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# WHO WANTED THE EUROPEAN WAR?

BY  
GUGLIELMO FERRERO

TRANSLATED BY  
P. E. MATHESON

*Price Eightpence net*

OXFORD  
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## PREFATORY NOTE

THIS study was published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of Dec. 15, 1914, under the title 'Le Conflit européen d'après les documents diplomatiques', and was republished in a literal translation, arranged by the publishers, in the collection of 'Problemi italiani' under the new title 'Le origini della guerra presente'. The study now printed has been supervised by the author himself and is perhaps something more than a new translation, as the French text has been revised or retouched in many points. In his revision the author has taken account of the Austro-Hungarian Red Book, which was not published when the study appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. As now printed the pamphlet records the diplomatic action of Europe from July 23 to August 1, 1914, which gave rise to the European war, so far as it can be gathered from all the collections of diplomatic documents up till now put at the disposal of the public. These are :

The White Book published by the German Government (*German White B.*).

The three White Books published by the British Government—Miscellaneous, No. 6 (1914) [Cd. 7467]; Miscellaneous, No. 8 (1914) [Cd. 7445]; Miscellaneous, No. 10 (1914) [Cd. 7596]—collected by the Government in one volume: *Great Britain and the European Crisis* (quoted as *W. B.*).

330038

The Orange Book published by the Russian Government (*Orange B.*).

The Yellow Book published by the French Government (*Yellow B.*).

The Red Book published by the Austro-Hungarian Government (*Red B.*). For this the Italian translation made by the Austrian Government has been used.

GUGLIELMO FERRERO.

# WHO WANTED THE EUROPEAN WAR?

## I

ON July 23, 1914, the Habsburg Monarchy, in a diplomatic 'note', requested the Government of Serbia to make reparation for the blood of the Archduke, butchered at Serajevo. We all remember the amazement of Europe on reading that famous 'note'; but the consternation felt in the Chancelleries on receiving copies of it was equally great. They saw clearly that Austria with subtle and cold-blooded skill had contrived a provocation to Russia, fraught with most bloody issues. After reassuring the Powers of the Triple Entente for a fortnight that she would present only moderate requests to Serbia, she then, at an unexpected moment, when the Governments of Europe were all on the eve of retiring to the country, sprang a surprise by demanding of the little State that she should commit suicide on the tomb of the Archduke, and allowed her only two days to complete the sacrifice. What would happen if Russia proved unwilling or unable to abandon Serbia to her fate?

On July 24 the Ambassador of Austria-Hungary in London went to Sir Edward Grey to hand him the note. In taking it from the hands of the Ambassador Sir Edward Grey did not disguise the acute anxiety that he felt at this moment. He told him that no one disputed the right of the Dual Monarchy to avenge the death of the Archduke, but added that he had never

seen so 'threatening' a document addressed by any State to another free and independent State. He declared that England would stand aside if Austria and Serbia alone were involved, but that if Russia intervened she could not stand aside: in that case she would have to consult the other Powers to see what could be done (*W. B.* 5). The same day Grey had conversations with the French Ambassador and with the German Ambassador. He said at the outset that if Russia intervened to defend Serbia, he intended to propose to France, Germany, and Italy that they should join England in interposing their peaceful offices between Vienna and St. Petersburg (the Russian capital still bore that name). M. Cambon thought the proposal a wise one, but observed that these Powers could take no steps until the Russian Government had declared its intentions in some way or other; but Austria had allowed Serbia so little time to reply, that the time-limit would certainly expire before any action could even be commenced, and therefore the first necessity was to induce Austria to extend the time-limit allowed to Serbia. But who could persuade Austria except Germany? Grey agreed, and the same day, after explaining to the German Ambassador when and how in his opinion the four Powers ought to intervene, he begged him to urge his Government to ask the Austro-Hungarian Government to take no irrevocable action when the time-limit expired (*W. B.* 10; *Yellow B.* 32-3).

England, from July 24 onwards, declared her point of view frankly and precisely: if Russia thinks it possible to leave Austria and Serbia to settle their quarrel alone, England will stand aside with folded arms; if Russia intervenes, England will invite the Powers to interpose their united good offices to mediate between the two

great Empires. What did Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia say and do on the same day?

Germany defined her point of view the same day, but took a different line. She affirmed that no Power, for any reason, must come between Austria and Serbia. The German Government has stated and repeated the statement a hundred times that up to July 23 it was unaware of the *coup* which the allied Empire was preparing against Serbia, and this, though not probable, may be true, as there is no document or decisive proof to show that it is false. At the same time, if Germany was indeed entirely in the dark, it is singular that the German Government, the same day on which the Austrian note was handed to Serbia, July 23, could send the long note, which was handed the next day, July 24, to the Governments of France, England, and Russia. This note, after warmly defending Austria-Hungary, concluded with these very plain and far from reassuring words:

‘The Imperial Government desires to affirm, in the strongest possible manner, that the present conflict concerns Austria-Hungary and Serbia alone, and that therefore the great Powers must seek to confine the conflict to them. The Imperial Government desires that the conflict should not spread; because the intervention of a third Power might, owing to the Alliances, produce incalculable effects.’ (*W. B.* 9; *German White B.* 1; *Yellow B.* 28.)

There can be no doubt what was Germany’s object in this first step. Whilst Germany, by threatening ‘incalculable’ effects, played with the Russian Colossus, Austria would easily be able to dispose of little Serbia on her own account. But whilst Germany muttered low threats between her teeth, the ancient Monarchy of the

Habsburgs practised its most amiable smile before the glass ; and all honey and sweetness, wearing its 'heart on its sleeve', did its best to reassure the anxiety of Europe. 'The Russian Government', said Count Berchtold to the Russian Ambassador on July 29, speaking as an old friend with his hand on his heart, 'need not be anxious. The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy harboured no evil designs, it aimed at no annexation of Serbian territory, and did not propose to alter the balance of power in the Balkans ; its sole desire was to correct Serbia of the vicious habit of murdering sovereigns and heirs-apparent ; and this it wished to do not so much in its own interest as in the common interest of all dynasties.' (*German White B. 2 ; Red B. 18.*)

To Grey, however, the good Count conveyed an even more reassuring message, but in strict confidence and for his private ear : he instructed the Ambassador to tell him at the opportune moment—I copy word for word the official Italian translation of the Red Book—'that the note presented yesterday to Belgrade must not be regarded as a formal ultimatum : it is indeed a "note" with a time-limit fixed for reply, which, as your Excellency will be good enough to explain in strict confidence to Sir E. Grey, will, if the time-limit expires without result, be followed only by rupture of diplomatic relations and by the commencement of necessary military preparations.' (*Red B. 17.*)

At St. Petersburg, however, feeling was strongly roused. Both in the streets and in official quarters the thing was taken in bad part. On the morning of the 24th the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sazonoff, listened, half impatiently, half sardonically, to the 'note' to Serbia, which the Austrian Ambassador came to read to him, interrupting him every moment and declaring finally



that Austria had taken a grave step. In the afternoon the Council of Ministers met and sat for five long hours. What its decisions were we do not know, but we do know that when it broke up Sazonoff declared openly and without reserve, to the German Ambassador, that, inasmuch as the relations of Austria and Serbia interested the whole of Europe, Russia would *on no condition* allow Serbia and Austria to settle them alone, and explicitly requested Austria to prolong the time-limit allowed to Serbia (*German White B. 4; Red B. 16*). The Russian point of view was therefore in direct opposition to that of Germany.

## II

Thus on July 24 each of the great Powers had, to use the common phrase, taken up its position. France alone had declared herself unable to express a definite opinion, as she was waiting till Russia should state her mind more clearly.

'Night brings counsel,' says the proverb. We must suppose that in the night between the 24th and 25th, Pallas Athene (as in the *Iliad*) appeared by the sleepless pillows of the men who governed Germany. In a word, on the 25th the German Government changed its tone. It no longer warned the European Powers, in a voice half of counsel, half of menace, not to interfere between Austria and Serbia. It now wrapped itself up in an indolent and dilatory optimism, as if the doings of this lower world, and among them the dispute between Austria and Serbia, interested it no longer. Herr von Jagow, Foreign Minister for the kingdom of Prussia, declared first to the English Ambassador, and then to the Russian chargé d'affaires, that the Imperial Government consented to transmit to the Austrian

Government the request of the Russian Government, that Austria should prolong the time-limit allowed to Serbia for her suicide, but doubted whether it would arrive in time. He added that he was certain that Russian opinion would be reassured when it knew the true intentions of Austria as Count Berchtold had explained them. He said there was no danger of a general war: at the worst war might break out between Austria and Serbia! Finally, he declared that Germany desired peace, and was ready to intervene when the peace of Europe was really in danger. On the same day in Paris, at noon precisely, the German Ambassador went to the Quai d'Orsay to tell the Government how much displeased he was that a paper, *L'Écho de Paris*, had described the German 'note' of the preceding day, on 'the incalculable effects', as a 'Teutonic threat'. Threat indeed! the German Government had merely meant to say that it desired that the conflict should not spread further—surely an honest and legitimate desire. Baron Schoen also added that there was no agreement between Austria and Germany (*White B.* 13; *Yellow B.* 41-3).

In short, compared with the 'note' of the preceding day, the conversations of the 25th were prudent and conciliatory. Why had Germany softened the tone of her two outspoken notes of the 24th? Let who will try to guess: for the present writer this is the first mystery. It remains true, however, that on that very day Austria, which the day before had tried to reassure Russia and England with words, refused to take the one *action* which might have quieted feelings at St. Petersburg better than a thousand conversations. On the 25th M. Kondochev, Russian chargé d'affaires, tried in vain to find Count Berchtold in order to ask him,

in the name of his Government, to extend the time-limit imposed on Serbia. The Count had thought fit to go to Ischl. M. Kondochev was obliged to forward the request by telegraph; and Count Berchtold replied by telegraph in the negative (*Orange B.* 11-12; *Yellow B.* 43). Germany was using wise words, but the action of Austria was hostile. When Sir E. Grey learnt that Austria had refused to extend the time-limit, he at once recognized the danger of her attitude. The Austrian Ambassador in vain tried to reassure him, by confiding to him Count Berchtold's secret: that, if Serbia did not give a satisfactory answer, though the Austrian Government would recall its minister from Belgrade, it would not adopt any real acts of war. These diplomatic refinements and juridical distinctions were all that he offered! Grey feared that Serbia could not give satisfaction to Austria; that the great Austro-Hungarian Empire and the small Serbian kingdom would break with one another in a few hours; there was, therefore, not a moment to be lost, if he wished to preserve peace. Instead of offering opposition to the peculiar confidences of the Austrian Ambassador, Grey sent for the Ambassador of Germany; he told him that the four great Powers ought to pledge themselves not to mobilize, and should all make a joint request to Austria and Russia not to proceed to any act of war, until they could look about for an agreement; he pressed him most earnestly to secure the assent and participation of Germany, on which the result of this move seemed to him to depend. The step would be fruitless without the participation of Germany. Lichnowsky seemed to be moved by the language of the minister. He agreed that Austria might accept the intervention of the four great Powers,

to mediate not between herself and Serbia, but between Serbia and Russia (*White B.* 26 ; *Orange B.* 22).

But Sir E. Grey had good reason for his anxiety, and for wanting not to lose time. The same day the minister of Austria-Hungary at Belgrade asked for his passports and left. Following the advice of Russia, France, and England, Serbia had declared herself ready to cut her throat at Austria's bidding, with such good will that one can hardly help thinking that she was already aware that Austria would not be content with the offer. Austria in fact declared that Serbia's pretended offer of suicide was a sham ; and, although the little Slav kingdom had accepted almost all the clauses of the ' note ', declared that she had rejected it (*Red B.* 30). Impartial observers drew the conclusion that Austria did not wish to avenge the Serajevo murder, but to get hold of a pretext for war (*W. B.* 41). The moment had therefore now come to take a decisive step towards securing an agreement.

### III

On the 26th, then, Sir E. Grey proceeded with the plan suggested the day before to the German Ambassador, and made an official proposal to the Cabinets of Rome, Paris, and Berlin, that the Ambassadors of Italy, France, and Germany should join him in conference, with a view to securing an agreement between Austria and Russia, meanwhile requesting Serbia, Russia, and Austria not to take up arms until the conference had met (*W. B.* 36). The same day Sazonoff again attempted to discuss matters with Count Berchtold, and telegraphed to the Ambassador of the Czar at Vienna (*Orange B.* 25),

‘I have to-day had a long and friendly conversation with the Ambassador of Austria-Hungary. After examining with him the ten demands made to Serbia, I pointed out to him that some are quite impossible, even if the Serbian Government should declare its willingness to accept them. Thus, for example, demands 1 and 2 could not be satisfied without a revision of the Serbian laws on the Press and on Associations, and it would be difficult to induce the Skuptschina to consent to this. As for 4 and 5, they might have most dangerous consequences, and even give rise to acts of terrorism against members of the Royal House and against Pasich, a result certainly not intended by Austria. As regards the other points, it seems to me that it would not be difficult to find a basis for an understanding, if it appeared that the charges made were supported by adequate proofs.

