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German Aims Series.

"Berlin Insisted that Serbia Must Be Massacred."

GUILTY!

PRINCE LICHNOWSKY'S DISCLOSURES.

By **C. A. McCURDY, M.P.**

NATIONAL WAR AIMS COMMITTEE.
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Most of the extracts quoted in this pamphlet are from the *Times* translation of the original version published by *Vorwärts*.

The complete text of Prince Lichnowsky's disclosures, with an introduction by Professor Gilbert Murray, is published under the title of "My Mission to London, 1912-1914" (Cassell). Price 6d. net.

GUILTY!

PRINCE LICHNOWSKY'S DISCLOSURES.

THE memoirs of Prince Lichnowsky, German Ambassador in London from 1912 to 1914, were written for private circulation only. Prince Lichnowsky himself has explained in a letter to the German Chancellor how they became public property. He had shown them under a pledge of absolute secrecy to a few political friends.

“Unfortunately one of these gentlemen, without my knowledge, gave my memorandum to an officer to read—an officer employed in the political department of the General Staff, whom I did not know, but who took a lively interest in these questions. Completely failing to understand the importance of what he was doing, this officer manifolded the memorandum and sent it to a number of personages, most of whom are unknown to me.

“When I heard of the mischief it was unfortunately too late to call in all the copies that had been given out. I placed myself at the disposal of the then Imperial Chancellor, Herr Michaelis, and expressed to him my very deep regret at the whole painful affair. Since then, keeping in constant touch with the Foreign Office, I have striven to prevent as far as possible the further circulation of my observations, but unfortunately without the desired success.”

The accident which gave these memoirs to the world may have been unfortunate for Prince Lichnowsky, but it was still more unfortunate for the German Rulers, whose guilt in forcing this war on Europe is for all time settled by the conclusive evidence of their own Ambassador. Never was a crime more clearly proved. Never was Prussian militarism more nakedly exposed, since the distant days when Bismarck cynically admitted that he had not scrupled to commit forgery in order to force war on France.

Prince Lichnowsky came to this country as the German Ambassador in November, 1912. He continued to occupy that post until war was declared between Great Britain and Germany in August, 1914. He speaks, therefore, with knowledge and authority. He himself played an important part in the diplomatic events which he relates. When he arrived in this country Europe was just recovering from an attack of nerves which had lasted more than a year. There had been alarms and rumours of war. In the summer

of 1911 the Kaiser had startled the world by the sudden despatch of a German gunboat to Agadir, and in July of that year the British Government had thought it necessary to sound a serious note of warning through Mr. Lloyd George. War had actually broken out between Italy and Turkey. For months Europe had listened with strained ears to the rattling of the German sword.

“THE GERMAN PERIL.”

Prince Lichnowsky himself admits the anxiety and unrest which had been created by German policy in 1911:

“Our obscure policy in Morocco had repeatedly caused distrust of our peaceful intention, or, at least, had raised doubts as to whether we knew what we wanted, or whether our intention was not to keep Europe in a state of suspense and, on occasion, to humiliate the French. An Austrian colleague, who was a long time in Paris, said to me, ‘The French had begun to forget *la revanche*. You have regularly reminded them of it by trampling on their toes.’

“Our attitude furthered the Russo-Japanese and Russo-British *rapprochement*. In face of ‘the German peril’ all other considerations faded into the background. The possibility of another Franco-German war had become evident, and such a war could not leave Russia or England unaffected.”

But in the autumn of 1912, when Prince Lichnowsky arrived in England, the trouble had quieted down. The storm appeared to have blown over. In Prince Lichnowsky’s opinion

“The moment was obviously favourable for an attempt to come to a better understanding with England.”

The first important fact which the memoirs establish is the fact that in 1912 the German Ambassador found the British Government ready and willing to be friends, anxious to do everything in their power to come to a friendly understanding with Germany, so as to secure the peace of the world.

