Thesis Approved

By

C. S. Armstrong  Major Adviser

H. D. Cooper  Dean
THE BRITISH CABINET CRISIS OF AUGUST, 1914

BY
ELLEN ROSE PEAREY

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
Creighton University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Arts in the Department of History

OMAHA, AUGUST, 1951
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THE CRITICAL DAYS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. MR. JOHN BURNS AND LORD JOHN MORLEY</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE POINTS OF DISSENSION</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Anglo-French Entente</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Anglo-Russian Entente</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Foreign Office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

This study is an attempt to present as nearly as possible a complete picture of the crisis in the British Cabinet, and the issues involved in it, on the eve of Britain's entry into World War I. There is only one work covering the whole Ministerial controversy, the Memorandum on Resignation by Lord John Morley, who is perhaps the leading character in this story and naturally presents it from his viewpoint alone.

The memoirs of the prominent political figures of that period have, of necessity, been relied upon as primary sources of information. Some of these were disappointing as they dismissed the crisis in a sentence or two.

The Times (London) editions for June through September, 1914 were checked, and although they contained little pertaining to the crisis in the Cabinet, the unwritten news and editorials proved the more significant. Hansard's Parliamentary Debates revealed only one instance, and that during the question period in the House of Commons on August 5, which referred to the crisis and its accompanying resignations of two Ministers.
The general works dealing with World War I, such as those of Sidney B. Fay and Bernadotte E. Schmitt, were valuable for their interpretations, but they made only passing references to the crisis, relying for their account upon the same memoirs as this study.

An inquiry directed to the British Information Service in New York regarding possible British sources related to this study, disclosed no sources other than those already consulted.

To understand Britain's pursuit of a policy which abandoned her traditional "splendid isolation" from other than its political aspect, it was necessary to consider John A. Clapham's *Economic History of Modern Britain* and Arthur J. Marder's *Anatomy of British Sea Power*.

Volume XI of the *British Documents on the Origins of the War* was carefully scrutinized in vain for any references to the crisis itself, but it was helpful in depicting the work Grey was doing at the Foreign Office during July and the first three days of August, 1914.

The various historical periodicals lacked articles pertaining to this specific study, though a few were of some interest in their criticisms of Sir Edward Grey's policies. One article dealing with crisis by Sidney B. Fay was taken almost wholly from Morley's *Memorandum*,
but it lacked the author's commentary. Though Morley had once edited the *Fortnightly Review*, his resignation passed unnoticed by that journal in favor of articles on the conduct of the war and Britain's relief in achieving national unity when the challenge from abroad averted the impending civil war in Ireland.

The greatest difficulty encountered in the preparation of the study was in extracting the story of the crisis piece by piece from the defenses of and attacks upon Sir Edward Grey.
CHAPTER I

THE CRITICAL DAYS

In the spring and early summer prior to the out­break of World War I in 1914 the European scene was calm when contrasted to the conflict which was raging in England over the Irish Home Rule Bill. When it became certain that the Bill would go into effect under the Parliament Act with its third passage by the House of Commons, the Protestant counties in Ulster began making preparations for armed resistance. Their support in Parliament came from the Conservative party. Irish Nationalists were likewise arming and the Liberal Ministry under Herbert Asquith faced opposition from both groups along with the possibility of civil war in Ireland. Asquith thought the situation so serious that in April he added to his duties as Prime Minister those of Secretary of State for War.

In an attempt to reconcile differences over an amendment to the Bill under debate in Commons and to avert civil war, the King called a conference at Buckingham Palace for July 21. It ended in failure three days later.
Feelings were running almost as high in Parliament over the Budget presented by David Lloyd George as Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Liberal Government lost considerable support in a serious division over the Budget on July 7. The whole situation was fraught with danger for Asquith’s Government. The Times editorially blamed Lloyd George for the damage done to his party and in its leading article for July 9 pictured the situation as follows:

The trade boom is ebbing fast; the most critical phase of the Irish question is upon us; the Government is losing its hold upon its Parliamentary majority; and Ministers are palpably window-dressing. An early General Election has always been present to the minds of Ministers as a possible means of escape from their difficulties; it is a contingency which must always be borne in mind in taking stock of the situation. Many Liberal members confess candidly that their party could do with a period of opposition. The majority, it is true, are held together by a powerful cement. But the keen electioneering minds in the Cabinet, who are at last smelling danger, are not likely to allow the damage which their party is now clearly suffering to go beyond repair.¹

With the scene at home so filled with domestic problems few Englishmen felt undue apprehension over the murder of an Austrian archduke in Bosnia. There was some justification for their complacency. Relations with Germany had improved steadily in the months since Great Britain and Germany had worked together for a peaceful solution of Balkan difficulties. Treaties between the two

¹The Times (London), July 9, 1914.
countries concerning the Portuguese colonies and the Bagdad Railway were awaiting final signatures, while the British fleet had just made a visit to the German naval base at Kiel late in June. A perusal of The Times for June and July, 1914, reveals that leaders and editorials on domestic issues took precedence over the European situation until July 27, when, for the first time, the possibility of a European war dominated the columns of that newspaper. The British had been alarmed repeatedly in the past decade by the prospect of a European conflict arising from crises in Morocco and the Balkans. However, by July 27 the news of mobilization in both Austria and Serbia, the knowledge that Russia with French support would aid Serbia in the event of an Austrian attack, and the reluctance of the Continental powers to submit the dispute to a general conference awakened the British to the uncertainty of working out a peaceful solution to this crisis, despite their former successes.

That the members of the House of Commons were not too concerned over events in Austria and Serbia is evidenced by the fact that several times during the first two weeks of July Prime Minister Asquith was asked from the floor of the House if he would consider an autumn session. The plan was to adjourn the first of August and resume sessions the middle of November. In Asquith's replies he
said that the matter was receiving careful consideration and that he would make a definite statement as soon as possible. On July 13 he stated in the House that the Government had decided upon an autumn or early winter session.2

As no minutes were kept of Cabinet sessions until 1918 it is difficult to ascertain when the Ministers first became aware of the seriousness of the European situation. From the memoirs of that period it appears that the first discussion followed the reading by Sir Edward Grey of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia at the Cabinet session of July 24. From that date until Britain entered the war on August 4, there were many long Cabinet meetings, sessions which served to deepen the cleavage which had existed in the Liberal administration since the formation of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman’s Cabinet in 1905, and in the party since the Boer War. The differences among the Ministers concerning Britain's role in the impending conflict were to culminate in the resignation of two members—Mr. John Burns, the President of the Board of Trade, and Lord John Morley, Lord President of the Council. Both tendered their resignations to Prime Minister Asquith before Britain was actually at war. A study of the events leading to their resignations shows that neither resigned on a whim, but rather because of dissentient views they

2The Times (London), July 7, 9, 14—1914.
held regarding the conduct of affairs by the Foreign Office from 1906 to 1914 and the policies pursued in Britain's relations with France and Russia which led to British intervention in World War I. This is particularly true of Lord John Morley, though he had no quarrel with Liberal domestic policies and was an ardent fighter for Irish Home Rule. These resignations were the first from the Asquith Cabinet over a question of foreign policy.

The Liberal Party was in Opposition from 1895 until 1905, and during that time it had been divided into two wings by the Boer War, but this division was not comparable to the real split in the party which had occurred over the Home Rule question under Gladstone in 1886. Sir Edward Grey became the leader of the group called the Liberal Imperialists who supported the Conservative Government in the prosecution of the South African war. As a disciple of Gladstone, Grey did not believe in the acquisition of more land for the Empire, but he did believe in preserving the honor and security of the lands within the Empire even at the cost of war. The bulk of the Liberal Party were Radical-Pacifists. Their leader, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, was asked to form a Government late in November, 1905, when Arthur Balfour resigned.

The leading Liberal Imperialists in this Cabinet included Sir Edward Grey in the Foreign Office, Herbert
Asquith as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Richard Haldane as Secretary of State for War. Sharing the opinions of the Prime Minister were John Morley, Secretary of State for India, and Sir Robert Reid, the Lord Chancellor. Lloyd George and John Burns also entered the Cabinet and they, too, had condemned the Boer War.

Following the illness and death of Campbell-Bannerman, Asquith assumed the duties of Prime Minister. Winston Churchill, who joined the new Cabinet as President of the Board of Trade, called the Asquith Cabinet a "veiled coalition." Again according to Churchill, there was a "very distinct line of cleavage" between the Radical-Pacifists who were in a majority in the Cabinet and the party, and the Liberal Imperialists. As Prime Minister, Asquith now had to assume an impartial position, "but his heart and sympathies were always with Sir Edward Grey, the War Office and the Admiralty, and on every important occasion when he was forced to reveal himself, he definitely sided with them."^ It is not to be construed from a discussion of this cleavage among the Ministers that they were unable to work in an atmosphere of courtesy and harmony. There is considerable evidence of strong personal friendships among the members of the Cabinet from opposing

---

wings of Liberal opinion, most notably the friendship be-
tween Haldane and Lord Morley. From 1905 until the crisis
of the summer of 1914 there were many clashes of will and
opinion among the members of the Cabinet, but none of
which came so near to dividing the Cabinet, the Parliament,
and the country as that which led to the resignations of
Burns and Morley.

The most frequent differences of opinion in the
Liberal Cabinet had occurred over naval and military
expenditures. Before the turn of the century the country
was still predominantly isolationist, in the sense that
it preferred a policy of remaining outside the alliances
and entanglements on the Continent. Gladstone had been
interested only in maintaining a fleet stronger than the
next two--France and Russia. The naval problem had become
a political football between the Liberals and the Conserv-
atives, and the Conservative Party had become synonymous
with a powerful fleet which seemed to be Britain's only
security against the Triple and Dual Alliances. Gladstone
had resigned in 1894, in fact, as the immediate result
of his opposition to an increase in Naval Estimates,
though underlying his resignation were eight years spent
in an unsuccessful struggle to enact Home Rule for Ireland.

