even told him, if France and Germany became involved in war, England would be drawn into it. This, of course, would not mean an engagement vis à vis of France. He further told Paul Cambon that the Cabinet had come to the conclusion that they could not at the present

moment make any promise. "Up to the present moment, we did not feel, and public opinion did not feel, that any treaties or obligations of this country were involved". But, he added encouragingly, further developments might alter the situation and persuade the Government and Parliament that intervention was justified. The preservation of Belgian neutrality might be, "I would not say a decisive, but an important factor", in determining England's attitude.

How little Paul Cambon was satisfied with this statement, can be seen from his own report on the conversation (Yellow Book No. 110). He asked Grey whether perhaps England would wait for the German invasion of France before she intervened. "I have insisted on the fact that the measures already taken on our frontier by Germany revealed intentions of early aggression, and that, if it was desired to avoid a repetition of Europe's mistake in 1870, it would be well that England should promptly consider under which circumstances she would give us the support upon which France counted." (*"J'ai insisté sur le fait que les mesures déjà adoptées sur notre frontière par l'Allemagne révélaient des intentions d'agression prochaine, et que si l'on voulait éviter de voir se renouveler l'erreur de l'Europe en 1870, il convenait que l'Angleterre envisageât dès maintenant les conditions dans lesquelles elle nous donnerait le concours sur lequel la France comptait."*) But Grey remained on the Cabinet's decision. On the other hand, Sir Arthur Nicolson whom Cambon met on leaving Sir Edward Grey's rooms, offered him some slight consolation: The Council of Ministers would meet again tomorrow, "and he gave me to understand confidentially that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would not fail to resume the discussion" (*"et, confidentiellement, m'a fait entendre que le Secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires étrangères ne manquerait pas de reprendre la discussion"*).

It is hardly necessary to read between the lines.

Up to the meeting of the Council of Ministers to which Sir Arthur Nicolson had alluded, the replies to Sir Edward Grey's question regarding Belgian neutrality had arrived from Paris and

Berlin. The French Government of course emphatically promised to respect Belgian neutrality. In Berlin, however, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had declared to the British Ambassador that he would first have to consult the Emperor and the Chancellor. "I gathered from what he said that he thought any reply they might give could not but disclose a certain amount of their plan of campaign in the event of war ensuing, and he was therefore very doubtful whether they would return any answer at all." (Blue Book No. 122.) This report of Goschen's has left Berlin in the late evening of July 31<sup>st</sup>, being received at the Foreign Office on August 1<sup>st</sup>, according to an entry in the Blue Book.

The English echo followed promptly. Already the next number (123) of the Blue Book contains a communication from Grey to Goschen of August 1<sup>st</sup>, saying that Grey told Prince Lichnowsky that the reply of the German Government with regard to the neutrality of Belgium was "a matter of very great regret" because the neutrality of Belgium "affected feeling in this country". If Germany could see her way to reply as France had replied it would materially contribute to relieve anxiety and tension in England. On the other hand, if there were a violation of the neutrality of Belgium by one combatant while the other respected it, it would be extremely difficult to restrain public feeling in England. Prince Lichnowsky presented the alternative whether, if Germany gave a promise to respect Belgian neutrality, England would engage to remain neutral. Grey answered evasively, declaring that the English Government's hands were still free and that they were considering what their attitude should be. All he could say was that their attitude would be determined largely by public opinion in England to which the neutrality of Belgium very strongly appealed. But he did not think that England could give a promise of neutrality on that condition alone. "Prince Lichnowsky even suggested that the integrity of France and her colonies might be guaranteed." But to all of this Grey had but one reply: "I said that I felt obliged to refuse definitely any promise to remain neutral on similar terms, and I could only say that we must keep our hands free."

So, Sir Edward Grey's own report on the conversation of the morning of August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Germany has gone still farther in the concessions by which she strove to obtain England's neutrality. The Imperial Chancellor stated to the Imperial Diet on August 4<sup>th</sup> that he had offered to the English Government "that, as long as England will remain neutral, our fleet will not attack the Northern coasts of France"; and he added "that, as long as England will remain neutral, we would be ready, provided reciprocity be assured, to undertake no hostile operations against French merchant shipping".

The English Blue Book contains nothing of these German concessions. Has Sir Edward Grey submitted them to the Cabinet at all? It appears from the French Yellow Book (No. 144) that this omission cannot have been the fault of the German Ambassador in London, for Paul Cambon reports on August 3<sup>rd</sup> that the German Ambassador had sent a communiqué to the Press stating that, if England remained neutral, Germany would forego all naval operations and not use the Belgian coasts as a base.