“When I came to London in November, 1912, people had become easier about the question of Morocco, especially since an agreement had been reached with France and Berlin. Lord Haldane’s mission had failed, it is true, as we demanded promises of neutrality, instead of contenting ourselves with a treaty which would ensure us against a British attack or any attack with British support. Sir Edward Grey had not, meanwhile, given up the idea of coming to an understanding with us, and made such an attempt firstly on economic and colonial grounds. . . .

“The British statesman, having succeeded in settling old points with France and Russia, wished to come to a similar agreement with us. His intention was not to isolate us, but to make us, so far as possible, partners in a working concern. Just as he had succeeded in bridging Franco-British and Russo-

British difficulties, so he wished as far as possible to remove causes of friction between Germany and Great Britain, and by a network of treaties—which would finally include an agreement on the unfortunate naval question—to secure the peace of the world.

“ This was Sir Edward Grey’s programme. In his own words:—‘ Without prejudice to the existing friendly understandings with France and Russia, which purposed no aggressive aims, and involved in themselves for England no binding obligations, to reach a friendly *rapprochement* and understanding with Germany.’ In short, to bring the two groups together.”

THE BALKAN CONFERENCE, 1912.

The first diplomatic business which the new German Ambassador had to transact made it quite clear that England had no intention of converting her Entente with Russia and France into an alliance hostile to Germany, that her influence was being thrown on the side of peace.

“ Shortly after my arrival in London, in 1912, Sir Edward Grey proposed an informal exchange of views, in order to prevent a European war developing out of the Balkan War, since, at the outbreak of that war, we had unfortunately declined the proposal of the French Government to join in a declaration of disinterestedness and impartiality on the part of the Powers. The British statesman maintained from the beginning that England had no interest in Albania, and would, therefore, not go to war on the subject. In his rôle of ‘ honest broker ’ he would confine his efforts to mediation and an attempt to smooth away difficulties between the two groups. He therefore by no means placed himself on the side of the Entente Powers, and during the negotiations, which lasted about eight months, he lent his goodwill and powerful influence towards the establishment of an understanding.

“ But we, instead of taking up a position such as England adopted, invariably accepted the views dictated to us by Vienna. Count Mensdorff led the Triple Alliance in London, and I acted as his second. My task consisted in supporting his proposals.

“ On every point, including Albania, the Serbian harbours, in the Adriatic, Scutari, and in the definition of the Albanian frontiers, we were on the side of Austria and Italy, whilst Sir Edward Grey hardly ever took the French or Russian point of view. On the contrary, he nearly always took our part, in order to give no pretext for war. That pretext was supplied later by a dead Archduke.”

THE ANGLO-GERMAN TREATIES OF 1913.

The year 1913 afforded further proof of the sincere desire of the British Government to come to a friendly understanding with Germany.

Prince Lichnowsky reveals the fact that in that year two important treaties were negotiated between the German Ambassador and the British Foreign Office, which should have gone far to remove all doubt in Germany as to our desire for friendly co-operation with that country.

The first of these treaties, the "African Treaty," was intended to define the economic and political interests of the two countries in the Portuguese African Colonies, in the event of Portugal deciding at any time to sell, lease, or otherwise develop these important territories.

"As the Portuguese Government possessed neither the power nor the means to open up or adequately to administer its extensive possessions, the Portuguese Government had already at an earlier date thought of selling these possessions and thereby putting their finances in order. Between us and England an agreement had been reached which defined the interests of the two parties."

The object of the negotiations in 1913 was to alter and amend a former treaty of 1898, which divided these territories into spheres of interest between Germany and England.

The German Ambassador found his task a pleasant one; there was no refusal on the part of the British Government to consider Germany's desire for colonial expansion. On the contrary, Lichnowsky says:

"Thanks to the conciliatory attitude of the British Government, I succeeded in giving to the new treaty a form which entirely accorded with our wishes and interests. All Angola, as far as the 20th degree of longitude, was allotted to us, so that we reached the Congo territory from the south. Moreover, the valuable islands of San Thome and Principe, which lie north of the Equator, and therefore really belonged to the French sphere of interests, were allotted to us—a fact which caused my French colleague to make lively, although vain, representations. Further, we obtained the northern part of Mozambique; the frontier was formed by the Likungo. The British Government showed the utmost readiness to meet our interests and wishes.

"The sincerity of the English Government in its effort to respect our rights was proved by the fact that Sir Edward Grey, before ever the treaty was completed or signed, called our attention to English men of business who were seeking opportunities to invest capital in the territories allotted to us by the new treaty, and who desired British support. In doing so, he remarked that the undertakings in question belonged to our sphere of interest."

The German people were never permitted to know of the friendly and conciliatory spirit shown to them by British statesmen in the negotiation of this treaty. The "African Treaty" was agreed and initialed in August, 1913, but it was never signed. The reason is significant. Sir Edward Grey was ready to sign it as soon as the

German Government would agree to its publication, but he insisted that the matter should be made public.

“ Sir Edward Grey was willing to sign only if the treaty was published, together with the two treaties of 1898 and 1899. England has no other secret treaties, and it is contrary to her existing principles that she should conceal binding agreements. He said, however, that he was ready to take account of our wishes concerning the time and manner of publication, provided that publication took place within one year, at latest, after the signature.”

But the German Government objected to publicity, and so the treaty was never signed. It did not suit the War Party at Potsdam to let the German people know the truth.

In Germany the preparations for the coming war, of which we knew nothing, were already far advanced. As part of those preparations a campaign of hatred was being scientifically organised. Pan-Germans, militarists, and Reventlows were teaching the people of Germany that they were surrounded by a world of enemies, cut off from any peaceful expansion by the envious jealousy and the “ encirclement policy ” of British statesmen.

The “ African Treaty,” which gave such tangible and convincing proofs of our honest desire for friendship, had, therefore, to be suppressed. First one excuse and then another was found in Berlin for wrecking the treaty, and consent to publication was never obtained by the German Ambassador until the end of July, 1914, when the armies were already marching to the great war.

The second treaty negotiated with Germany in 1913, but never signed, was a treaty giving Germany large and important spheres of influence in Asia Minor. Prince Lichnowsky's account of this treaty is :

“ At the same time (while the African agreement was under discussion) I was negotiating, with the effective co-operation of Herr von Kühlmann, the so-called Baghdad Railway Treaty. This aimed, in fact, at the division of Asia Minor into spheres of interest, although this expression was carefully avoided in consideration of the Sultan's rights. Sir Edward Grey declared repeatedly that there was no agreement between England and France aiming at a division of Asia Minor. . . .

“ By this treaty the whole of Mesopotamia up to Basra became our zone of interest, whereby the whole British rights, the question of shipping on the Tigris, and the Wilcox establishments were left untouched, as well as all the district of Baghdad and the Anatolian railways.

“ The British economic territories included the coasts of the Persian Gulf and the Smyrna-Aidin Railway, the French Syria, and the Russian Armenia. Had both treaties been concluded and published, an agreement would have been reached with England which would have finally ended all doubt of the possibility of an Anglo-German co-operation.”

It is an extraordinary picture which is thus revealed. The German Ambassador was obtaining from Great Britain valuable and substantial proofs of friendship and goodwill, railways, concessions, and interests in great territories, and the Imperial Government of Germany was refusing all the advantages that they obtained, rather than allow the facts to become known. It did not suit the War Party at Potsdam to let the German people know that friendship could be had and war avoided on honourable and favourable terms.

THE QUESTION OF THE FLEET.

Prince Lichnowsky refers also to the vexed questions of the Fleet and our supposed jealousy of German trade. In neither of these matters did he find any insuperable obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations.

"Most difficult of all," says Prince Lichnowsky, "there remained the question of the Fleet. It was never quite rightly judged. The creation of a mighty fleet on the other shore of the North Sea and the simultaneous development of the Continent's most important military Power into its most important naval Power was at least uncomfortable for England. Presumably this cannot be doubted. . . .

"But on account of our Fleet alone England would have drawn the sword as little as on account of our trade, which it is pretended called forth her jealousy and ultimately brought about war. . . .

"From the beginning I adopted the standpoint that in spite of the Fleet it would be possible to come to a friendly understanding and *rapprochement*, if we did not propose new votes of credit, and, above all, if we carried out an indisputable peace policy. I also avoided all mention of the Fleet. . . .

"During my term of office the then First Lord, Mr. Churchill, raised the question of a so-called naval holiday, and proposed, for financial reasons as much as on account of the pacifist inclinations of his party, a one year's pause in armaments. . . .

"I am convinced that his initiative was honest, cunning in general not being part of the Englishman's constitution. It would have been a great success for Mr. Churchill to secure economies for the country and to lighten the burden of armament, which was weighing heavily on the people. . . .

"It was Mr. Churchill's and the Government's favourite idea that by supporting his initiative in the matter of large ships we should give proof of our goodwill and considerably strengthen and increase the tendency on the part of the Government to get in closer contact with us. But, as I have said, it was possible in spite of our Fleet and without naval holidays to come to an understanding.

“In that spirit I had carried out my mission from the beginning, and had even succeeded in realising my programme when the war broke out and destroyed everything.”

TRADE RIVALRY.

As regards our supposed jealousy of Germany's commercial progress, the German Ambassador has some shrewd comments :

“Trade jealousy,” he says, “so much talked about among us, rests on faulty judgment of circumstances. It is a fact that Germany's progress as a trading country after the war of 1870 threatened the interests of British trade circles, constituting a form of monopoly with its industry and export houses. But the growing interchange of merchandise with Germany, a fact I always referred to in my public speeches, had allowed the desire to mature to preserve good relations with England's best client and business friend. . . . The Englishman as a matter of fact adapts himself to circumstances and does not tilt against windmills.

“In commercial circles I found the greatest goodwill and desire to further our common economic interests.

“In other circles I had a most amiable reception, and enjoyed the cordial goodwill of the Court, Society, and the Government.”

Why was it that Prince Lichnowsky's labours for a friendly understanding with Great Britain were fruitless? The answer becomes quite clear when we read the damning passages in the memoirs which deal with the outbreak of the war.

It was because the rulers of Germany wanted war and meant to have it. They sent Lichnowsky to discuss peace, because they knew him to be a peaceable and honest man, and they wished us to believe that their aims were those of their ambassador.

But while Lichnowsky openly and honestly was discussing peace, behind his back the Hohenzollerns were plotting and preparing war, a war of conquest; and they were not willing to miss their war of conquest for any treaties Prince Lichnowsky might secure from us, or for any friendships which he might be making for the German people.

THE OUTBREAK OF WAR.

The outbreak of the war obviously took the German Ambassador by surprise. He says :

“At the end of June, 1914, I proceeded to Kiel by order of the Kaiser. A few weeks before I had been given the honorary degree of Doctor at Oxford, a distinction conferred upon no German Ambassador since Herr von Bunsen. On board the Meteor (the Kaiser's yacht) we heard of the death of the Archduke, the heir to the Austrian Throne. His Majesty expressed

regret that his efforts to win the Archduke over to his ideas had thus been rendered vain. Whether the plan of nursing an active policy against Serbia had already been determined upon at Konopischt I cannot know.

"When I arrived at Berlin I saw the Imperial Chancellor, and said to him that I regarded our foreign situation as very satisfactory, since our relations with England were better than they had been for a very long time past. I also remarked that a pacifist Ministry was in power in France.

"Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg seemed not to share my optimism. . . .

"I spent only a few hours in Berlin, where I heard that Austria intended to proceed against Serbia, in order to put an end to an intolerable state of affairs.

"Unfortunately I under-estimated at the moment the importance of the news. I thought that nothing would come of it after all, and that, if Russia threatened, the trouble could easily be composed. Now I regret that I did not stay in Berlin and say at once that I would have no share in any such policy. . . .

"I hoped for salvation from an English mediation, because I knew that Sir Edward Grey's influence in Petrograd could be turned to use in favour of peace."

THE AUSTRIAN ULTIMATUM.

Prince Lichnowsky was soon to learn how serious was the menace to the peace of the world which had already been prepared and agreed between the rulers of Austria and Germany. The brutal and offensive ultimatum of Austria against Serbia appeared in the Press. Dr. Mühlson has since revealed to the world the personal responsibility of the Kaiser for the issue of that document. The German Ambassador probably saw it first in the London papers.

"When the ultimatum appeared," says Prince Lichnowsky, "the whole world except in Berlin and Vienna understood that it meant war, and indeed world-war. The British fleet, which chanced to be assembled for a review, was not demobilised.

"At first I pressed for as conciliatory an answer as possible on the part of Serbia, since the attitude of the Russian Government left no further doubt of the seriousness of the situation.

"The Serbian reply was in accordance with British efforts; M. Pashitch had actually accepted everything, except two points, about which he declared his readiness to negotiate. If Russia and England had wanted war, in order to fall upon us, a hint to Belgrade would have been sufficient, and the unheard-of Austrian Note would have remained unanswered. . . .

"Sir Edward Grey went through the Serbian reply with me, and pointed to the conciliatory attitude of the Government at Belgrade. We then discussed his mediation proposal, which was to arrange an interpretation of the two points acceptable to both parties. . . .

“M. Cambon (French Ambassador in London), the Marquis Imperiali (Italian Ambassador in London), and I should have met under Sir Edward Grey's presidency, and it would have been easy to find an acceptable form for the disputed points, which in the main concerned the participation of Austrian officials in the investigation at Belgrade. Given goodwill, everything could have been settled in one or two sittings, and the mere acceptance of the British proposal would have relieved the tension and would have further improved our relations with England. I urgently recommended the proposal, saying that otherwise world-war was imminent, in which we had everything to lose and nothing to gain. In vain! I was told that it was against the dignity of Austria, and that we did not want to interfere in the Serbian business, but left it to our Ally. . . .

“Of course it would have only needed a hint from Berlin to make Count Berchtold satisfy himself with a diplomatic success and put up with the Serbian reply. But this hint was not given. On the contrary we pressed for war.”

“SERBIA MUST BE MASSACRED.”

“WE PRESSED FOR WAR.” If there are still people who think that this war arose out of British diplomacy, let them consider that admission of the German Ambassador.

Germany pressed for war. Germany insisted upon war.

“After our refusal Sir Edward asked us to come forward with a proposal of our own. WE INSISTED UPON WAR. . . .

“The impression became ever stronger that we desired war in all circumstances. . . . Otherwise our attitude in a question which, after all, did not directly concern us was unintelligible. The urgent appeals and definite declarations of M. Sazonoff (Russian Foreign Minister), later on the positively humble telegrams of the Tsar, the repeated proposals of Sir Edward, the warnings of San Giuliano (Italian Foreign Minister), and of Bollati (Italian Ambassador in Berlin), my urgent advice—it was all of no use, for Berlin went on insisting that Serbia must be massacred.”

“Berlin went on insisting that Serbia must be massacred!” Never in history has the ambassador of a Great Power written such terrible words of condemnation of his own Government. When all Europe was striving for peace, “BERLIN WENT ON INSISTING THAT SERBIA MUST BE MASSACRED.”

“A SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.”

And so the great war was forced upon Europe. And so Prince Lichnowsky's mission to London came to an end and the rulers of Germany had their way, and to-day one-third of the people of Serbia,

men, women, and children, lie massacred in the giant graveyards which have been dug because the rulers of Germany had their way.

In describing his departure from this country Prince Lichnowsky says :

“ A special train took us to Harwich, where a guard of honour was drawn up for me. I was treated like a departing Sovereign. Thus ended my London mission. It was wrecked, not by the perfidy of the British, but by the perfidy of our policy.”

Against the perfidy of that policy he makes this last despairing protest :

“ I had to support in London a policy which I knew to be fallacious. I was paid out for it, for it was a sin against the Holy Ghost.”

Prince Lichnowsky's memoirs show us in a clear white light the souls of men who never desired peace or friendship, for whom wealth, trade, and colonies were not enough, whose determined resolve from beginning to end of the story was war—war at any cost, war for the despoiling of their neighbours, war for the domination of the world, war for the love of war.

“ WE DELIBERATELY DESTROYED THE POSSIBILITY OF A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.”

The German Ambassador sums up his country's crimes in a confession which will be read so long as this war is remembered among men.

“ The Question of Guilt . . . As appears from all official publications, without the facts being controverted by our own White Book, which owing to its poverty and gaps constitutes a grave self-accusation :

“ 1. We encouraged Count Berchtold to attack Serbia, although no German interest was involved, and the danger of a world-war must have been known to us—whether we knew the text of the ultimatum is a question of complete indifference.

“ 2. In the days between July 23 and July 30, 1914, when M. Sazonoff emphatically declared that Russia could not tolerate an attack upon Serbia, we rejected the British proposals of mediation, although Serbia, under Russian and British pressure, had accepted almost the whole ultimatum, and although an agreement about the two points in question could easily have been reached, and Count Berchtold was even ready to satisfy himself with the Serbian reply.

“ 3. On July 30, when Count Berchtold wanted to give way, we, without Austria having been attacked, replied to Russia's mere mobilisation by sending an ultimatum to Petersburg, and on July 31 we declared war on the Russians, although

the Tsar had pledged his word that as long as negotiations continued not a man should march—so that we deliberately destroyed the possibility of a peaceful settlement.

“In view of these indisputable facts it is not surprising that the whole civilised world outside Germany attributes to us the sole guilt for the world-war.”

Let us make a note of these statements :

Germany encouraged Austria to attack . . . though no German interest was involved. . . . Germany rejected mediation even when Austria was ready to be satisfied with the Serbian reply. . . . **GERMANY DELIBERATELY DESTROYED THE POSSIBILITY OF A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.**

Prince Lichnowsky proceeds :

“Is it not intelligible that our enemies declare that they will not rest until a system is destroyed which constitutes a permanent threatening of our neighbours? Must they not otherwise fear that in a few years they will again have to take up arms, and again see their provinces overrun and their towns and villages destroyed? Were those people not right who declared that it was the spirit of Treitschke and Bernhardi which had dominated the German people—the spirit which glorifies war as an aim in itself and does not abhor it as an evil? Were those people not right who said that among us it is still the feudal knights and Junkers and the caste of warriors who rule and who fix our ideals and our values—not the civilian gentlemen? Were they not right who said that our love of duelling, which inspires our youth at the universities, lives on in those who guide the fortunes of the people? Had not the events of Zabern and the Parliamentary debates on that case shown foreign countries how civil rights and freedoms are valued among us, when questions of military power are on the other side?”

“German power,” said President Wilson, “is a thing without conscience, honour, or capacity for covenanted peace, and as such must be crushed.” Not negotiated with, but crushed.

And he added these words, which may serve as a practical postscript to this summary of Prince Lichnowsky's memoirs.

“Our present immediate duty is to win the war, and nothing shall turn us aside until that purpose is accomplished.”

Before the publication of these memoirs, there may have been people in this country who honestly believed that British diplomacy had some share of blame, if only a small share, for the terrible tragedy of the world-war, that Germany had some grounds for

thinking that she was being unfairly treated or hemmed in by other Powers, or that secret diplomacy or secret treaties gave Germany some excuse for her crime.

Prince Lichnowsky turns on all these delusions the searchlight of truth. As Mr. A. G. Gardiner has said with great force (in the *Daily News*), these memoirs disclose

“ The blackest story of devilry in the world’s history. What has Germany to say of it? What have we to say of it? It blows to the winds the last fragment of the case of those who have opposed this war—who for three years and more have said that we were guilty too, who have taught the unthinking the mischievous cant about a fight between this group of capitalists and that, and encouraged them to doubt and ask ‘What are we fighting about?’ Lichnowsky knows what we are fighting about. Thousands in Germany know what we are fighting about, and millions soon will know.”

The German Ambassador’s mission to London may have failed. What of his later mission to Berlin?

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