‘In the interests of peace, which, according to Szapary, Austria has no less at heart than the other Powers, it would be necessary to put an end as soon as possible to the present conflict. With this object it would seem to me very useful that the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador should be authorized to confer with me privately, with a view to a joint revision of some clauses in the Austrian note of the 10th (23rd N. S.) of July. In this way we might succeed in finding a formula which Serbia could accept, while giving Austria satisfaction in regard to the substance of her requests. I beg you to explain this in a discreet and friendly spirit to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.’

(Communicated to the Ambassadors in Germany, France, England, and Italy.)

England and Russia therefore were working for peace. Unfortunately Grey had not been mistaken in anticipating that the diplomatic rupture between Austria and Serbia would be followed by rapid military preparations in the Austrian and in the Russian Empire. On July 26 Austria-Hungary began to call part of her reserves to the colours (*Orange B.* 24), and Russia took

the preliminary steps to be ready for mobilization on the Austrian borders (*German White B. 23*). What was Germany doing meanwhile? Did she hasten to assent to the proposals of the English Government, urged so strongly by Sir E. Grey, and assented to by Italy on the same day (*W. B. 35*)? No. Throughout July 26 she went on repeating that she wished for peace and that her desire for peace was not disturbed by the first vague notices in regard to Russian mobilization which arrived in Berlin during the day (*German White B. 6, 7, 8*): she still worked for peace, but by means very different from those advised by England, directing her efforts to convincing the Governments of France, England, and Russia that, as Austria had declared that she had no designs on Serbian territory, Russia had now no reason for intervening. 'Sazonoff has declared that Russia cannot allow Serbia to be mutilated: but Austria has no idea of that kind; and therefore . . .' Such is the reasoning and conclusion on July 26 of Zimmermann, Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in conversation with the English chargé d'affaires at Berlin (*W. B. 33*). And the Imperial Chancellor the same day instructed the Ambassadors at Paris and London to express the same view to the French and English Governments (*German White B. 10; Yellow B. 56*).

'To-day the German Ambassador', telegraphs the Russian chargé d'affaires from Paris on the 26th, 'has made the following declarations to the Minister in charge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

"Austria has declared to Russia that she has no territorial aspirations and does not threaten the integrity of Serbia. Her sole desire is to secure her own tranquillity. Peace and war are therefore in Russia's hands. Germany, like France, wishes to preserve peace, and has strong hopes that France will

use her influence at St. Petersburg to give counsels of moderation."

'The Minister replied that Germany, for her part, might well take some similar step at Vienna, especially in view of the fact that Serbia had given proof of a very conciliatory spirit. The Ambassador replied that Germany could not take this step, having decided not to interfere in the Austro-Serbian conflict. Then the Minister asked if the four great Powers—England, Germany, Italy, France—could not attempt to move at St. Petersburg and Vienna. The Ambassador stated that he had no instructions. In the end the Minister refused to assent to the German proposal.'

Germany, in a word, wanted France to undertake the duty of explaining and recommending to Russia the German point of view. At the same time she got her Ambassador to take a step at St. Petersburg: a step clearly described, not in the German White Book, but in Dispatch 28 of the Red Book, a dispatch sent by the Austrian Ambassador in Russia to Count Berchtold. It begins thus—

'ST. PETERSBURG,

'*July 26, 1914.*

'As it is rumoured that Russia is preparing to mobilize, Count Pourtalès has warned the Russian Minister in the most explicit manner that the use of military preparations for the purpose of diplomatic pressure is most dangerous at this moment, as in this case the purely military point of view becomes predominant in the larger States, and if once "the button is touched" in Germany there is no means of stopping.'

Germany, it would seem, was so passionately devoted to the peace of the world that she was ready once again to let Russia pay the whole cost of securing it! What in fact was the demand made by Germany with such

a friendly air on July 26 in London, Paris, and St. Petersburg? No more nor less than the complete surrender of Russia, as in 1909. Grey rightly believed that the main thing, indeed the only thing, to preserve peace, was that Germany should mediate impartially between Austria and Russia, instead of standing by the side of her ally to support her at all costs in all her arguments, good or bad; because only in that way could the French and English Governments in their turn take action at St. Petersburg as friends of peace rather than as friends of Russia. But it was only too clear that Germany, whatever the reasons, found this impartial attitude difficult. As early as July 24 she had launched against Russia, and on Austria's behalf, the lightning threat of 'incalculable consequences'; on the 25th she had seemed to detach herself a little from her ally; but on the 26th she returned to her side, to aid her in gaining her point, while at the same time trying to wrap her support in the veil—alas! only too transparent—of disinterested love of peace. The German move failed. London and Paris again asked Germany to give counsels of prudence at Vienna (*W. B.* 46; *Orange B.* 28; *Yellow B.* 56). The Russian Government made a clear and explicit declaration to the German Ambassador that Russia had not yet called up a single man of her Reserve; that she would not mobilize on the frontiers of Germany; but that if Austria declared war on Serbia, Russia would order mobilization in the districts of Kiew, Odessa, Moscow, and Kazan (*Red B.* 28; *German White B.* 11). But meanwhile the English proposal, the one hope of agreement, was hung up for want of Germany's assent; and, what is worse, the conversations in the course of the day left little hope that Germany was disposed to assent. The 26th closed in uncertainty and anxiety.



## IV

But once more night seemed to bring counsel. On the morning of the 27th Germany seemed disposed to accept the English proposal, i. e. to mediate impartially between her ally and the ally of France in the supreme interest of peace. 'I told M. Jagow'—telegraphs the French Ambassador at Berlin on July 27—'that Grey's proposal was a means of preserving peace. M. Jagow told me that he was disposed to proceed on these lines, but added that if Russia called out her army, Germany could not stand still and look on. I asked him whether Germany thought it necessary to mobilize, so long as Russia mobilized only on the Austrian borders. He replied "No", and has authorized me to report this to you' (*Yellow B.* 67). The same day Sir E. Grey telegraphed to the English Ambassador at Berlin: 'The German Ambassador has informed me that the German Government accepts *in principle* the mediation of the four Powers between Austria and Russia' (*W. B.* 46).

In the course of the day France in her turn assented to the English proposal, and the Russian Government declared that if it could not come to a direct understanding with the Austro-Hungarian Government, 'it would accept the English proposal or any other proposal calculated to settle the dispute'. There was therefore a moment, in the course of July 27, in which it was possible to hope that before sunset the agreement between the four great Powers, acting for peace, would be concluded, and that next day Europe, after three days of anxiety, might draw a great sigh of relief. . . . Only the formal assent of Germany was wanting! When, however, Sir E. Goschen, English Ambassador in Berlin, went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the afternoon

of the 27th to receive the official reply of the German Government to the English proposal, the answer he received, to his surprise, was a clear and decided 'No'. Herr von Jagow had changed his opinion in a few hours. He declared to the English Ambassador that, if such a conference were called, it would mean the establishment of a Court of Arbitration under another name; it was impossible to summon Austria and Russia before a Court of Arbitration, unless they both asked it to give a decision. The Ambassador used every effort to show, by every kind of argument, that the conference proposed by England was something entirely different: but the Minister remained firm; the only concession he made was that, since Austria and Russia wished to discuss the question between themselves, it was possible to wait till their discussions were concluded before having recourse to other expedients or taking fresh steps. It seemed, in fact, that the German Government was once more wrapping itself up in its dilatory optimism, like a tortoise in its shell: the danger is not urgent, we can therefore wait and see. . . . In a word, Germany, after a period of real or pretended hesitation, wrecked the English proposal in order to help Austria to secure her purpose. Austria had already forgotten the confidences made to the English Government on July 25. She wished at all costs to make war on Serbia, and that very day had announced to the Powers that, as Serbia had not given a satisfactory reply, she was preparing to use 'energetic measures'. Austria, then, did not wish the conference to intervene and embarrass her movements: at the same time she did not wish openly to refuse the good offices of the peace-makers. Germany's idea was to dismiss them before they entered on their duties.

The fine house of cards, which Sir E. Grey had taken such pains to build, had in two days tumbled to the ground; it was blown down by Germany at the last moment. All was again uncertain, and—what was worse—a suspicion had gained ground in the Chancelleries of the Triple Entente that Germany and Austria were carrying out a cleverly concerted plan, in which Germany was to play with the Powers without seeming to do so, while Austria acted. The moment was come for plain speaking. Grey sent for the Austrian Ambassador and asked him if his Government realized that, without thinking, it was bringing about nothing more nor less than universal war (*White B.* 48). The Russian Ambassador in Vienna paid a visit to Baron Macchio, at that time Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: he told him without reserve that if Austria declared war on Serbia, Russia would intervene and Europe would be in flames; he asked that the Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg might be instructed to confer with Sazonoff, who in his turn should try to persuade Serbia to make such concessions to Austria as were just (*W. B.* 56; *Orange B.* 41). The French Ambassador in Berlin proposed to Herr von Jagow that the four Powers should at least take one step in common at Vienna, by begging the Austrian Government 'to abstain from any action which might aggravate the present situation' (*Orange B.* 39). Further, the Russian chargé d'affaires called upon Herr von Jagow and begged him to advise the Austrian Government 'strongly' to accept the proposal of the Russian Ambassador at Vienna (*Orange B.* 38). Austria and Germany therefore in the course of July 27 received plenty of salutary advice and conciliatory proposals. Russia on that day spoke plainly and straightforwardly: she said, and repeated the assurance, that

she wished for peace, but that if Austria declared war on Serbia she should call out her army and intervene.

Unfortunately the proposals were not accepted and the advice was not listened to. Herr von Jagow said 'No' to the French Ambassador and to the Russian military attaché, protesting that he could not advise Austria to give way (*Orange B.* 38-9). The German Ambassador in Paris declared to the Director of the Political Department that Germany would not hear of conferences or mediations (*Orange B.* 34). The attitude of Germany was such that even the Russian Government, so respectful till that moment to its great Imperial neighbour, lost patience. 'My conversations with the German Ambassador'—writes M. Sazonoff, in a dispatch sent on the 28th to the Russian Ambassador in London—'confirm my opinion that Germany approves of the uncompromising attitude of Austria. The Berlin Cabinet, which might have stopped all these troubles at the outset, does nothing. The Ambassador even regards the answer of Serbia as inadequate. This attitude of Germany is particularly disquieting. It seems to me that England would be in a better position than any other Power to attempt to induce the German Government to take the necessary action. The key of the situation is at Berlin' (*Orange B.* 43). Not only did Berlin reject all the conciliatory proposals made by Russia and France: but Austria, deaf to all counsel and advice, challenged fate, and on July 28 declared war on Serbia.

## V

Events which had been trembling in the balance for five days were now precipitated. Austria had refused to listen to reason: the world turned its eyes towards

Russia. What action would be taken by that vast Empire, which had repeatedly declared that it would never abandon the little Slav kingdom to the hands of Austria?

On July 28, the very day on which Austria declared war on Serbia, the Ministers met in council at St. Petersburg, and decided to begin mobilization next day in the military districts of Odessa, Kiew, Moscow, and Kazan; to advise the Cabinet of Berlin officially, and to repeat that Russia intended no menace to Germany (*W. B.* 70; *Yellow B.* 95, 96). This decision could of course take no one by surprise, as Russia had from the first declared that, if Serbia were assailed, she would call up her reserves on the borders of Austria. Popular indignation, excited by the provocative action of Austria, would not tolerate any hesitation in the Government. But the decision of the Russian Government was the only event of importance which the 28th was to record before evening. For some hours after the declaration of war all the Powers waited in silence, to see what would be the effect of this bold action. Germany was the first to break this anxious silence. All at once, on the evening of the 28th, the Chancellor of the German Empire invited the English Ambassador to see him and conversed with him in the most discreet and courteous manner imaginable: he had not been able to accept the English proposal, as it did not seem to him practicable; Germany, however, was ready to do what she could to prevent war: Vienna and St. Petersburg would proceed to discuss matters without intermediaries and would come to an understanding: he was doing his very best to get the two great Powers to discuss the situation together. He added that he had some fear that the Russian mobilization would make it much more

difficult for him 'to preach moderation at Vienna', but he ended by saying that 'a war between the great Powers ought to be avoided' (*W. B.* 71). Some hours later, at 10.45 p.m., the Emperor of Germany, who had returned that day to Berlin from the North Sea, sent a telegram to the Czar, in terms of friendship and confidence, concluding with these words: 'I by no means overlook the difficulty encountered by You and Your Government from the excitement of public opinion. In view of the cordial friendship which has united us so long, I shall do what I can to induce Austria to obtain a frank and satisfactory understanding with Russia. I hope that You will help me' (*German White B.* 20). Finally, on the same night instructions must have been sent from Berlin in accordance with these conversations and intentions, as on the morning of the 29th the German Ambassador at Paris officially informed the French Government, in confidence, that the German Government did not give up its purpose of 'inducing the Austrian Government to initiate a friendly discussion' (*Yellow B.* 24); and at the same hour M. Sazonoff and the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg exchanged the most cordial assurances as to the intentions of their respective Governments. The following is the tenor of their conversation, as summed up in the dispatch of M. Sazonoff himself:

'The German Ambassador informs me in the name of the Chancellor that he has not failed to exercise a moderating influence at Vienna, and that the declaration of war will not stop him. Up to this morning there is no news that the Austrian troops have crossed the Serbian frontier. I have asked the Ambassador to send the Chancellor my thanks for the friendly tenor of this communication. I have informed him of the military measures taken by Russia, none of which,

as I have told him, is directed against Germany; I have added that they imply no intentions of aggression against Austria-Hungary, but are explained by the mobilization of the greater part of the Austro-Hungarian army. As the Ambassador declared himself favourable to direct explanations taking place between the Cabinet of Vienna and ourselves, I answered that I was entirely in favour of this, provided that the counsels of the Berlin Cabinet of which he spoke found an echo in Vienna.

‘At the same time I also informed him that we were ready to accept a conference of the four Powers, which did not seem to be very acceptable to Germany.

‘I said that in my opinion the best means of preventing a general war was to be found in negotiations for a conference of the four Powers—Germany, France, England, Italy—and direct communications between Austria-Hungary and Russia, in the same way as in the most critical moments of the crisis of the previous year.

‘I told the Ambassador that after the concessions made by Serbia it would not be difficult to find a compromise, provided that Austria showed a little goodwill and that all the Powers worked together for conciliation.’ (Communicated to the Ambassadors in England, France, Russia, Austria, and Italy.)

Finally, then, Germany did what all Europe had been asking her to do for five days: she put her influence at the service of peace instead of at the service of Austria. How explain this unexpected change? This also is a mystery. But, if we may conjecture, it seems probable that the German Government and the Austrian Government began to realize on July 28 that the Russian Government this time was in earnest. We shall find confirmation of this in the *Austrian Red Book*, where we find a dispatch sent by Count Berchtold on July 28 to the Austrian Ambassador in Berlin.

‘I request Your Excellency to go *at once* to the

Imperial Chancellor or to the Secretary of State and to communicate to him, in my name, what follows :

‘According to information received in similar terms from St. Petersburg, Kiew, Warsaw, Moscow, and Odessa, Russia is making extensive military preparations. M. Sazonoff, as well as the Russian Minister of War, has given his word of honour that no order for mobilization has yet been given : the latter however told the German military attaché that the military districts bordering on Austria-Hungary, i. e. Kiew, Odessa, Moscow, and Kazan, would be mobilized, should our troops cross the Serbian border.

‘In these circumstances I would earnestly beg the Cabinet of Berlin to try and find an opportune moment to give a *friendly* warning to Russia, that the mobilization of these districts would be a menace to Austria-Hungary, and that therefore, if it actually took place, the Monarchy as well as Germany its ally would be bound on their side to take the most extensive measures to meet it.

‘In order to make it easier for Russia to change her mind it would seem advisable that this warning should in the first instance be given by Germany alone, though we should naturally be ready to associate ourselves with you.

‘Plain speaking would in my opinion at this moment be the most effective means of conveying to Russia the full significance of a threatening attitude’ (*Red B.* 42).

The Austrian Government, then, began to feel anxious about the military preparations of Russia during July 28, and therefore requested Germany to repeat the *coup* which had succeeded so well in 1909. Any one who is reluctant to credit Germany with very astute and secret designs may suppose that on the evening of the 28th she became aware, from comparing the information received from St. Petersburg with that from Vienna, that matters were becoming dangerous, and that, in her alarm, she tried to look for a remedy.



## VI

The influence of Germany in the councils of Europe was still very great in the last days of July. It will therefore appear the more singular that Austria took so little notice of her first counsel of peace, and that at the very moment in which she asked her powerful ally to make Russia drop the sword from her hand by a menacing word or the lightning of her flashing eye! But so it was. On the morning of July 29 the Chancelleries of Europe learnt that Austria refused to enter on a discussion with Russia in regard to Serbia's reply (*Red B.* 44). And what course did Germany take then? Did she utter any protest or criticism upon Austria's conduct? Did she make one more attempt to influence the ally who needed the support of her authority? No! She submitted. That very day the Imperial Chancellor and the English Ambassador had a conversation about Austria's refusal, and the Imperial Chancellor said that he regretted Austria's reply; he added that the sole object of Austria in making war was to punish once for all the incorrigible duplicity of Serbia; he had therefore advised Austria to declare her intentions in a way which should prevent all misunderstanding (*W. B.* 75). That was all! Europe, however, was not aware on the morning of the 29th that on the previous evening Austria had asked Germany to repeat her *coup* of 1909: Europe therefore had no reason to doubt the sincerity of the Chancellor. 'The key of the situation is at Berlin,' Sazonoff had said the day before, and he was right; for, in spite of the refusal of Austria, hopes revived on the 29th. If Germany, powerful Germany, desired peace, once again there would be peace! M. Viviani,

President of the Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs in France, who had meanwhile returned to Paris from Russia, telegraphed to London that 'since the discussions between Vienna and St. Petersburg had ceased, he urged that the Cabinet of London should in some way or other repeat its original proposal' (*Orange B.* 55). The German Ambassador at Paris went to Viviani to repeat to him once more that his Government wished for peace; and, Viviani having replied that if Germany desired peace she ought to support the English proposal, Baron von Schoen no longer replied with a refusal as on the 27th, but confined himself to urging formal difficulties. The words 'conference' or 'arbitration', he said, alarmed Austria.

Finally Sir E. Grey repeated his proposal, and, as Germany had raised objections rather on the form than on the substance of the proposal, he declared himself ready to leave to Germany the decision on all questions of form (*W. B.* 84; *Yellow B.* 98). How could Austria resist such a combination of peace-makers besieging her on every side? Once more hope seemed possible. . . . When suddenly at midnight a dispatch arrived from Germany, which seemed '*very strange*'. . . . The English Ambassador reported that the Chancellor had sent for him in the evening. The Chancellor '*had just returned from Potsdam*' and in spite of the inconvenient hour had disturbed His Excellency to ask him '*if England pledged herself to remain neutral in a European war, provided that Germany promised to respect Holland and to deprive France of nothing but her colonies*' (*W. B.* 85). The amazement of the Foreign Office on reading this strange dispatch may be imagined! Up till now discussion had turned solely on the Austro-Russian dispute and the means of

settling it without war: but now suddenly Germany, while discussion was going on, and without even waiting till next morning, wished to know what England would or would not do in the event of European war, and even went so far as to outline the conditions of peace to be imposed on France! Was Germany, then, instead of trying to reconcile Austria and Russia, contriving war against France? It was clear, in a word, that the Chancellor would never have put such strange questions, after the conversations of the previous day, unless war had been practically decided on in the conference at Potsdam, from which he had just returned.

This raises a difficult question. Why this sudden and unexpected change? What had happened on July 29? Why was it that the Chancellor, who on the evening of the 28th told the English Ambassador that war between the great Powers must be prevented, was now, on the evening of the 29th, negotiating for the neutrality of England in the European war already decided on?

## VII

This is the chief mystery presented by this appalling narrative. I shall try to clear it up, so far as it is possible to do so a few months after the events, by way of conjecture, as the available documents are so few. To-morrow, it may be, new documents will sweep away my conjectures, as a wind disperses a bank of clouds that has hung heavy and motionless in the sky; but they will at least do service to the truth, by stimulating the curiosity of all who are anxious to know what is true. The task is not an easy one. As a first step let us begin by observing that the Russian Government

had, on the 29th, officially notified the German Government that it had ordered mobilization on the Austrian frontier. This is stated in the German White Book, and confirmed by a dispatch sent from Berlin by the English Ambassador (*German W. B.* 9; *W. B.* 76). Let us now proceed to read some documents which lie remote from one another, in the different diplomatic Books published up till now, documents which seem unrelated, but which are in fact interlaced like so many crossing threads in the great web of events. First, the dispatch sent on the 29th by Sazonoff to the Russian Ambassador at Paris (*Orange B.* 58):

‘The German Ambassador has to-day informed me that his Government has resolved to mobilize, if Russia does not break off her military preparations. Now we began these in consequence of the mobilization which Austria had already taken in hand, and in view of Austria’s unwillingness to find any peaceful solution whatever of her dispute with Serbia.

Since we cannot accede to the wishes of Germany, the only course left for us is to hasten our armament and to reckon on war as inevitable. Be good enough to notify the French Government of this, and at the same time to express to it our sincere gratitude for the declaration which the French Ambassador has made me in its name, that we can rely entirely on the support of our ally, France. In present circumstances this declaration is of special value to us.’

(Communicated to the Ambassadors in England, Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy.)

Now let us glean in the *German White Book*, and we shall find a dispatch sent by the Emperor of Germany to the Emperor of Russia, in the night of July 28-9, at 1 a.m., written in a tone very different from that of July 28.

‘My Ambassador has been instructed to call the attention of Your Government to the danger of

mobilization. Austria-Hungary has only mobilized a part of her army, and that against Serbia. If Russia, as seems to be Your intention and that of Your Government, mobilizes against Austria-Hungary, the part of mediator, which You have so earnestly pressed me to undertake, and which I accepted at Your desire, becomes almost if not quite impossible. All now depends on You, as on You will rest the responsibility for war or peace' (*German W. B.* 23).

Next let us read a dispatch sent on July 30 by the English Ambassador at St. Petersburg, relating what had happened on the 29th :

'The French Ambassador and I visited the Minister of Foreign Affairs this morning (July 30). His Excellency informed us that yesterday *afternoon* the German Ambassador told him that Germany was ready to guarantee the integrity of Serbia on behalf of Austria-Hungary: M. Sazonoff replied that, notwithstanding this, Serbia might become the vassal of Austria as Bokhara had become the vassal of Russia, and that a revolution would break out in Russia if the Government should tolerate such a thing.

'M. Sazonoff added that Germany was making military preparations against Russia, especially in the direction of the Gulf of Finland; the Government had indisputable proofs of this. The German Ambassador had a second conversation with M. Sazonoff during the night, at 2 a.m. The Ambassador *completely broke down* when he understood that war was inevitable. He then begged M. Sazonoff to suggest anything which he might telegraph to his Government, as a last hope. To satisfy him M. Sazonoff wrote the following formula in French and handed it to him: "*If Austria-Hungary, recognizing that the Austro-Serbian question has assumed the character of a European question, declares her readiness to eliminate from her ultimatum the points which prejudice the sovereign rights of Serbia, Russia pledges herself to cease her military preparations.*"

'If this proposal is rejected by Austria, a general

mobilization will be decreed. A European war will then be inevitable. Feeling here is so much excited that, unless Austria makes concessions, Russia cannot draw back. Russia, knowing that Germany is preparing, cannot wait long before converting her partial mobilization into a general mobilization' (*W. B.* 97).

Not less important is the dispatch of M. Paléologue, French Ambassador at the Russian Court, sent from St. Petersburg on July 30 (*Yellow B.* 103):

'The German Ambassador came to-night to M. Sazonoff, to insist again, but in less categorical terms, that Russia should cease her military preparations, asserting that Austria had no designs on the territorial integrity of Serbia.

"We are not concerned", replied M. Sazonoff, "to preserve only the territorial integrity of Serbia; there is also her independence and her sovereignty. We cannot allow Serbia to become the vassal of Austria."

'M. Sazonoff went on: "The crisis is so grave that I feel bound to tell you my whole mind. Germany, by intervening at St. Petersburg while refusing to intervene at Vienna, is only trying to gain time to allow Austria to checkmate the little Serbian kingdom before Russia is able to assist it. But the Emperor Nicholas is so desirous of averting war that I will make a fresh proposal to you in his name: '*If Austria, recognizing, &c.*'" Count Pourtalès promised to give this proposal his support with his Government.'

Finally, on July 30, M. Sazonoff telegraphed to the Russian Ambassador at Berlin (*Orange B.* 60):

'The German Ambassador, who has just left me, asked me if we could not be satisfied with the promise that Austria would not touch the integrity of the kingdom of Serbia, and asked me on what conditions we would even now consent to suspend arming. I dictated to him the following declaration, to be transmitted immediately to Berlin: "*If Austria, recognizing, &c.*"

‘ Be good enough to telegraph immediately what is the German attitude to this new proof of our desire that peace should not be disturbed, as we cannot allow all these negotiations to serve merely to give Austria and Germany more time for their military preparations.’

Now let us examine and compare these documents. From dispatch 59 of the *Orange Book* we learn that on July 29 M. Sazonoff and the German Ambassador had a conversation. Dispatch 99 of the English book, *Great Britain and the European Crisis*, mentions a conversation which took place between these two persons *in the afternoon* of the 29th. Do the two dispatches refer to the same conversation? It seems probable. If so, it is possible by comparing the two documents with one another to discover what was the subject of the conversation. The German Ambassador told M. Sazonoff that Austria promised to respect the territorial integrity of Serbia and that Germany was ready to guarantee the promise; but notified him that if Russia continued to mobilize *against Austria*, Germany also would mobilize. The German Government then, having on the morning of the 29th sent its Ambassador to reassure the Russian Government and to advise it to negotiate with the Austrian Government, in the afternoon, after Austria had refused to enter upon the discussion recommended by her ally, instead of pressing its first advice and making a new effort to bring Austria to a different mind, sent its Ambassador back to take the action requested the day before by Count Berchtold: that is, to demand, half suavely, half roughly, that Russia should return her sword to the scabbard. In other words, the German Government, which in the morning said it was still willing to intervene as peace-maker between Austria and Russia, in the afternoon presented itself again before

Russia, this time in the character of Austria's ally, with its hand upon its sword.

The reasons of this change are a mystery. Those who do not wish to view all the acts of the German Government in a sinister light and to suppose that on July 28 it acted a part, in order to lull the suspicions of its adversaries and so surprise them better the next day, may argue that there were two parties at Berlin: the weaker party, working in the open, which wished to keep Austria in check and preserve peace; the other party, secret but more powerful, which wished for war; and that this second party prevailed in the councils of the Government on the morning of the 29th. How and why—if this conjecture is true—history will perhaps one day tell us. Baron Beyens, who was the last Minister at Berlin, in an article of capital importance published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of June 1, 1915, openly accuses the German Emperor of having forced this fatal step upon his reluctant Government. Beyens is one of the few people in a position to know what happened: if his accusation is confirmed, what a terrible responsibility will rest on William II! In any case, if the reasons for the action are obscure, there is no doubt that the action taken by the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg in the afternoon of July 29 was the decisive and irrevocable act which provoked the European war. The German Ambassador had hardly left him when M. Sazonoff telegraphed to the Russian Ambassador at Paris that war was now inevitable, and that France and Russia must make ready their armaments without delay. The reason is not difficult to understand. The memory of the humiliation inflicted by Germany on the Russian Empire in 1909 was still rankling: she was firmly determined not to pass again under the 'Caudine Forks'



before the eyes of the world. Germany's action now clearly showed that she wished to repeat the manœuvre. How otherwise explain the fact that not Austria, on whose frontiers mobilization had been ordered, but Germany, requested Russia not to take up arms; and made the request when Russia had hardly decreed her mobilization and had not yet begun it: after von Jagow had declared that Germany would not put her army on a war footing so long as Russia mobilized on the frontiers of Austria only? This time, then, Russia was resolved to defy the threat, and this would force Germany to carry it into effect; but every one knew all over Europe that, if Germany called her people to arms one day, she would declare war the next.

And in fact, not at St. Petersburg only but also at Berlin, war was thought to be imminent as soon as the German Ambassador had failed in that fatal move which he made on the afternoon of July 29. We can in this way explain the surprising conversation of the Imperial Chancellor with the English Ambassador on the evening of the 29th. The Imperial Chancellor, as has been said, had just returned from Potsdam. Why had he gone to Potsdam? M. Cambon tells us that it was to take part 'in an extraordinary council with the military authorities presided over by the Emperor' (*Yellow B.* 105). If we ask what was discussed in this great council, in the presence of the heads of the army, and what was the subject of its deliberations, the answer is that they discussed the things on which the Chancellor, directly he returned to Berlin, conversed with the English Ambassador, and those which the German Ambassador went to discuss with M. Sazonoff at 2 a.m. on the night July 29-30.

If, then, we compare facts and dates, it is possible

to reconstruct in summary form the events of that day. The reply of Russia put the German Government under the obligation of fulfilling its threat: but mobilization would be followed by war, the European war. It was therefore necessary to call into consultation the heads of the army. The council of Potsdam was summoned to discuss the reply made by Russia on the afternoon of the 29th to the request of the German Ambassador; and after a long discussion it decided to approach Russia once more, but to do so at once the same night, asking her again, 'in less categorical terms', to use the words of Paléologue, on what conditions she would consent to suspend preparations for war: if Russia once more refused, Germany was to declare war at once without losing a moment, and thus secure the advantage of initiative and of attack. So completely is this true, that, immediately on his return to Berlin, and without even waiting till the following day, the Imperial Chancellor found it necessary to make sure of the neutrality of England. The European war was therefore decided on at Potsdam in the evening of July 29, 1914.

No document which has so far come to light proves with certainty that Germany had immediately begun her own final preparations for war; but it is difficult to believe that the German Government remained inactive for forty-eight hours, when it knew that war was imminent and when it showed such great haste in other respects. However that may be, there is no doubt that on the same evening, immediately on his return to Berlin, the Imperial Chancellor put his 'strange' inquiries before the British Ambassador; that the Emperor sent his dispatch to the Czar at midnight, to support the action which his Ambassador, Count Pourtalès, was to

take at 2 a.m., an hour which alone suffices to prove what rapid action the German Government had adopted after the Potsdam council. It is clear that these three facts are closely connected. The words of Count Pourtalès to Sazonoff and Sazonoff's reply are to be got from dispatch 60 of the *Orange Book* and dispatch 103 of the *Yellow Book*. The German Ambassador was urgent in pointing out to Sazonoff, as the German Emperor's dispatch states, the grave dangers of mobilization; but when he became aware that the decision of the Russian Government was irrevocable he could not conceal his emotion. Up till that moment he had hoped that the Russian Government would give way, as it had done in 1909; certainly when he made his move on the afternoon of the 29th he did not suppose that he was at that moment the humble and unconscious instrument of fate, serving to let loose upon Europe the most appalling calamity which had ever befallen it. When he became aware of it he burst into tears—a human weakness for which no one will blame him; they may be called the first tears of the war or the last of the peace of Europe—in any case they were too late! The irrevocable step had been taken. True, Russia and Austria continued their conversations on the 30th and 31st; indeed on the 31st the Austrian Government, assailed by doubts and fears, consented to discuss its ultimatum with the Great Powers of Europe (*W.B.* 131), that is, to do what the Powers had asked it to do at the first. For a moment hope again revived in London and Paris, but the action of Germany at St. Petersburg on the 29th had now produced too deep a distrust between Russia and Germany. On the 30th the two Empires hastened on their preparations for war: Russia because she now had only too good reason to distrust Germany;

Germany because, her threat having failed, she knew that she was forced to strike. The military preparations of Germany decided Russia to order a general mobilization on the 31st, and this in its turn determined the German ultimatum of July 31, which was the beginning of the European war. In the historical narrative which precedes the *German White Book* it is stated that the general mobilization of the Russian army was decided on at St. Petersburg *in the afternoon of July 31*, and the *Orange Book* asserts that the German ultimatum was delivered to St. Petersburg at midnight on the 31st (*German W. B.* 14; *Orange B.* 64). As Russian time is sixty-one minutes in advance of the time of central Europe, it is clear that the German ultimatum was sent immediately after the news of the general Russian mobilization arrived at Berlin. There were no doubts or hesitations at Berlin—a further proof that from the evening of the 29th war was a settled thing, if the second move of the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg failed like the first. There was no longer any search to find a pretext for declaring war: it would indeed have been extraordinary to make war on Russia on the ground that Russia was mobilizing on the Austrian frontier, when Austria even on the 31st still declared, though possibly without reflection, that she did not consider the Russian mobilization as a hostile act (*W. B.* 118). Even the distinguished professors who signed the famous manifesto of the ninety-three would then have realized that the provocation came from Germany. It seems, indeed, that till the last moment Germany hoped that Russia would give way. But Russia this time did not give way, and on Saturday, August 1, at 5 p.m., the German Ambassador handed in at St. Petersburg the following declaration of war:

‘The Imperial Government has used its best efforts since the beginning of the crisis to arrive at a peaceful solution. In compliance with a desire expressed by H.M. the Emperor of Russia, H.M. the German Emperor, acting in agreement with England, was willing to act as mediator between the Cabinets of Vienna and St. Petersburg, when Russia without waiting for the result proceeded to mobilize all her forces by land and sea. In consequence of this threatening action, for which no military preparation on the part of Germany had afforded ground, the German Government found itself confronted by a grave and imminent danger. If the Imperial Government had not taken measures to meet this danger, it would have compromised the safety and the very existence of Germany. The German Government therefore found itself obliged to address itself to H.M. the Emperor of all the Russias, and insist on the cessation of the military action already mentioned. Russia having refused to take notice of this request and having by this refusal made clear that her action was directed against Germany, I have the honour to inform Your Excellency, by order of my Government, of what follows: H.M. the Emperor, my August Sovereign, in the name of the Empire, takes up the challenge and deems himself in a state of war with Russia.’

The European war had broken out. The stream of time, which till that day had borne our destinies along, securely as it seemed, on somewhat troubled and stormy but still not dangerous waters, had now plunged headlong into a vast and wild abyss; and no one knows when and where and through what depths it will emerge, once more to look on the face of the sun, which had smiled upon our life until that fatal day of August 1, 1914.

### VIII

This summary investigation of the documents so far published, allows us to set Germany's declaration of war in its true light. Not Russia, and certainly not England,

but Austria and Germany kindled the great conflagration. The facts and dates speak clearly. In the early days of the fatal week, July 24–August 1, Austria openly provoked the Powers of the Triple Entente by threatening Serbia, rejecting all offers of mediation, refusing to listen to the counsels of Russia, which, whatever may be said against her, cannot be accused of not having spoken clearly from the very first. Meanwhile Germany spoke and acted rather ambiguously, but always trying secretly to favour the actions and designs of Austria, without declaring herself openly. Towards the end Austria seemed to grow more discreet, though perhaps more in word than in act, for while pretending to draw back, she secretly urged Germany to come forward and utter threats in her place. Germany consented, at first with some caution; until, at the first serious opposition of Russia, she let herself go; and, while all about her were hesitating, waiting, holding their breath in fear and anxiety, in a few hours she broke down all delay, and on the evening of July 29, 1914, a few hours after having reassured Europe with words of peace, decided on universal war.

It cannot be too strongly insisted on that precisely here lies the central mystery of this appalling story. Why was it that on July 29, twenty-four hours after the Chancellor had spoken reassuringly to the English Ambassador, the Imperial Government suddenly gave notice to Russia to cease her mobilization against Austria, although Austria did not yet consider herself threatened by the Russian preparations and raised no complaint? Generations it may be will torment themselves with the attempt to solve this momentous question, to which the documents up till now give but one answer, laconic but pregnant, to borrow an expressive epithet of the ancient

rhetoricians : that is, 'that the heads of the army insisted'—as Herr von Jagow told M. Cambon on July 30 (*Yellow B.* 109). What a vision those words open up ! But if the heads of the army wanted war and imposed it on the German Government in that Potsdam council of July 29, then another question has to be put. How was it that the heads of the army had so powerful an influence that they were able to draw the whole people into this romantic adventure ? How was it that in the council that evening it entered no one's mind that they were on the point of setting Europe on fire ; or, if it did, why was it that the council did not tremble before the awful responsibility which they assumed ? In this place all that has been attempted is the proof that Germany brought about the war. How in the year of grace 1914 a nation could venture, in the face of the world and of history, on an act of such incredible audacity, is a question I must leave for discussion elsewhere.

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