Thus Germany had offered in return for England's neutrality the integrity of Belgium, France and her colonies, and furthermore was ready to forego any naval operation against the French coast and French merchant shipping; but not even at this price, nor at any other, as Sir Edward put it quite plainly, England's neutrality was to be had. "England will have her hands free" meant, translated from the language of "Cant" into the language of straightforwardness, "England is already firmly tied to France".

On the same day, the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, Sir Edward Grey made the following statement to Paul Cambon (Yellow Book No. 126): He was going to draw the attention of the Cabinet to the insufficient reply of Germany in the question of Belgian neutrality and would ask for authority to tell the House of Commons on Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, that the English Government would not permit a violation of Belgian neutrality. Besides, the English squadrons were mobilised, and he would propose to his colleagues that the English fleet would oppose the passage of the German squadrons

through the Channel, or, if they succeeded in passing it, any demonstration on the French coasts.

It cannot be considered the habit in England for a Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to inform the representative of an interested foreign Power beforehand of proposals of the highest historical moment which he intends to make to the Cabinet Council, engaging by such an information the country's policy before the Cabinet has spoken. A procedure of this description is the more extraordinary where decisions are involved against whose tendency a successful opposition has previously asserted itself in the midst of the Cabinet. By furnishing to Monsieur Cambon these informations in the morning of August 1<sup>st</sup> and thereby forestalling the decisions of the Cabinet, it must be put to his credit that at any rate this step did not involve a more heavy engagement towards France than he had already taken before.

Anyhow, it is significant that the English Blue Book contains no communication of Sir Edward Grey to the British Ambassador at Paris in reference to this conversation with Paul Cambon, while, on the other hand, Paul Cambon did not fail to at once report it to his Government.

At Paris a great deal of anxiety was beginning to be felt in consequence of the opposition showing itself in the English Cabinet, so that the British Ambassador at Paris resolved to telegraph to Grey in the evening of July 31<sup>st</sup>, that the French Minister for Foreign Affairs was "urgently anxious as to what the attitude of England will be in the circumstances, and begs an answer may be made by His Majesty's Government at the earliest moment possible". (Blue Book No. 124.)

The reply was Sir Edward Greys extraordinary statement to Paul Cambon in the morning of August 1<sup>st</sup>.

France was now appeased, and without awaiting the German mobilisation, the French Government on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, 3.40 o'cl. p. m., issued orders for the general mobilisation of the French army. (Blue Book No. 136.)

On the following day, Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, Sir Edward Grey made another statement to the French Ambassador which he repeated in a more definite form on August 3<sup>rd</sup>:

“If the German squadron should pass through  
“the Straits or go north in order to double the  
“British isles for the purpose of attacking the  
“French coast or the French navy, and to disturb  
“the French mercantile marine, the English  
“squadron would intervene in order to give its  
“entire protection to the French navy, so that  
“England and Germany would be in the state of  
“war.”

(“Dans le cas où l'escadre allemande franchirait le détroit ou remonterait la Mer du Nord pour doubler les îles britanniques dans le but d'attaquer les côtes françaises ou la marine de guerre française et d'inquiéter la marine marchande française, l'escadre anglaise interviendrait pour prêter à la marine française son entière protection, en sorte que dès ce moment l'Angleterre et l'Allemagne seraient en état de guerre.”) (Yellow Book No. 143.)

When first making this statement on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, Sir Edward Grey thought it advisable to give the following explanation: The British Government had very important questions and most difficult issues to consider and they felt that they could not bind themselves to declare war upon Germany if war broke out between France and Germany tomorrow. But it was essential to the French Government, whose fleet had long been concentrated in the Mediterranean, to know how to proceed, with their northern coasts entirely undefended. The English Government therefore had thought it necessary to give them this assurance. It did not bind England to go to war with Germany unless the German fleet took the action indicated. (Blue Book No. 148.)

This commentary shows to which extent the arrangements between France and England, though formally not binding, were in fact material obligations. On nothing more than the „mere“ plan of operation agreed upon between the English and French military and naval authorities, which was in no way to hamper the liberty of action of both Governments in the event of war, the French fleet had been concentrated in the Mediterranean. But

now the English Cabinet felt itself, by this very concentration, constrained to assume the protection of the French North coast and of the French merchant marine, and even to go to war with Germany.

If, therefore, between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of August German men-of-war had ventured either to sail through the Straits or to pass up the North Sea, and as England would have interpreted this as an intention to attack the French coast or fleet, or at least to disturb the French mercantile marine, this would have called forth an immediate action of the English fleet and the actual state of war between England and Germany would have resulted. And this for the consequences, which the English Cabinet believed itself entitled to draw from the Entente with France, which England had always professed to be in no way binding! Independent, too, of Germany's attitude towards Belgian neutrality.

But the neutrality of Belgium was still kept in reserve as a possible cause of war for which an efficient pretext was still lacking for the majority of the British Cabinet. Grey, it is true mentioned to Paul Cambon on August 3<sup>rd</sup> only the putting to sea of the German fleet as "casus belli" while not mentioning Belgian neutrality. But in the conversation of August 2<sup>nd</sup> he had already said that the Cabinet were considering what statement they would make in Parliament on the next day — in effect, whether they would declare the violation of Belgian neutrality to be a "casus belli". (Blue Book No. 148.) Grey had therefore not yet succeeded in carrying his proposal, that England would not allow Belgian neutrality to be violated, through the Cabinet, a proposal which he had on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August promised the French Ambassador to submit to his colleagues.

It may be a matter for regret that German warships did not at that time actually put to sea and that no hostile action of the English fleet occurred in consequence. If so, the tale that England had been forced to war solely through Germany's violation of Belgian neutrality, would have been exploded.

As facts developed, the pretext kept in reserve by the leading circles of England, became an actuality. The German Government was forced by circumstances which have long since become

public property, to demand of Belgium permission for the free passage of German troops. The King of the Belgians appealed to the King of England for diplomatic intervention with a view to safeguard the integrity of Belgium. The British Government thereupon demanded an immediate declaration of Germany that Belgian neutrality would be respected. (Blue Book No. 153.) The German Ambassador made a final attempt by submitting to the British Government a telegram from the German Foreign Office by which he was instructed to repeat in the most positive form the assurance that, even in the case of an armed conflict with Belgium, Germany would, under no pretence whatever, annex Belgian territory. The telegram further read: "Please impress upon Sir E. Grey that German army could not be exposed to French attack across Belgium, which was planned according to absolutely unimpeachable information." (Blue Book No. 157.)

Even this failed. In the evening of August 4<sup>th</sup> the British Government presented an ultimatum expiring at midnight, i. e. at a time when German troops had already crossed the Belgian frontier. The war with England had come!

After all that has been said concerning the development of French, English and German negotiations in the course of the critical week, no further proof is required that England would have gone to war even if there had been no German violation of Belgian neutrality. The responsible leaders of English policy had, on the strength of the formally not binding Entente with France, in the days following upon the presentation of the Austro-Hungarian note to Servia, so firmly engaged England in the direction of immediate active intervention on the side of France, that England could no more stand aside if not at the price of the overthrow of the Cabinet and for fear of the reproach of perfidy.

It has to be considered, and it is evident, that those persons who had led England into war had to do all they could to rouse public feeling in order to cover their own responsibility. It has been shown how insincere a proceeding this was. Enough, to point to the documents which the German authorities succeeded in

seizing at Brussels, and which furnish proof of a cooperation on the part of Belgian and English military authorities coinciding with the cooperation of French and English General Staffs and Admiralties on the basis of the Franco-British Entente. If, with regard to the Anglo-Belgian military understanding, the excuse is put forth that the agreements only referred to the eventuality of a violation of Belgian neutrality through Germany, and in themselves carried no obligation for the policy of both Governments, this amounts to no more than a similar statement of English statesmen in Parliament and in public for years past with regard to the character of the Franco-British Entente. In the case of Belgium, however, the relations are defined with quite particular clearness. There is among the seized documents a note by the hand of Count von der Straaten, Director in the Belgian Foreign Office, concerning a conversation between Lieutenant-Colonel Bridges, English Military Attaché at Brussels, and General Jungbluth, Chief of the Belgian General Staff, on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1912. In the course of this conversation Lieutenant-Colonel Bridges declared, according to Count von der Straaten's memorandum:

"The English Government would have immediately effected a landing in Belgium during the last events (Morocco crisis) even if Belgium had not demanded it."

"The General interposed", the memorandum goes on to say, "that Belgian assent would be necessary."

"The Military Attaché replied that he was aware of that; but as Belgium was not in a position to prevent the Germans from passing through Belgium, England would have landed her troops in Belgium in any case."

There is no indication in the memorandum of Count von der Straaten that Belgium has raised any sort of objection or made any reserves regarding this declaration.

It follows that England was fully determined in 1912 to throw over board the inviolability of Belgian neutrality for whose sake she professes to have now gone to war. Belgium herself had hopelessly compromised her neutrality by her military agreements with England. If England, in the face of these indisputable facts,

still tries to make the world at large believe that she has drawn the sword in defence of the neutrality of Belgium, she is playing the part of the seducer who pretends to defend his own victim's innocence.