---

4Richard Burdon Haldane, An Autobiography (New
From this time on there was an increasing number of Liberals who favored larger estimates. Thus the most acute crisis in the Liberal Government before 1914 occurred in 1909 over naval expenditures. Sir Edward Grey stated that the difference was not on the principle of national safety, but on the margin of strength necessary to secure it. In notes which Grey passed to Lord John Morley during several crucial Cabinet sessions over the 1909 estimates, he wrote that he could not stay in the Cabinet if the Navy Estimates did not "provide a sufficient margin of safety against possible German strength in 1912-13." He felt that the figures of German shipbuilding would cause such a feeling of apprehension that the "country will become ungovernable" and that there would not "be only scare but panic." The difference between scare and panic he pointed to as being the fact that the Admiralty Board would resign on a program of


6For earlier scares see Arthur J. Marder, The Anatomy of British Sea Power (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), pp. 174-203, 274-290, 372-393. Marder believes that with the passage of the Naval Defence Act in 1889 "began the first chapter of the modern race in naval armaments" and that "there can be no doubt that the Act, however much a necessity to England, served as a stimulus to France and Russia, though this was always denied by the Conservatives." p. 162.
four ships and that the minimum they would remain on was six. In this crisis Morley was apparently on Grey's side.

At the Cabinet session of July 24 referred to earlier, the Ministers had sat all afternoon discussing the Irish problem, as the Buckingham Palace conference had ended that day without reaching a solution. From notes taken during the Cabinet meeting Asquith cites the real interest of the meeting as Grey's statement on the European situation. The Austrian note to Serbia had been brought to Grey from the Foreign Office and as the meeting was reaching its end, Grey read the document to the Ministers. Asquith's observation was that "this means almost inevitably that Russia will come on the scene in defence of Servia, and if so it is difficult both for Germany and France to refrain from lending a hand" and that "we are within measurable distance of a real Armageddon." 8

Winston Churchill found difficulty in disengaging his mind from the "tedious and bewildering debate which had just closed," but gradually "the parishes of Fermanagh and Tyrone faded back into the mists and squalls of Ireland, and a strange light began immediately, but by


perceptible gradations, to fall and grow upon the map of Europe." In notes dated July 26 Asquith calls the situation the most dangerous of the "last forty years" and states that it might "incidentally have the effect of throwing into the background the lurid pictures of civil war in Ulster." Their minds were still not quite free of the Irish problem.

There is no record in the contemporary accounts of another Cabinet session until Monday, July 27. On Sunday orders had been sent to the First Fleet concentrated at Portsmouth not to disperse, and for the ships of the Second Fleet to stay in their home ports close to their crews. Grey had contacted Paris, Berlin, and Rome on the suggestion that the Ambassadors of their countries should meet with him to mediate the dispute as four disinterested powers. When he met with the Cabinet on Monday, July 27, he informed them of the contents of Sir George Buchanan's telegram of July 24 from St. Petersburg which described M. Sazanoff's hopes that England would proclaim her solidarity with France and Russia, and expressed Buchanan's opinion that France and Russia were determined to make a strong stand.

9Churchill, op. cit., p. 204.
10Asquith, op. cit., II, 8.
Lord Morley's remembrance of dates in his Memorandum on Resignation is uncertain, and he places the report of this telegram "on or about July 24-27," but he records that at the same meeting "Grey in his own quiet way . . . made a memorable pronouncement." The time had come, Grey told them, when the Cabinet was bound to make up its mind plainly whether they were to take an active part with Russia and France, or to stand aside and preserve an absolute neutrality. They could no longer defer decision as events were moving rapidly and they could no longer wait on accident, and postpone. If the Cabinet was for neutrality, Grey told them he did not think he was the man to carry out such a policy. Then Morley says "the Cabinet seemed to heave a sort of sigh, and a moment or two of breathless silence fell upon us." Morley expressed his satisfaction to Grey that the Foreign Secretary had "brought the inexorable position, to which circumstances had now brought us, plainly and definitely before us" as it was "fairer to France and everybody else, ourselves included." Morley could not, on the instant, gather with any certainty in which direction opinion was inclining, but it was no wonder, he recalls, as "everybody had suddenly awakened to the startling fact that nothing less than the continued existence of the Ministry was this time--the first time--in sharp peril from differences
within, and not from the House of Commons."12

Bernadotte E. Schmitt observes in his study on the advent of the war that one may speculate whether the Cabinet as a whole viewed the problem as keenly at this time from the point of view of party solidarity as Lord Morley did, as no decision was taken in answer to Sir Edward Grey's appeal. Schmitt concludes that on that day war had not yet broken out and that it was contrary to both Cabinet usage and British temperament to deal with hypothetical cases.13 Without a decision from the Cabinet, Grey had no basis upon which to work with the other governments.

The view of the Foreign Office was expressed undoubtedly that day in an editorial in The Times entitled "Europe and the Crisis" which stated,

Peace, indeed, is the first interest of the Entente and the first interest of England. Both will spare no efforts to preserve it. But any plans which may be based on the supposition that the policy of either has changed, or is likely to change, are doomed to disappointment and to failure. Our friendships are firm, as our aims are free from all suspicion of aggression.14


14The Times (London), July 27, 1914.
That Cabinet meeting of Monday, July 27, was the first on the European situation, according to Winston Churchill, and the meetings continued thereafter daily or twice a day throughout the week. From his viewpoint the Cabinet was "overwhelmingly pacific." He numbers at least three-quarters of the members in a group determined not to be drawn into a European quarrel unless Great Britain were attacked. Churchill thought it unlikely that Britain would not be attacked. Those in the Cabinet in a pacific mood he describes as believing first that Austria and Serbia would not come to blows; secondly, that if they did, Russia would not intervene; thirdly, if Russia intervened, that Germany would not strike; fourthly, if Germany struck at Russia, France and Germany might neutralize each other without fighting; and fifthly, that they did not believe that if Germany attacked France, she would attack through Belgium or that if she did the Belgians would forcibly resist. He concludes that here were positions, "all of which could be wrangled over and about none of which any final proof could be offered except the proof of events."^15

In his memoirs Lloyd George pictures the Cabinet as being "hopelessly divided--fully one third, if not one

half, being opposed to our entry into the War."\(^{16}\)

Lord Beaverbrook, who was raised to the peerage in 1917 and who was serving as a member of Parliament and secretary to Bonar Law at the time of the crisis, delineates three main groups of opinion in the Cabinet—"those who were in favour of intervention, and those who were ready to engage in or abstain from war, according to conditions." For an immediate declaration of neutrality without imposing any conditions on Germany, Lord Beaverbrook lists Lord Morley; Mr. John Burns; Sir John Simon, the Attorney General; Lord Beauchamp, the First Commissioner of Works; and Mr. Charles Hobhouse, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. For peace, but prepared to leave the door open in case it became necessary to intervene, were Lloyd George and Lord Harcourt of the Colonial Office. "Beyond these, and shading off to the left of peace and the right of war" were the Marquess of Crewe, Lord Privy Seal; Mr. Reginald McKenna, Home Affairs Secretary; and Sir Herbert Samuel, the Postmaster General. Beaverbrook represents Sir Edward Grey as being solid for intervention, and Churchill, "going even beyond him, was pressing for instant mobilization." Though the Prime Minister was known in his personal opinion to side with Grey and Churchill, he

was "chiefly anxious to maintain unity at all costs."

Beaverbrook was of the opinion that a majority for non-intervention could have been obtained if a strong man had stepped forward to lead the pacifists, and intimates that Lloyd George was the man who could have given their large number strength. As Beaverbrook saw it "it was a case of quality against quantity of opinion."\(^{17}\)

One may readily question Beaverbrook's sources of information in view of the facts that he was a member of the Opposition and outside the Cabinet, and that the members of the Ministry themselves are so niggardly in giving details in their own accounts regarding their divergent opinions. Beaverbrook relates how Churchill, during the week of the crisis, was in communication with the Conservatives in an attempt to form a Coalition Government. Presumably much of the information concerning the difficulties of the Cabinet must have come from Churchill.\(^{18}\)

Morley portrays Harcourt as the man busily engaged during that momentous week organizing opinion among his Cabinet colleagues in favor of neutrality. He


\(^{18}\)Ibid., pp. 8-11.
was initiating a countermove against that "being openly worked with his best daemonic energy by Winston, with strenuous simplicity by Grey, and sourdement by the Lord Chancellor--the Prime Minister seeing and waiting."

Morley characterizes both movements as being without intrigue and all above-board. As Morley was passing along the corridor in the House of Commons one night [Morley gives no date] Harcourt got him into his room and there he found Beauchamp, McKinnon Wood, Hobhouse, and Pease "very zealous" against the extension of the French entente to an alliance. McKinnon Wood was the Secretary for Scotland, and Joseph Pease, the President of the Board of Education. The group in Harcourt's room figured there were "eight or nine men" in the Cabinet likely to agree with them. Regarding other meetings of the group, Morley states, "I think I attended one other meeting of this Peace Group in the same place, and under the same auspices," but during the week Harcourt "two or three times threw me little slips at the Cabinet table, 'That I must resign is more and more evident.'"19

Grey was cognizant of the growth of the anti-war party in the Cabinet, and he claims that it did not appear in the Cabinet discussions "for neither I nor anyone tried to force a decision while there was still any hope of

---

19Morley, op. cit., p. 4.
peace." Discussions in the Cabinet were "restrained and reserved" for they kept to "that on which we were all agreed—the endeavour to prevent war altogether." Outside the Cabinet Grey was sure that the anti-war group was meeting and arranging "concerted action, if need be, to keep this country out of war or to resign if they failed in doing so." According to Grey the group included "more than one of the names that came next after that of the Prime Minister in authority and influence with the Liberal Party inside and outside." He thought it "needless to enquire whether the group included half, or less, or more than half the Cabinet," as it was "sufficient in number and influence to have broken up the Cabinet."²⁰

By comparing the estimates made by various members of the Cabinet as to the complexion of the group in the Cabinet opposing British intervention, it is safe to assume that a majority of the twenty-one Ministers in the Cabinet were in that group. Churchill's "overwhelming" estimate seems somewhat exaggerated.

Grey states that he made no attempt to counteract the anti-war movement either inside or outside the Government. He could not remember "asking any colleague to support participation in war, if war came." He felt that if the country went into the war, it must do so

²⁰Grey, op. cit., I, 323-324.
whole-heartedly "with a feeling and conviction so strong as to compel practical unanimity." He did not want the country maneuvered into a war by the "counter-workings of a pro-war against an anti-war group." The French were pressing Grey to give a pledge of support, but Grey felt that to demand from the Cabinet a pledge would have been fatal and would have resulted in the resignation of one group or the other and would have broken up the Cabinet altogether.\(^21\)

The opinion of the country and Parliament also had to be taken into account. In general the people wanted peace, and even the majority of the Liberal newspapers were against British intervention during the last week of July. There was some pro-French feeling among the people, as well as some anti-German feeling, but not enough to overcome the general desire for peace. The people had been repeatedly assured that they were not obligated to either France or Russia by an alliance, and they could see no reason why they should become involved in the war. From Grey's viewpoint these feelings had to be represented in the Cabinet, for otherwise "the Government would have been out of touch with the country—an unsafe position in any circumstances, a most dangerous one in a crisis." Grey admits that there had to be an

\(^{21}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 324.\)
anti-war party in the Cabinet. On the other hand, the group who shared Grey's point of view in the crisis felt that to stand aside would mean the domination of Germany; the subordination of France and Russia; the isolation of Britain and the hatred of her both by those who had feared and those who had wished for her intervention in the war; and ultimately that Germany would wield the whole power of the Continent. Such a situation would have been contrary to the traditional position Britain had maintained by keeping herself free from the Continental alliances, yet enjoying the "balance of power" made by them, and entering only on one side or the other in the system of alliances when one power became too strong.

Grey pictures the two groups working together in the Cabinet to prevent a European war like "two men who walk side by side on a straight road, but who see ahead a parting of the ways and are determined, when they come to it, to go one to the right and the other to the left." He observes that both groups acted wisely in the crisis. One side did not press the authorization of a pledge to support France, and the other did not urge that it be intimated to France that Britain would stand aside. Both sides were aware of the members of the Cabinet between them who were reserving their decision. Furthermore,

---

22 Ibid., p. 326.
"the Cabinet as a whole knew that it was not in a position to pledge the country." Grey indicates that it was a difficult and anxious time for him because of the sense of responsibility he felt to the Cabinet in not going "one inch beyond what the Cabinet had authorized." The policy that the Ministry was to adopt would have to be determined by the events of the days that followed.

In the Cabinet debates Lord Morley was emphasizing the Russian aspect of the situation. In his Memorandum he recalls:

Have you ever thought, I put to them, what will happen if Russia wins? If Germany is beaten, and Austria is beaten, it is not England and France who will emerge pre-eminent in Europe. It will be Russia. Will that be good for Western civilization? I at least don't think so. If she says she will go to Constantinople, or boldly annex both northern and neutral zones in Persia, or insist on railways up to the Indian and Afghan frontier, who will prevent her: Germany is unpopular in England, but Russia is more unpopular still. And people will rub their eyes when they realize that Cossacks are their fellow victorious champions for Freedom, Justice, Equality of man (especially Jew man), and respect for treaties (in Persia for instance).24

Meanwhile Lloyd George was opposing intervention on economic grounds. He had been consulting with leading businessmen in Great Britain and they were against plunging England into a European war. They feared the effect it would have on the whole system of credit centered in

23Ibid., pp. 328-329.
24Morley, op. cit., pp. 5-6.
London, on commerce and manufacturing, and on labor, wages and prices.  

On Tuesday, July 28, hostilities began in Europe with the Austrian declaration of war on Serbia. In the Cabinet the decision was made to put into effect the precautionary regulations in the preparation for war. On the following day a strong bid was made by Berlin through Sir Edward Goschen for British neutrality, and at the same time Grey was warning Lichnowsky, the German ambassador, not to count on England standing aside in all circumstances. From Grey's answer to Goschen regarding Germany's bid for neutrality it is clear that he felt Germany was asking England to stand by while French colonies were taken and France beaten so long as Germany did not take French territory as distinct from their colonies, and that Germany was asking England to bargain away her obligation to guarantee the neutrality of Belgium. The reply to Germany that England would not bind herself to neutrality on such terms was not presented to the Cabinet. Grey took it to Asquith at 10 Downing Street and, even though a Cabinet meeting was scheduled for the afternoon, they agreed that it might be sent without waiting as they were certain that the Cabinet would agree that this bid for neutrality could not be accepted. The reply was


26Grey, op. cit., p. 317.
dated July 29, but not sent until Thursday, July 30. 27

In the House of Commons on Wednesday Asquith had described the situation as one of extreme gravity. In his notes for July 29 Asquith wrote: "The Amending Bill and the whole Irish business are, of course, put into the shade by the coming war, for it now seems as if nothing but a miracle could avert it. After dinner I went across to E. Grey and sat with him and Haldane till 1 A. M., talking over the situation and trying to discover bridges and outlets." 28 These three men were in intimate contact throughout this whole week of decision, and their meetings were made easier by the fact that Grey was staying with Haldane. 29

Also on Wednesday, July 29, Lord Morley had reported in the House of Lords on the European situation. His report was brief and unrevealing. He said:

All Europe is exceedingly alive to the far reaching possibilities that are brought into view by this strife. As to the best way of averting the spread of war beyond the area immediately and primarily concerned, the other Powers are engaged in active communications. As to the part of His Majesty's Government in these international communications, there is nothing to add to what was said yesterday afternoon by the Leader of the House. Your Lordships may rest assured of the earnest and unremitting efforts of His Majesty's Government,

27 Ibid., pp. 318-319.
28 Asquith, op. cit., p. 8.
29 Haldane, op. cit., p. 292.
well-acquainted as they are with all the complications and difficulties of the European situation, to aid the cause of international peace and to avoid a vast catastrophe.

Certainly Morley can not be accused of letting any of his own opinions color this report to the Lords.

Going before Commons on July 30 the Prime Minister pleaded for unity, as debate was still continuing in the House over the Home Rule Amending Bill. The House agreed to postpone indefinitely the Bill in order that the British nation might present a united front. The Home Rule Bill which had been originally introduced by Asquith in 1912 was finally enacted in September, but its execution was suspended for the duration of the war.

Opinion was still sharply divided in the Cabinet on Thursday on the question of British participation in a European war. There seemed no hope of reconciling it without some resignations from the Government. Sir Edward Grey was exercising extreme care in avoiding any commitments to France through the French ambassador, M. Cambon. Opinion was also divided in Parliament, the press, and among the public so that Grey could not bring England to the side of France without some new fact or turn of events. Sidney B. Fay suggests that the possibility of a German refusal to respect Belgian neutrality had been revealed to Grey in the German bid for British neutrality and that

30The Times (London), July 30, 1914.
it might be this eventuality that could turn British opinion to France, but this aspect of the situation was not to be considered until the next day.

According to Asquith's notes the Cabinet met at eleven o'clock Friday morning, July 31, and had a "very interesting discussion, especially about the neutrality of Belgium and the point upon which everything will ultimately turn—are we to go in or stand aside?" He writes that everybody longed to stand aside, but that the French, through Cambon, were "pressing strongly for a reassuring declaration." Edward Grey had an interview with Cambon during the afternoon which he had described to Asquith as being "rather painful." Asquith adds that Grey had to tell Cambon that "we are under no obligation, that we could give no pledges and that our actions must depend upon the course of events, including the Belgian question and the direction of public opinion."^2

There is no record of the Cabinet having reached any decision at this session regarding British interests and obligations under the Treaty of 1839 in respect to Belgium. Morley says that the question was "thrown back day after day as less urgent that France" and that as "a Cabinet usually thinks of one thing at once, the

---


^3Asquith, op. cit., p. 10.
question of Belgium was up to this date, and in truth up
to the morning of August 3rd, when Grey had to set out
his whole case in the House of Commons, secondary to the
pre-eminent controversy of the Anglo-French Entente."33

Saturday, August 1, Germany declared war on
Russia. In the Cabinet Grey noted a change in the point
of view of the anti-war group which was "beginning to
give shape to the attitude of the Cabinet as a whole."
He could not say how or why this change was being wrought,
but his impression was that "as war became more imminent,
men began to picture themselves the probable scenes and
events of it; and the more vividly they saw these, the
more uneasy they became at the prospect of Britain sitting
still and immovable, while great events fraught with in-
calculable consequences were happening at her very doors."34

Asquith records that the Saturday session of the
Cabinet parted in a "fairly amicable mood." Lloyd George
was still all for peace, but was being "more sensible and
statesmanlike for keeping the position still open."
Churchill, Asquith describes, was "very bellicose and de-
manding immediate mobilization." Grey had declared to
Asquith that he would go if an "out-and-out and uncom-
promising policy of non-intervention at all costs was

33Morley, op. cit., p. 3.
adopted." The main controversy that morning had been on Belgium and its neutrality and Asquith was still not quite hopeless about peace, "though far from hopeful."

He was certain that if war came there would be a split in the Cabinet. If Grey went he would go and "the whole thing would break up." On the other hand, he writes, "we may have to contemplate, with such equanimity as we can command, the loss of Morley and possibly, though I do not think it, of Simon."35

Fay calls August 2 the "Sunday of Resolve" for England.36 For Asquith the day began with a breakfast visit from Prince Lichnowsky to implore him not to side with France. Asquith describes the Prince as being very emotional and weeping, but at the same time bitter and heartbroken about the policy of his government not restraining Austria. Asquith told him that the British had no desire to intervene and the possibility of intervention rested with Germany if she would not invade Belgium or send her fleet into the Channel to attack the north coast of France.37

The Cabinet met from eleven o'clock until nearly two. It was evident that the Cabinet was on the verge of splitting. The French appeal for help was brought

35Asquith, op. cit., p. 11.
36Fay, op. cit., II, 538.
37Asquith, op. cit., p. 11.
before the Cabinet and the main question was the language to be used by Grey to Cambon in the afternoon. Asquith pressed for attention to the neutrality of Belgium, but, according to Morley, "it was secondary to the question of our neutrality in the struggle between Germany and France; and to our liability to France under the Entente." Morley summarizes the situation as the discussion began thus:

Grey admitted that we were not bound by the same obligation of honour to France as bound France to Russia. He professed to stand by what he had told Cambon in his letter of 1912, that we were left perfectly free to decide whether we would assist France by armed force. We were not committed, he always said, to action in a contingency that had not yet arisen and might never arise. No immediate aggressive action was entailed upon us, unless there was action against France in the Channel or the North Sea.  

Harcourt had assured Morley before the discussion began that he believed there were ten or eleven men in the Cabinet against Grey's view that Britain had both obligations of honour and substantial obligations of policy in taking sides with France. After considerable discussion and with some difficulty Grey was authorized to assure Cambon that if the German fleet came into the Channel or through the North Sea to undertake hostile operations against French coasts or shipping, the British

---

38 Morley, op. cit., p. 10.

39 Ibid., p. 11.
fleet would give all the protection in its power. This assurance, of course, was subject to the approval of Parliament and was not to be understood as binding Britain to take action unless action was taken by the German fleet.

This authorization for Grey's conversation with Cambon was not unanimous for Mr. John Burns resigned at once, but Asquith persuaded him to hold off until the Cabinet met again that evening. Morley depicts Burns as insisting "with remarkable energy, force, and grasp" that the authorization was "neither more nor less than a challenge to Germany, tantamount to a declaration of war against her." While Asquith, Morley says, took the blow a "trifle too coolly." As the Cabinet broke up at lunch time Morley told Burns that he thought he was mistaken in going on that particular question as "the door-step argument makes a warning to Germany defensible, apart from French Entente." Morley also told Burns that he was certain to go out with him, "but on the general policy of armed intervention, as against diplomatic energy and armed neutrality, to which Grey has step by step been drawing the Cabinet on." Morley says that just as he had expected, he had not made the slightest impression on

---

40 Asquith, op. cit., p. 12.
Burns. Morley wanted to keep Britain's hands free and take advantage of the occasion for more talk and negotiation with Germany.

Asquith notes that in that morning session Lord Crewe, Reginald McKenna, and Herbert Samuel had acted as a "moderating intermediate body." Lord Crewe had shown "remarkable moderation, judgment, and patriotism" throughout the crisis according to Lord Beaverbrook and had urged his colleagues that "what was undoubtedly Liberal majority opinion should not separate itself from the policy of Grey and Churchill, behind which stood the threat not only of the resignation of these Ministers, but of the withdrawal of the Prime Minister, the disruption of the party, and the fall of the Government in the very moment of the most acute crisis which had threatened the British Empire for a hundred years; events themselves would settle the issue."43

About noon Sunday, while the Cabinet was still in session, a letter was brought to the meeting from the Conservative front Opposition benches assuring the Liberal Government that they were ready to support a decision to stand by France and Russia. In it there was no mention of Belgium. The letter was sent on the joint authority

41 Morley, op. cit., p. 12.
42 Asquith, op. cit., p. 12.
of Lord Lansdowne and A. Bonar Law, the leader of the Opposition. As has been pointed out, party differences in England were acute before the war, but when the nation became faced with the grave danger of being involved in a European conflict the whole situation was changed. The patriotic motive which inspired the letter from the Opposition can not be discounted entirely, but as Beaverbrook observes, the whole party was for war with the exception of Lord Balfour, the ex-Prime Minister and ex-leader of the Conservative party. Some members of the Opposition favored the formation of a Coalition Government at the outset, a move opposed by Bonar Law, and so those members had to content themselves with minor positions of service "while they considered that their talents gave them the right to higher places which they could fill to better advantage to the country than the Liberal occupant." The letter served to record the Conservative attitude, and at the same time to strengthen Asquith's hand against the pacifists in his own Cabinet without suggesting that the Conservatives give any active assistance.

In the 1914 Parliament the Conservatives were the largest group in the House, while the Liberal Government depended upon a coalition of the Liberal,

44 Ibid., pp. 24-25.
Nationalist, and Labour groups for a working majority. Though the Opposition plays a recognized part in the British form of government, it has no official position. Between the outbreak of the war on the continent and the time it became clear the stand Britain was to take, the Conservative leaders had held conferences to determine their views and the action they were prepared to take which culminated in their letter of August 2. They were aware that the danger to Britain could only be overcome if national resources were utilized to the utmost, and the British could act as a united nation. The actions of the Conservative leaders in this period were explained fully several months after Britain entered the war in a speech made by A. Bonar Law. 46

David Lloyd George accused the Conservative party of having become "increasingly Germanophobe" in the years before the war, largely because of the rivalry between the British and German Empires for supremacy on the seas and in the marts of the world. Lloyd George admitted that the Conservatives were far from desiring war anywhere, but that when it did come it was popular with the Conservative leaders and journalistic press for

some of their "ardent spirits" had hoped for it, while others had anticipated that a clash with Germany was inevitable. With the working majority controlled by the Liberal party in the House, they could be dismissed only by a dissolution. This, according to Lloyd George, would have been "unthinkable in the agony of the Great War," and a division of the nation would have been an "unspeakable crime when even united the nation could barely be saved from defeat, so formidable was the foe we challenged."\textsuperscript{47}

The letter assuring the Liberal Government of Conservative support which was read at the Sunday morning Cabinet session was in these terms:

\begin{flushright}
2nd August, 1914

Dear Mr. Asquith,— Lord Lansdowne and I feel it is our duty to inform you that in our opinion, as well as in that of all the colleagues whom we have been able to consult, it would be fatal to the honour and security of the United Kingdom to hesitate in supporting France and Russia at the present juncture; and we offer our unhesitating support to the Government in any measure they may consider necessary for that object. Yours very truly,

A. BONAR LAW\textsuperscript{48}
\end{flushright}

Grey gives all credit to the Conservative leaders "for their resolution and courage in making this contribution to a decision at a moment when they had not before them, as we had before us, the compulsion of the imminent menace to Belgium." He says the letter from the Conservative

\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Lloyd George, op. cit.}, pp. 190-192.

\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ginsburg, op. cit.}, p. 62.
leaders was read and laid aside as it could have no influence on their discussion at that point on Sunday. "It was to the good to know it, but what mattered it now, when the issue of the Belgian Treaty was bringing everyone to the conclusion that we must fight by the side of France, and to the determination to do so?" Grey questions. According to the other accounts, the main subject at the session at which the Conservative offer was received was the language which Grey was to use with Cambon in the afternoon, and not the obligation to Belgium, though Asquith was pressing for it. Grey may have been obsessed at the time with finding some condition on which a unified opinion could be reached in the Cabinet. Since it could not be reached on a point of honor and obligation to France, hence his absorption with the Belgian neutrality question which was not mentioned by the Conservatives.

Asquith rather perfunctorily notes only that "Bonar Law writes that the Opposition will back us up in any measure we may take for the support of France and Russia." He is absorbed by the problem of unity as he supposes that "a good number of our own party in the House of Commons are for absolute non-interference" and to him it would be a "shocking thing if at such a moment we break up."

---

49 Grey, op. cit., p. 10.
50 Asquith, op. cit., p. 12.
On this "Sunday of Resolve" Asquith was clear in his own mind as to what was right and wrong. He summarizes:

(1) We have no obligation of any kind either to France or Russia to give them military or naval help. 
(2) The dispatch of the Expeditionary Force to help France at this moment is out of the question and would serve no object. (3) We must not forget the ties created by our long-standing and intimate friendship with France. (4) It is against British interests that France should be wiped out as a Great Power. (5) We cannot allow Germany to use the Channel as a hostile base. (6) We have obligations to Belgium to prevent it being utilized and absorbed by Germany.\footnote{Ibid.}

After the Sunday morning session Morley joined his colleagues Simon, Lloyd George, Harcourt, Samuel, Pease, and McKinnon Wood at Beauchamp's for lunch. There he says the general opinion was that "Burns was right," and that they should not have passed Grey's proposed language to Cambon. They all seemed to feel that the Cabinet was "rather artfully drawn on step by step to war for the benefit of France and Russia." Morley observes that if he, or anyone else, could have persuaded the Cabinet that the mixed argument of French liability and Belgian liability would end in expeditionary force and an active part for Britain in a European war, "the Cabinet would undoubtedly have perished that very evening, Lloyd George and Simon heading the schism." He felt that the door-step point was awkward, if they stopped there. Morley told the group at the luncheon that he felt bound
to resign, but on wider grounds. "Personally," he re-
flected, "my days were dwindling, I was a notorious peace-
man and little-Englander, etc., my disappearance would be
totally different from theirs; the future responsibilities
to Asquith, to the party, to the constituencies were quite
different in their case, with their lives before them, and
long issues committed to their charge." 52 Morley was
nearly seventy-six years old at the time of the Cabinet
crisis and had served in Parliament since 1883, after
spending some years in the field of journalism.

Morley passed the afternoon at his Club wrestling
with the problem of the action he would take when the
Cabinet reconvened at 6:30 that evening. Gladstone had
often told him that a public man could have no graver
responsibility than quitting a Cabinet on public grounds,
and that there was no act for which a man might more
justly be called to full account. Anyone, Morley noted,
could hold or advocate unpopular opinions; but withdrawal
from a Cabinet was a definite act, "involving relations
for good or ill with other people, and possibly affecting
besides all else the whole machinery of democratic govern-
ment." As he continued musing he thought of how an act of
resignation concerned "a man's principle and creed;" of

52 Morley, op. cit., p. 16.
how it affected his "intimate and confidential relations with fellow-workers; and of how it concerned "his party, its strength and weakness, the balance of power in its rank and its organisation."\footnote{Ibid., p. 17.}

To Morley the dissolution of the Ministry was in full view that Sunday afternoon. He questioned whether even the break-up of the Ministry would be less of an evil both for Liberal principles and the prospects and power of the Liberal party, than their "wholesale identification with a Cabinet committed to intervention in arms by sea and land in Central Europe and all the meshes of the Continental system." In his mind he blamed Asquith and Grey for "disingenuously" playing up the significance of the French Entente in both the Cabinet and Parliament. An entente seemed even more dangerous than an alliance, for an alliance had definite covenants, but an entente was vague, resting on "point of honour, to be construed by accident and convenience." The Prime Minister and Grey had assured the House of Commons that Britain had no engagements unknown to the country, and yet at that hour Britain was confronted by engagements that were "vast indeed, because indefinite and undefinable." When Morley and Harcourt protested against the conversations which had been going on since 1906 between the military and naval
officers of Britain and France, Morley thought that Grey and the Prime Minister had deliberately minimized the significance of the conversations. The famous letter to Cambon of November, 1912, written largely at the instigation of Morley and Harcourt and pointing out that the military conversations were not to be considered as binding engagements on the part of either France or Britain, was now turning out to be a "singularly thin and deceptive document" to Morley.\(^{54}\)

If Grey felt he must resign if the Cabinet decided in favor of neutrality rather than intervention as a policy, neither was Morley the man "to sit in the Council of War into which Campbell-Bannerman's Cabinet is to be transformed" if the Cabinet adopted intervention. Morley doubted if the firm conviction of his colleagues at Beauchamp's luncheon would last and he could see no standard-bearer for their non-interventionist group. He was convinced that the power of Asquith and Grey, and the "natural 'cohesion of office', would prove too hard for an isolated group to resist." Lloyd George's motives in the situation were a riddle to Morley. His "stock" had sunk dangerously low in the country, and Morley saw the Liberal party as in a shattered state and unable to win the coming election, "mainly owing to Lloyd George himself." Finally, at the end of his afternoon's rumination

\(^{54}\)Ibid., pp. 17-18.
Morley decided that the others in the Cabinet could do what they would, but for him "the future being what it must inevitably be" there was no choice for him but to resign. Of his decision, Morley has this to say: "My decision was due to no one particular conversation, telegram, despatch; to none of the private correspondence from abroad, which Grey used to confide to me as representing the Foreign Office in the House of Lords. It was the result of a whole train of circumstance and reflection." 55

While Morley had been reaching his decision to resign that evening, Grey had been examining Britain's obligation to Luxembourg which had been invaded that Sunday by German troops. He had the Hansard report of the debate of 1867 in the House of Lords on the Luxembourg Treaty brought to him. The debate had established that Britain's obligation to Luxembourg was a collective, rather than a separate, guarantee. No one of the signatory powers had an obligation to defend Luxembourg, unless all the signatory powers did so; and none of the powers had an obligation to act separately without the others. Grey concluded that the "violation of Luxembourg entailed no obligation on us to take action," but that the British could, if they wished, "make the German invasion of

55Ibid., pp. 20-21.
Luxembourg a reason for going to war, but it was not an obligation." The question resolved itself to Grey as being one of whether or not the interest of Britain required her to act, rather than one of British honor. Luxembourg itself had made no resistance to the German invasion, though it had notified the signatory powers of the 1867 treaty of its invasion. Therefore, Grey laid aside the question of Luxembourg to concentrate on that of Belgian neutrality which was sure to be violated according to the plan worked out by von Schlieffen when he had been chief of the German general staff. Grey's study of the Luxembourg obligation had revealed to him though by contrast the "binding character of the guarantee of Belgium." 

Haldane states that on Sunday it was evident to both Grey and himself that Britain would be unable to keep out of the war, but that they had arrived at this conclusion on different grounds. Grey had reached his decision through consideration of what Britain owed to France and his belief that British national interest was tied to the preservation of France. Because of her alliance with Russia, France was bound to come into the war and Britain would have to stand by her. Haldane believed that Britain should join the struggle without delay as he

56Grey, op. cit., II, 3, 6.
felt that Germany would be seeking not only the overthrow of France and Russia, but the ultimate domination of the world. 57

At the meeting of the Cabinet Sunday evening Grey reported on his conversation with Cambon, and again Burns said that he must resign. As the session was breaking up Morley records that he said quietly to Asquith that he feared that he, too, must go. Asquith asked one favor of him, that he sleep on his decision, to which Morley agreed. When Morley left the room, Asquith was appealing to Burns to stay—"in vain." 58

Early Monday morning, August 3, Asquith notes that he received two letters of resignation, one from John Morley, and the other from Sir John Simon. 59 There is no record of when the Prime Minister received the following letter from John Burns:

BOARD OF TRADE, WHITEHALL GARDENS, S.W. August 2, 1914

DEAR MR. ASQUITH,—The decision of the Cabinet to intervene in an European war is an act with which I profoundly disagree. I therefore place in your hands my resignation of my office as President of the Board of Trade. With deep respect, cordial sympathy, and best wishes,—Yours sincerely,

JOHN BURNS 60

57 Haldane, op. cit., pp. 292-293.
58 Morley, op. cit., p. 21.
The letter which Asquith received from Morley was somewhat longer. He wrote:

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE, WHITEHALL, S.W.
August 3, 1914

MY DEAR ASQUITH,—I have—as you wished—taken a night's reflection over my retirement. I have given earnest pains to reach a sensible conclusion.

One thing is clear. Nothing can be so fatal in present circumstances as a Cabinet with divided councils. Grey has pointed out the essential difference between two views of neutrality in our present case. Well, I deplore the fact that I incline one way and the three of my leading colleagues incline the other way. This being so, I could contribute nothing useful to your deliberations, and my presence would only hamper the concentrated energy—the zealous and convinced accord—that are indispensable.

You remember the Peelites joining the Palmerston Cabinet in the Crimean War. They entered it, and resigned in two or three days. So, if we abandon neutrality, I fear that vital points might arise within two or three days that would make my presence a tiresome nuisance.

I press you therefore to release me. I propose to come to the Cabinet today after the P.C.* at the palace. But I dare not hope to be much affected by what will pass there.

You will believe that I write this with heartfelt pain.—Ever,

"M."61

At the Cabinet meeting later Monday morning a fourth member—in addition to Morley, Burns, and Simon—declared that he must join the others in resigning.

Lord Beauchamp. Asquith describes the scene that morning as "rather moving" and in which "every one all round said something, Lloyd George making a strong appeal to them

---

*Privy Council

61Asquith, Genesis of the War, pp. 220-221.
not to go, or at least to delay it."\(^6\) At the beginning of Asquith's appeal to all of them he said "with some emphasis," according to Morley, "that nothing would induce him to separate from Grey.\(^5\) Asquith's support of Grey is understandable when one considers the intimacy and accord which had existed between the two since they had worked together in the formation of the Liberal Imperial League. The resigning members were all in attendance at the Monday morning Cabinet, and all agreed to say nothing that day and to sit in their accustomed places in the House that afternoon when Grey was to speak on Britain's position in the crisis.

In the end Simon and Beauchamp were won over and brought back into the Cabinet by Asquith, and Morley and Burns were left to go alone. Churchill comments that the pressure of events "soon afforded reasons, opportunity, excuses enough" to Morley's colleagues who had proffered him their support, and that they stayed "with various fortunes and different explanation: Lloyd George so successfully adapted himself to the new conditions as to become the prime relentless war leader, the apostle of the 'knock-out blow,' the undisputed master of the triumph."\(^4\) By the next day Churchill himself was in all his "war-paint"

\(^6\) Asquith, Memories and Reflections, p. 24.


and "longing for a sea fight," according to Asquith who was filled with sadness by the whole thing.  

Asquith made one more attempt to get Morley to remain in the Cabinet. He wrote to him, but Morley's reply led Asquith to the conclusion that Morley remained "obdurate" and must go. The Morley letter is noteworthy, for in it he again expresses his fear of Britain binding herself to Russia, a situation he had argued against earlier in the Cabinet. This is Morley's reply to Asquith's appeal:

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, S. W.
August 4, 1914

MY DEAR ASQUITH,—

Your letter shakes me terribly. It goes to my very core. In spite of temporary moments of difference, my feelings for you have been cordial, deep, and close, from your earliest public days. The idea of severing these affectionate associations has been far the most poignant element in the stress of the last four days. But I cannot conceal from myself that we—I and the leading men in the Cabinet—do not mean the same thing in the foreign policy of the moment. To bind ourselves to France is at the same time to bind ourselves to Russia, and to whatever demands may be made by Russia on France. With this cardinal difference between us, how could I either honourably or usefully sit in a Cabinet day after day discussing military and diplomatic details in carrying forward a policy that I think a mistake? Again I say, divided counsels are a mistake.

I am more distressed in making this reply to your generous and most moving appeal than I have ever been in writing any letter of all my life.

Ever

M 67

65Asquith, Memories and Reflections, p. 25.

66 Ibid., p. 25.

67 Ibid., pp. 13-14.
Though it was Sir Edward Grey's foreign policy which was largely the source of the controversy within the Cabinet which led to the resignations of Burns and Morley, Grey has a surprisingly small amount to say about either the Cabinet crisis or the resignations in his two volumes of memoirs. He states that he never fully understood the reason for the resignations, but he felt sure "they were based on deep and sincere conviction, not on any pusillanimity or opportunism" and they were respected accordingly.\textsuperscript{68} Grey's reticence may have been due to the fact that it was his conduct of affairs that was "under fire," or that during those critical days the controversy within the Cabinet was of lesser import to him than Britain's problem as a nation. Though Grey stresses the importance of Cabinet sanction needed during the last days of July, his memoirs do not reveal so strongly as do Asquith's, for example, that he felt the need for unanimity of opinion within the Cabinet. Of course, one of Morley's strongest "bones of contention" with the Foreign Minister was that Grey felt that he could conduct affairs without the knowledge and approval of the Cabinet.

With the invasion of Belgian territory, the mobilization of the British army, and the sending of the British ultimatum to Germany on Tuesday, August 4, the resignations of John Burns and Lord Morley seemed to cause

\textsuperscript{68} Grey, \textit{op. cit.}, II, p. 16.
hardly a ripple on the national scene. The only references to the whole Cabinet crisis in the London Times were in one news story and an editorial appearing in the issue for August 5.

In an editorial proposing Lord Kitchener for the War Office in preference to Richard Haldane the Times stated:

In pressing this suggestion we have sought to speak with the utmost respect of Lord Haldane, just as we wish to speak with equal respect of the two Ministers who, not seeing quite eye to eye with him and his colleagues, have elected to leave the Cabinet. At any less crowded moment the retirement of the dignified and beloved figure of Lord Morley would arouse universal sorrow. We regret Lord Morley's decision, which invests with a certain pathos the close of a great public career. We appreciate his motives, just as we appreciate those of Mr. John Burns. Both Ministers, we believe, are actuated by a desire which the country will recognize as entirely commendable, not to embarrass the Government retaining office after a decision about which they have misgivings.69

In the news story—in a bold face paragraph heading the body of the story—it was reported that late Monday night efforts were still being made to induce Mr. Burns to withdraw his resignation, but that Mr. Morley's was final. The resignations were cited as the result of "a fundamental difference of opinion with their colleagues over the national policy, as set forth on Monday by Sir Edward Grey, and of a strong desire that at this time of crisis Mr. Asquith should have the support of an absolutely

69The Times (London), August 5, 1914.
united Cabinet." The story continued:

Now that it has reached this point no harm is done by revealing some of the stages leading up to yesterday's decision. It is already a tolerably open secret, indeed, that throughout last week—while Germany's intentions were still undeclared and Sir Edward Grey was labouring for the peace of Europe—divergent views were held inside the Cabinet as to the duties and interests of this country in certain still non-existent circumstances. There were well-founded rumours of possible resignations—first on one side, then on the other side of the cleavage. But the Prime Minister, feeling, no doubt, that a change of Government under present conditions was impossible—successfully exerted all his powers to keep his colleagues together; and by Sunday the scale had been turned decisively by the news of Germany's action in the matter of Luxembourg and Belgium. On that same afternoon the country was definitely committed to the support of France by Sir Edward Grey's note to M. Cambon, and Monday's speech announced the decision to the world.

By that time the dissentient element in the Cabinet had been reduced by the logic of events to very small proportions. Four Ministers out of 21 were still unconvincing; but there is reason to believe—if only from their continued attendance at yesterday's meeting—that two of them have now found it possible to remain in office. The decision of Mr. Burns and Lord Morley was deeper rooted. They had taken it independently and at different stages in the controversy—an important fact which completely dispels the notion that there has been anything like an organized secession. In both cases it is satisfactory to know that one of the strongest motives for resignation was the conviction that any rift in the Cabinet must hamper its freedom of action in a great emergency.70

Thus, with these press notices, all public attention to the Cabinet crisis ended. During the 1920's most of the memoirs of the leading figures in the controversy were published, but in the years intervening since

70 Ibid.
1914 Britain had experienced government administration by two coalition Cabinets and emerged victorious from the War. The main purpose served by these memoirs was to provide sources for a re-examination of the problem of placing the responsibility for the war. It was not until five years after the death of Lord John Morley in 1923 that the executors of his estate published his Memorandum on Resignation which fully revealed his stand in the Cabinet crisis. Morley had written the book in 1917 from notes he had made during the crisis in the Cabinet. At least two of his colleagues, Burns and Loreburn, had read the manuscript. Much probably could have been revealed by Burns, but he neither wrote nor did anything after his resignation which would shed any light on the reasoning which led him to resign on the ground that he was simply opposed to Britain entering a war.71

Though Morley's Memorandum on Resignation is frequently cited by the authors of works on this period in British history, only one, Winston Churchill, commented on the value of the document itself. Morley's work is vague about dates and sequence of events, and, of course,
is a partial and personal record, yet it is as Churchill says:

... as true and living a presentment of the War crisis within the British Cabinet as has ever been, or probably ever will be given. All is there, and these fragments, so shrewdly selected, so gracefully marshaled, are a better guide to the true facts than the meticulously exact, voluminously complete accounts which have appeared from numerous quarters. In a style which arrests eyes jaded with the commonplace, Morley has revealed, partly consciously but for the most part unconsciously, both the sundering from the past which Armageddon meant, and his own inability to comprehend the new scale and violence of the modern world. 72

One can not leave the story of this crisis in the British Cabinet without some mention of Sir Edward Grey's historic speech in the House of Commons on August 3 which climaxed the week's deliberation in the Cabinet, or of the actions of Grey himself in the crisis.

When the Cabinet convened on Monday morning, August 3, most of its members regarded war as inevitable. They were aware of the German ultimatum to Belgium and the appeal made by Albert of the Belgians to King George. Though the majority of the Cabinet would not have acceded to a decision to enter the war because of an obligation to France, the violation of Belgian neutrality was a point of sentiment and honor. The threat to Belgium produced a changed atmosphere in the Cabinet that morning, and before they separated they had assented to the principal

72 Churchill, Great Contemporaries, p. 84.
points in the statement Grey was to make in Parliament that afternoon. They had also given formal sanction to the already completed mobilization of the fleet and to the immediate mobilization of the army. There was, however, no decision taken to send an ultimatum to Germany or to declare war on her. These decisions were not made in the Cabinet, but "were compelled by the force of events, and rested on the authority of the Prime Minister." There can be no doubt that Grey realized, when he appeared before Parliament that afternoon, that his only hope of a unified opinion in favor of entering the war would have to be reached through an appeal dwelling on the plight of Belgium, rather than the obligation he felt to France.

Grey states that he believed the state of mind at which the Cabinet had arrived at their morning session was "faithfully represented in the speech made by me that afternoon in the House of Commons; at any rate, that speech was intended to represent the mind of the Cabinet, though some of the arguments used may have been my own." Where he thought he might be expressing something "that was outside the strict limits of Cabinet agreement," it was carefully expressed as a personal view.

In his speech Grey summarized the state of affairs

---

73Churchill, World Crisis, I, p. 234.
74Grey, op. cit., II, 10.
and pointed out that it was clear to him that the peace of Europe could not be preserved. He told the House that up until Sunday afternoon Britain had not promised anything but diplomatic support, but such a promise was invalid after the assurance he had given M. Cambon that Britain would oppose any hostile action in the North Sea and the Channel. He wanted the House to approach its consideration of the crisis "from the point of view of British interests, British honour, and British obligations, free from all passion as to why peace has not been preserved." How far British friendship with France entailed obligation he left to every man to "look into his own heart and his own feelings, and construe the extent of the obligation for himself." If Britain ran away from its obligations of "honour and interest" regarding the Belgian Treaty he doubted whether what ever material force Britain might have at the end of the European conflict would be of much value when measured against the respect that Britain would have lost. He emphasized that Britain would suffer "terribly" whether she entered the war or stood aside.

Nearing the end of his address Grey asked what other policy but intervention there could be before the House. He suggested an immediate proclamation of unconditional neutrality as the only alternative. Actually that choice was not even left to them in view of the commitment already made to France. Furthermore, they were faced with the consideration of Belgium's neutrality which precluded any unconditional neutrality.
Without the conditions of Belgian neutrality "absolutely satisfied and satisfactory," a state which could not be reached in view of the German ultimatum, Britain was bound "not to shrink from proceeding to the use of all the forces in our power."

In conclusion Grey stated:

My object has been to explain the view of the Government, and to place before the House the issue and the choice. I do not for a moment conceal, after what I have said, and after the information, incomplete as it is, that I have given the House with regard to Belgium, that we must be prepared, and we are prepared, for the consequences of having to use all the strength we have at any moment— we know now how soon—to defend ourselves and to take our part. . . . As far as the forces of the Crown are concerned, we are ready.75

Grey professed to leave the choice of policy to the House. At this point there was no choice, a point which is reiterated by one of Grey's severest critics in the Liberal party, the Earl of Loreburn, who has the following to say about Grey's speech:

This remarkable speech began with an elaborate effort to prove that the House of Commons was perfectly free to determine either for peace or war. It ended with a passionate declaration that this country would be disgraced if we did not declare war, and the reasoning of the speech proved that Sir Edward Grey had committed himself irretrievably. It left the House of Commons convinced that it had in honour no choice but to join France in arms. It is an epitome of the reasoning by which Sir Edward Grey had been brought to believe that he could say and do what he said and did without limiting his freedom of action.76


To Morley's way of thinking Grey had delayed too long in posing the issue as a choice between neutrality and intervention, and in addition ought not to have let the situation arise. Morley lamented that "Grey's fine character had achieved an influence in Europe that was the noblest asset for the fame of England and the glory of peace," and with England's entrance into the war it would all be gone. He felt that "with a fleet of overwhelming power, a disinterestedness beyond suspicion, a Foreign Minister of proved ability, truthfulness and self-control, when the smoke of battle-fields had cleared from the European sky, England might have exerted an influence not to be acquired by a hundred of her little Expeditionary Forces."77

Haldane says that he used to ask Morley whether there were no circumstances in which it was the duty of a great nation to fight. Morley neither disputed that there might be such circumstances, nor said that Britain would not be in peril if the northern ports of France were seized by Germany. Haldane thinks that throughout the crisis Morley had in his mind the conversations with France which had begun in 1906, and which supported Grey's argument that Britain had an obligation to France. Haldane agreed with Morley that the war could have been prevented, but that the blame for its not being prevented "dated back

to the days long before Grey's time, when we paid too little attention to what was going on even then on the Continent."

Another critic of Grey, Lloyd George, deprecates the fact that Grey never definitely even put before the Cabinet during its critical sessions the proposition that Britain should declare war if France were forced into the conflict by her alliance with Russia. Lloyd George thinks that Grey should have expressed a clear and unequivocal opinion either way and forced a decision in the Cabinet on that point. Furthermore, Lloyd George presumes that if Grey had raised the question of defending the neutrality and integrity of Belgium earlier, that there would not have been a dissentient voice in the Cabinet. He is not convinced that Morley and Burns would have resigned "had a decision on that point alone been reached in time as a means of circumscribing the area of war and possibly persuading Germany of the futility of waging it at all under conditions which would have been unfavourable to her preconcerted military schemes."

Elaborating on his opinion that Grey had failed in his attempts to prevent the war because of his hesitation in pressing for a decision in the Cabinet, Lloyd George pictures Grey as a "pilot whose hand trembled in the palsy of apprehension, unable to grip the levers and manipulate

78 Haldane, op. cit., p. 299.  
them with a firm and clear purpose," and of "pursuing a policy of waiting for public opinion to decide his direction for him." He admits that Grey was hampered by the divisions in the Cabinet, but holds that at any stage of the negotiations Grey could have secured a substantial unanimity among his colleagues on the point of Belgian neutrality being violated. He reckons that at the very worst only Morley and Burns would have resigned and that their resignations would have followed the British entry into the war no matter the issue upon which it was fought. With the assurance of the support of the Opposition, and thus in the name of a united people, Lloyd George believes that Grey could have intimated to the German government that if they put into operation their plan of marching through Belgium they would encounter the active hostility of the British Empire, and that he could have uttered the warning in time to leave the German military authorities without any excuse for not changing "their dust-laden plans."  

In defense of his actions during the last days of July and the first three days of August, Grey states, "Looking back on it all, it seems to me that the course actually followed in those critical days was the only one that could have led to the entry of Britain into the war, immediately, whole-heartedly and with practical unanimity."

---

80 Ibid., pp. 85-86.
If he had pressed for a pledge to aid France it would have divided the Cabinet and the violation of Belgium then would have found Britain with "a divided Cabinet, possibly with one Government resigned and another not formed; with a House of Commons and a country paralysed by division of opinion, with one section vehemently committed to helping France and another section, with equal vehemence, opposed to taking any part in war." Grey made a speech in the House of Lords on the occasion of Asquith's death in 1928, three years after the publication of his own memoirs. In recalling the situation in 1914, Grey made the only allusion one finds to the fact that Asquith as Prime Minister should have precipitated a decision rather than Grey. In the address Grey restated his opinion that if there had been an attempt to force a decision the divisions of opinion would only have been brought out and made irreparable. Grey's biographer, Trevelyan, believes that Grey was anxious to keep the Cabinet and the party together, not for party reasons, but because he felt that if the Liberals split, the country would be divided with disastrous results. Trevelyan also asserts that if Grey, in an attempt to keep peace, had told

81 Grey, op. cit., II, 41.
82 Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 299.
83 Ibid., p. 288.
Germany that Britain would join France should war break out, that not only would the Cabinet have repudiated Grey, but also most of the Liberals, all of the Labour party, and a large section of opinion in the City and the Conservative business class.  

There can be no doubt that it was the German ultimatum to Belgium, threatening the independence and integrity of that country, which finally determined the action of the British Cabinet and the attitude of the British people. This is the opinion of Grey, Churchill, Asquith, and Lloyd George, the latter even conceding that public sentiment would have demanded that the Government go to the aid of France if Germany had attacked France without provocation. However, Lloyd George states that in 1914 it was thoroughly understood that France was drawn into the quarrel by her Treaty obligations to Russia, and that if France had stayed out of the dispute, Germany would only have been "too pleased to leave her alone." Grey makes the point that the Cabinet was unable to give a pledge to anybody up to the time when violation of

84 Ibid., p. 285.

85 For a discussion of the significance of the violation of Belgian neutrality see Sister George Towle, "Anglo-French Relations and Belgian Neutrality" (Unpublished M. A. thesis, Dept. of History, Creighton University, 1942). Sister George concludes that the violation of Belgian neutrality was not the cause of England's declaration of war, but was used by Grey to rally public opinion to the support of a pre-established pledge with France.

86 Lloyd George, op. cit., p. 61.
Belgian neutrality became imminent, while Churchill cites the direct appeal for aid from the Belgian king as the issue which "untied the overwhelming majority of Ministers and enabled Sir Edward Grey to make his speech . . . to the House of Commons." To Asquith it is useless to speculate upon what might have happened had Germany "avoided the fatal blunder of the Belgian violation, but it is certain that the British nation could not then have gone into the war with a united front."

That England would have remained neutral had Germany refrained from infringing Belgian neutrality seemed "hardly likely" to the German ambassador, Prince Lichnowsky. Before the last decisive session of the Cabinet on Sunday Lichnowsky had visited Asquith, as has been pointed out, to try to win him over to take a neutral attitude. Without giving Lichnowsky any definite assurances, Asquith spoke of a war with Germany as 'quite unthinkable,' and as being 'very unpopular' in Britain. The ambassador thinks that, in view of a strong sympathy for Germany he saw in England at that time, he might have succeeded in restraining the British from intervening "at least for a while" if Belgian neutrality had not been

---

87 Grey, op. cit., I, 330.
89 Asquith, Genesis of the War, p. 208.
violated. He thought that perhaps the British Cabinet might even have held its hand "until the decisive battle had been fought." But, such was not to be the case, for the British Cabinet had fought its decisive battle in the last days of July before the violation of Belgian neutrality occurred.

---

CHAPTER II

MR. JOHN BURNS AND LORD JOHN MORLEY

There is a decided contrast in the memoirs of this period in their treatments of the resignations of Burns and Morley. Rarely more than a sentence was devoted to the fact that Burns had resigned. There were few expressions as to personal feelings among his colleagues on his resignation, and no descriptions of how Burns had reached his decision. This could be attributed partly to the fact that Burns never wrote or said anything for publication concerning his part in the Cabinet crisis, while Morley bequeathed to the students of history his Memorandum on Resignation.

Burns was the first Labourite to become a member of a British cabinet. He had begun working in factories at the age of ten, and as a young man he began addressing workingmen and agitating for labor. In 1886 he had been a leader in a labor riot in the West End of London, and had also been imprisoned for maintaining the right of public meeting in Trafalgar Square. Three years later he had assisted in the organization of a successful dock
strike in London. His political career began with his election to the London county council, and after 1892 he sat as a Labour member from Battersea in the House of Commons.

Brought into the Cabinet in 1905 by Campbell-Bannerman, Burns served first as President of the Local Government Board, and later, under Asquith, as President of the Board of Trade. According to Morley, he himself urged Campbell-Bannerman to bring Labour into the Cabinet in the person of John Burns.¹

Haldane calls Campbell-Bannerman's decision to include Burns in the Cabinet at that time a wise one, because he felt the Liberals were in need of an enlightened attitude towards social problems and they were beginning to realize that the outlook of "Victorian Liberalism was not sufficient for the progressive movement which had set in early in the twentieth century." Haldane realized later that Burns was even then beginning to be "out of date with Labour," and characterized Burns as a man "who had great oratorical gifts, but not much knowledge." In the end, Haldane seems to doubt the wisdom of Burns' selection.²

Burns was known to have been much opposed to the

²Haldane, Autobiography, p. 228.
South African war, which possibly explains his identification with the non-interventionist group in the Cabinet of 1914. Unlike Morley, Burns made no explanation in his letter of resignation as to how or why he had determined his course of action, other than that the decision of the Cabinet to intervene in a European war was an act with which he disagreed. As has been noted, Asquith made several attempts to persuade Burns to remain in the Cabinet, but he could not alter his determination to leave. Asquith's only comment on Burns was that he was a "man of rare gifts and even rarer personality, always a staunch and loyal comrade, and one 'to go out with in all weather.'" Like Morley, Burns seems to have ended his political career in 1914, though his death did not occur until 1943 when he was eighty-five years of age.

Though Morley was a prominent figure in British public life, his career as a statesman was probably secondary to his rank as an author. His Life of Gladstone is one of the great biographies in the English language. His other works included essays, studies of the French encyclopedists, biographies, and his last work, Recollections, which intimately covers his lifetime of thought and action.

---

3 Churchill, World Crisis, I, 24.
4 Asquith, Genesis of the War, p. 219.
The son of a Yorkshire surgeon, as a youth Morley intended to take orders in the Church of England, but after leaving Oxford he began his career in the field of journalism. First working on the staff of the Saturday Review, he later edited the Literary Review and the Fortnightly Review. While editor of the Pall Mall Gazette in the 1880's, Morley became interested in the cause of Irish Home Rule, and his identification with this cause endured throughout his political career. Some writers attribute Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule to Morley's influence, but Morley's powers of persuasion were not strong enough to retain his friend, Joseph Chamberlain, in the Liberal Party when the first Home Rule Bill was introduced in 1886. Chamberlain and Lord Hartington led a secession from the party of "Liberal Unionists" who were opposed to the Party's policy of fighting for Irish Home Rule. In the third and fourth Gladstone Cabinets, and in the Rosebery Cabinet, Morley served as Chief Secretary for Ireland.

Between 1899 and 1903 Morley half withdrew from the political scene to spend his time writing his biography of Gladstone. From 1905 until 1910 Morley served as Secretary for India in the Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith Cabinets, later taking on the post of Lord President of the Council until his resignation in 1914.
As Irish Secretary Morley had been a successful intermediary between the Irish Nationalists and the Cabinet, and while in the India Office he had shaped the proposals for Indian representative government known as the Morley-Minto Reforms. Churchill states that Morley was an "autocrat and almost a martinet" at the India Office, an opinion that is substantiated in a letter written by Sir Cecil Spring Rice in 1910. Rice was discussing the appointment of the new viceroy of India to replace Lord Minto when he wrote: "Morley thinks he will boss Hardinge as he bossed Minto . . . what a tyrant Morley must be." Though Morley had been an ardent fighter for Irish self-government, according to Churchill he was hostile to any such program for India and felt no sense of contradiction in declaring his hostility to the idea. "He went out of his war," Churchill states, "to challenge Radical opinion on this issue, and . . . he warned his own supporters of the perils of applying to the vast Indian scene the principles which he applauded in Ireland and in South Africa."  

If this picture of Morley in the India Office is

5 Churchill, Great Contemporaries, p. 80.


7 Churchill, Great Contemporaries, p. 80.
true, it may be explained by the fact that he was dis-
satisfied with holding one of the lesser offices in the
Cabinet. Several of Morley's colleagues in the Asquith
Government suggested that at one time or another Morley
aspired to one of the higher positions.

Lord Crewe is of the opinion that Morley was dis-
contented at the time of the formation of the Rosebery
Cabinet in 1894. Morley had suggested becoming President
of the Council, but had been induced to remain in the Irish
Office. Crewe intimates that Morley's discontent may have
arisen because he had hoped for the Foreign Office. 8

When the Liberal Ministry was formed in 1905, Grey
was reluctant to become Foreign Secretary under Campbell-
Bannerman as the leader in the House. Campbell-Bannerman
represented the orthodox Liberal group of Gladstone, and
Grey resented the formation of a Ministry without his
fellow Liberal Imperialist, Lord Rosebery. Churchill
went to visit Morley at the India Office and found him
despondent. He recalls Morley saying to him, "Here I
am in a gilded pagoda." Churchill believed that at the
time Morley wanted to become the Foreign Minister, and
was disappointed that Campbell-Bannerman had not "shown
the door" to Grey as he believed Gladstone would have done. 9

8Marquess of Crewe, Lord Rosebery (New York:
9Churchill, Great Contemporaries, p. 80.
"wholly unsuited by his nature, physical as well as mental," for the position. Haldane supports his opinion with these observations of Morley:

He had courage in drawing conclusions, but he had not much physical courage. As a speaker, when he had time to prepare closely and polish his phrases, he was very effective. His speeches on the platform were among the best of the time. But for the House of Commons he was lacking in individual force. He was not good at the lightning-like decisions which debate there often requires. Nor was he a great man of business or a born administrator. He was prone, in these regions to pay undue attention to the conventional view, and as a result to misjudge. Consequently, although when he came to be the head of a great administrative department he was always a distinguished personality with views that were original, he did not judge men well enough to be a chief of the most effective order.12

To see where Morley fell short as a judge of men, Haldane suggests turning to Morley's two volumes of Recollections which show how Morley "wished to rule and how he had not it in him to rule, at least to the extent he desired."

Haldane also doubted whether Morley's permanent officials found it agreeable to deal with him.13

Two of Morley's colleagues thought he sought the Foreign Office in 1905, but Haldane believed his ambition then was to be the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the second place in the Cabinet and the House of Commons. Campbell-Bannerman, in Haldane's judgment, was shrewd and under no illusions about his friends, as he realized that

12Haldane, Autobiography, pp. 103-104.
13Ibid., p. 107.
Morley was not the man for the Exchequer and gave the place to Asquith.\textsuperscript{14}

In 1910 Morley was over seventy and the work of the India Office was becoming too much of a burden for him. Churchill was distressed when he heard that Morley had asked to be relieved of his post because the divergence on foreign policy which existed between Morley and Grey was then becoming apparent. Churchill wrote to Asquith, pointing out that there was danger in Morley leaving the Cabinet and suggesting that Morley be made Lord President of the Council. This transition was made, and the Marquess of Crewe assumed the Secretaryship for India.\textsuperscript{15}

Morley was criticized by his colleagues, but at the same time he was regarded with respect and affection. Morley was a Victorian. He had reached his prime during the reign of Victoria, an era noted in Britain for its prosperity, progress, and peace. He could not cope with the forces of the twentieth century which were compelling Britain to leave her tower of "splendid isolation." He was a "little Englander" who had come under the influence of the powerful personality of Gladstone, and who had spent his lifetime building up barriers to war. Expressing his personal feelings on Morley's resignation

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 107.

with him on equal terms, across the gulf of thirty-five years of seniority, in the swift succession of formidable and perplexing events."  

In the last days of the crisis in 1914 Morley was firm for neutrality, but concerned over the fate of Liberalism, the party situation, and the possibilities of further parleys with the Germans. He had agreed that Britain could not permit hostile German action on her "doorstep," but from then on, according to Churchill, Morley was on the "slippery slope," though he was "no doctrinaire or fanatic." When Morley finally told Churchill that he must resign, Churchill tried to get him to wait two or three days, arguing that by then the Germans would "make everyone easy in his conscience" and the Cabinet would be in full agreement. Morley conceded that Churchill might be right, but he still felt that he would be no use in a War Cabinet and would only hamper the Cabinet; for if Britain had to fight, she must fight with 'single-hearted conviction.' Churchill tried once more to dissuade Morley from resigning for another forty-eight hours, but Morley persisted in his decision, withdrawing from the Cabinet "gently, gaily almost ... never by word or sign to hinder old friends or add to the nation's burden." If Morley had waited, Churchill surmises

17Churchill, Great Contemporaries, p. 82.
CHAPTER III

THE POINTS OF DISSENSION

The last half of the nineteenth century in Britain was one of comparative peace and prosperity, even though from 1873 to 1886 the country was plagued by depression. A tremendous growth in British industry made London the center of the world's wealth and trade, despite an accompanying struggle for the raw materials and markets of the world. On the other hand, British agriculture suffered a decline, largely because of its antiquated system of aristocratic landowners and tenant farmers, and the development of better means of transportation which permitted foreign grains to undersell domestic products in Britain.

Government administration vacillated between the Ministries of the Liberal "Little Englander," Gladstone, and the Conservative imperialist, Disraeli. There had been peace for Britain since the Crimean War, and foreign policy was not a political issue. Both parties pursued Britain's traditional policy of generally keeping her "hands free" from Continental affairs and using her influence to maintain a balance of power on the Continent.
In the event of a European war, the British fleet with its control of the Channel and supremacy on the seas, was Britain's safeguard against involvement.

When the series of wars leading to German unification were climaxed by the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and France in 1870, Britain's sympathies were with Germany rather than France, with whom she had had unsatisfactory relations since the Napoleonic wars. The policy Gladstone pursued in regard to Belgium enabled Britain to remain aloof from the struggle between France and Prussia. Gladstone proposed a treaty which both belligerents signed, providing that if either violated Belgian neutrality, Great Britain would co-operate with the other belligerent, but would not engage in the general operations of the war beyond the limits of Belgium. This policy was pointed to by the critics of the Asquith Ministry of 1914 as one which might have prevented British intervention had it been used again.

The final unifications of Germany and Italy as modern states, and their counterparts among the Balkan states, unleashed the forces of nationalism. These forces are directly responsible for the imperialistic rivalries of the 1890's, the armament race, the naval rivalry between Britain and Germany, and the division of Europe into two hostile groups by the Triple Alliance of 1882 and the Franco-Russian Treaty of 1894.
By the time the Franco-Russian Alliance was made, Britain was beginning to realize that her position of "splendid isolation" was neither tenable nor safe. In order to maintain her prestige among the powers of the world, she would have to make friends on the Continent.

The Anglo-French Entente

In the fast developing imperialism of the 1890's Great Britain's chief competitors were France and Russia. No rapprochement appeared possible with Russia as Great Britain and Russia had been rivals in the Near East since the Crimean War. An entente attempted by Joseph Chamberlain in 1898 and again in 1901 between England and Germany failed to materialize as Germany made imperialistic thrusts into China and the Ottoman Empire. Both German and French opinion was bitterly hostile to England during the Boer War, and an attempt was even made by Delcassé, the French Foreign Minister, to have Germany, Russia, and France intervene in the South African war. In addition, the Fashoda episode and subsequent diplomatic defeat for the French, had left a legacy of hatred for England, reviving among the French a desire for an understanding with Germany. At the turn of the century, the French, through Delcassé, seemed to be bidding for the friendship of both Germany and England. