

## 14 GERMANY AND THE 'FEAR OF RUSSIA'

party whose ambitions find little echo in the nation as a whole, and that party has always been very strongly represented amongst the official classes, and not least in the Russian Foreign Office. The policy of Asiatic adventure upon which the Russian Government had entered was the policy of that party. The Russian people have always remained more or less indifferent to Persian or Tibetan or Far Eastern questions. Its heart was never even really stirred by the war against Japan. On the other hand, Russian policy in the Balkans, whether or not it was always prompted by disinterested solicitude for the little Slav brothers, always struck a responsive chord throughout Russia; and the people perhaps even more than the Government fiercely resented the slap in the face which Russia had received as a great Slav Power.

As between the two Sovereigns, the wire from Berlin to St. Petersburg had been almost irreparably damaged by the Kaiser's Shining Armour; but when, in theory, the supreme authority is concentrated, as in Russia, in the hands of one man, he is rarely able to exercise real control over any department of the State. Hence in Russia the curious administrative anarchy which often seems to prevail under autocratic rule, even after the events of 1909. Thus it came about that although the Tsar had from the beginning been a whole-hearted supporter of the understanding with England, German influence continued to make itself felt in many powerful quarters, and even in the Russian Foreign Office. In foreign policy, it was chiefly in connexion with Persia that the voice of the German tempter still frequently obtained a hearing, and partly under pressure, Russian diplomacy, it must be admitted, often put a severe strain upon the spirit if not the letter of the Anglo-