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We arrive at the following conclusions as to the genesis of the European War, to be drawn from the publications of the Governments of the Triple Entente:

1. Russia has brought about the war by ordering general mobilisation on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July which — as the Russian statesmen were fully aware — made war for Germany inevitable.
2. All the pretexts advanced by the Russian Government for their general mobilisation, are untenable. Neither Austro-Hungarian nor German military measures can justify the Russian general mobilisation. The Russian Government have issued orders for general mobilisation immediately after Austria-Hungary had, upon the German Emperor's serious advice, adopted an attitude of quiet expectation, of which she had informed the Russian Ambassador at Vienna. Thus, Russia has conjured up the war just when hopes of a preservation of peace were revived by Austria-Hungary's conciliatory step.
3. According to her own statements, Russia was from the beginning of the crisis resolved to face all the risks of war if she could count upon support. This promise of unconditional armed support on the part of France was received by Russia in the evening of July 29<sup>th</sup> most likely with a hint that England was going to side with France.
4. France has given the promise of unconditional armed support to Russia only at the moment when she felt sure of England's cooperation. The certainty of England's armed assistance, the French Government received through the statement of the English Secretary of State

for Foreign Affairs to the French Ambassador in the forenoon of July 29<sup>th</sup>, concerning the refusal which he was going to give to the German Ambassador.

5. The persons responsible for the policy of England were from the outset tied by the "Entente" with France, and, if they had not already previously resolved to do so, they were determined to take part in the war under any circumstances, if France became involved.
6. The persons directing the British policy saw moreover clearly that a war on the Servian question would never be sanctioned by public opinion in England. That is why they concentrated their efforts upon finding a pretext palatable to English public opinion. This pretext was found in the "violation" of Belgian neutrality, which neutrality had been compromised by Belgium herself, and the respect of which in the case of emergency was not intended by the British General Staff (according to the own declarations of the English Military Attaché at Brussels).
7. To what extent the violation of Belgian neutrality through Germany was but a mere pretext for the British Cabinet, is evidenced by the fact that, previous to the English ultimatum to Germany on account of Belgium, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had made the formal statement to the French Ambassador that England would regard a passage of the Channel or of the North Sea by the German fleet as "casus belli".

On the strength of these indisputable facts, which are confirmed by the official publications of the Triple Entente Governments themselves, the statement that it was Germany that has wanted, and caused, the war will disappear before the verdict of History. Russia is the incendiary, France and England proved to be the accomplices.

It would far exceed the frame of this sketch were we to examine all the primary causes of the disastrous events and actions

which, in the short space between the 24<sup>th</sup> of July and 4<sup>th</sup> of August, have fomented this greatest and most sanguinary of all wars. These single events and actions, the utterances of Sir Edward Grey, of Cambon and Sazonof, of the First Lord of the Admiralty and of the Russian Generalissimo all these manifestations small as they may appear in comparison to the appalling human tragedy, are only the sudden outcome of the mysterious Forces which determine the History of our days.

In the case of Russia it is the craving for supremacy in the Near East, increased in vigour since her defeat at the hands of Japan, the grim determination to break through any resistance on the part of the Central Powers, whenever it should be possible.

As regards France, it is the fatal direction of her entire policy towards the negative pole of her thirst for revenge, coupled with dread, and converging in the readiness to side with any powerful adversary of Germany.

With England it is the commercial envy and aversion against any ascendant economical system, added to the instinctive antagonism against the strongest continental Power, and the traditional suppression of any continental aspiration to sea power.

These heterogeneous forces have spun the network of the Entente which became a terrible instrument in the hands of a small minority bent upon war, and in whose meshes the large and peaceful majority of the people of Russia, France and England were hopelessly taken. Russia's conflict with Austria-Hungary subjected the Entente to the supreme test. There is no doubt that a single word on the part of France would have been sufficient to keep down the Russian war party. At any rate, it is most probable that such a word, if spoken by England, would have kept back France. But it is on the other hand obvious that the smallest sign of encouragement by England was bound to let the war parties in Russia and France gain the upper-hand. It is of course equally certain that any withdrawal of France and England would have broken up the Triple Entente even if treaties and agreements would, so to speak, have allowed these two Powers a free hand. A novel orientation of the entire European policy

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might have arisen which would not necessarily have resulted in the hegemony of one single State, but in which every Power might have had equal chances.

In the choice between the preservation of the Triple Entente and the world's peace, the leading English and French statesmen, being already suspicious and prejudiced, have sacrificed the world's peace to the Entente under pressure of warlike cliques, and have carried away the greater part of the public opinion of their countries by invoking the sanctity of written and unwritten treaties.

It will be the task of historians to unfold the veil.



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