

Economic Causes of War.

Article No. 7.

WE are told that Great Britain entered the war because of her treaty to uphold the neutrality of Belgium, that the treaties of 1831 and 1839 entailed an obligation on England to fight; but the text of the treaties contains no word of this obligation. Gladstone said in 1870 that the treaty of 1839 was without force. Lord Palmerston, the man who signed the treaty of 1839, answering Disraeli said: "Hansard," June 8th, 1855, page 1748: "It had been agreed by treaty that Belgium and Switzerland be made neutral, but, I am not disposed to attach very much importance to such engagements, for the history of the world shows when a quarrel arises, and a nation makes war, and thinks it advantageous to traverse with its army such neutral territory, the declarations of neutrality are not apt to be very religiously respected." Major Murray, in "The Future Peace of the Anglo-Saxon," page 26, says: "As for treaties, there is no reliance to be placed on them. They are only considered binding as long as the mutual interests of the binding parties remain the same, and as long as there is power to enforce them. A prudent ruler ought not to keep faith when by so doing it would be against his interests." Could Bernhardt have beaten that quotation, fellow-workers? The real cause of the quarrel with Germany was no more an honorable one than that of a dread of a too powerful commercial rivalry which, if England had stood aside, might have culminated in a commercial alliance between Germany and France against her in the markets of the world. Germany was not so desirous of empire as she was of the preservation of the independence of Morocco, Persia and other states, as fruitful fields for German commercial expansion on the basis of the open door; in fact, free markets more than empire was her view of economic imperialism. France, on the other hand, wanted empire, not to secure free markets, but to monopolise undeveloped markets. Britain's traditional stand for free markets should have inclined British policy towards Germany, rather than towards her traditional enemies France and Russia. But that traditional attitude had been undermined and weakened by the fear and jealousy of powerful commercial, financial and social influences; it was crystallized in the Chamberlain Tariff Reform League, and aggravated by the extraordinary adaptability and success of Germany's economic progress in the undeveloped markets of the world. Britain's abandonment of her policy of the integrity and independence of Turkey, Morocco, Persia and Tripoli, developed an antagonism with Germany, because it eliminated the equal opportunity for commercial intercourse with these countries. This change of policy was detrimental to the German trade.

We were told that the war was to secure the future peace of the world, but when the Bolsheviks made public the secret treaties entered into during the war, they uncovered the beautiful platitudes that were used as lovely shop window dressings, and the complete defeat of Germany was seen in its reality to be necessary before the Allies could divide up the spoils agreed upon during the war. Russia was to acquire Constantinople, the Straits, and a large section of Asiatic Turkey. France was to acquire a large section of Asiatic Turkey and part of the German colonies. Italy was to acquire in addition to portions of Austria-Hungary, a section of Asiatic Turkey, an extension of her existing possessions in Africa, the right to conduct the foreign affairs of Albania, and a share in the war indemnity specified in the Treaty of London, 1915. The Anglo-Franco-Russian agreement as to the division of Asiatic Turkey was in the spring of 1916. Roumania was to acquire Hungary, south and east of the River Theiss. Britain was to acquire the "neutral zone" of Persia, part of the German colonies and Southern Mesopotamia, with Bagdad and two ports in Syria. From December, 1916, to March,

1918, there were nine peace openings from the Central Powers, which were turned down just because it was impossible to divide up the spoils secretly agreed to amongst the Allies, unless Germany was completely defeated and unable to oppose their greed.

Some people would have us believe that Protectionist countries are the creators of war, but Free Trade England is compelled to take part in a shuffle for spheres of influence and other monopolistic partitions of undeveloped countries, not merely by her capitalists crying for higher and more secure investments, but by the interests of her industry and commerce being threatened by her commercial competitors. Of course, we all know John Bull is an honest policeman. Did not John free Europe from Napoleon? He did his best to rescue Europe and France (who declined the favor) from the French Revolution. Whenever Britain succeeded in her liberating mission, it was to reinstate the Bourbon in Spain and Naples, and in 1815 to resettle the emigres, the priests, the Austrians, and an appalling reactionary regime all over the continent. Britain's historical mission is to fight for every scrap of paper without seeking any advantages of her own; merely accepting a few accidental gifts that may come her way. So the Henry Dubbs are taught; but if that is so, how is it that Britain did not fight Russia for violating the independence of Persia in 1911, also France for violating the guaranteed independence of Morocco? Why! Britain came to an arrangement about Persia's sacrifice; she also secretly sacrificed the independence of Morocco before she signed the public agreement by which Morocco's independence should be respected. Of course, this is not the first instance of a policeman being in league with thieves.

Japan broke Chinese neutrality in her endeavor to drive out the Germans from China. Russia did likewise in Persia to attack Turkey, and Italy followed suit in Albania all through the Great War which was fought to uphold small nations. Is it possible for hypocrisy to be more naked and unashamed? A fight for the freedom of peoples, and yet the Allies were oppressing many more millions of men than the Central Powers. George Brandes, the Danish author, says: "Apart from the Russia of Czardom, the Allies held despotic sway over some 550 millions of human beings—from Irishmen to Indians, Egyptians to Arabs, Moors to Koreans. With this ballast they set out to liberate 30 millions governed against their wishes by the Central Powers.

The war was the outcome of the great industrial and economic development of the Great Powers, and instead of wars today being necessarily like the wars of primitive man, who was forced to expand over a larger surface of the globe in search of food during famine and scarcity, they result today from an over-production of the people's needs, and show again, signs of the instability of capitalism. The war was not sprung upon any unprepared nation. The conference of Paris of April, 1914, at which Sir Edward Grey was present, has been shown by the Soviet Government to have been a preparing of the plans, by the Allies, to encircle the Central Powers. Russia began her trials of mobilization in February, 1914, and continued them until the outbreak of the war. Lord Haldane at Bedford College, November 29th, 1918, said: "At the outbreak of war the fleet was in such a state of efficiency as never before, and we were two to one even then against the whole German fleet. We mobilized at eleven o'clock Monday, August 3rd, 36 hours before we declared war. Within a few hours, with the aid of the navy, the expeditionary force was across the Channel before anybody knew it." Belgian neutrality was the excuse, the moral tone, to give to the public. German troops did not enter Belgium until the night of the 3rd and 4th of August, 1914, while Grey on the 2nd of August, after a session of the cabinet and after receiving a letter from Bonar Law

saying the Opposition was with him in whatever action was necessary, according to the British "White Paper" No. 148, said this: "I am authorized to give an assurance that, if the German fleet comes into the Channel or into the North Sea to undertake hostile operations against the French coasts and shipping, the British fleet will give all the protection in its power." Grey to Bertie, in Paris, August 2nd, "White Paper" No. 119 "The preservation of the neutrality of Belgium might be, I would not say a decisive, but an important factor in determining our attitude."

Now, fellow-workers, do you wonder why the Kaiser has never been tried? The very people who are bluffing are the last ones who would desire its accomplishment, because of their own entanglements. Lloyd George said that Britain did not covet any territory, but wanted on honorable peace. The gods of fate have thrown the Bull Dog just a few morsels for being a good dog. For instance, listen to this from a lecture on "A New East," by Rev. J. T. Parfitt, twenty years Canon of Jerusalem, before the Greenock (Scotland) Philosophical Society, November 22nd, 1918: "The present opportunity was the best we ever had to achieve mighty things in this remarkable part of the world. Palestine did not offer commercial advantages, only strategic, but Mesopotamia was rich in prospects. Why, the oilfields which we had just taken over a few days before we signed the armistice were worth ten million thousand pounds, and were the finest in the world. . . . We had not sought territorial expansion in the East, and were prepared to take up the white man's burden." That is one of the few morsels that Britain did not want; it just came to her because of her goodness of heart and her love of protecting inferior people like the Irish, Egyptians and the people of India, who, we are told, are unable to govern themselves.

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MORE MONEY MATTERS—THE SILVER SITUATION

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stands to reason that the great increase in the quantity of manufactured goods and raw materials would make imperative an addition to the existing store of silver.

The rise in the price of silver, then, has been due primarily to the inordinate demand from the East. But there are other factors. The shortage in the world supply is secondary only to the Eastern demand. One of the most productive silver fields in the world has suspended operations to a large extent during the past few years. We refer to Mexico. The decapitation of presidents, and looting of treasuries, have assumed a more elevated status than the mining of silver. The diversion to war industries of labor, in the American and Canadian fields, has had its effect. The increased use of silver money by soldiers in the war, as well as the stimulated demand for silver for surgical and medicinal purposes, have all combined to strengthen the market position in recent years.

The decrease in silver prices of late is directly attributable to the relaxation of the demand for Eastern products since industrial reconstruction, on a large scale, has extended to the belligerent countries. The embargo on the export of gold, put into effect by most of the participants, has now been removed. This removal results in giving to the commercial interests the option of paying in gold instead of silver, and so tending to reduce the demand for the latter. As international trade recovers, a further decline in silver prices, as stated in gold, is to be anticipated. The gold question will be dealt with in our next.

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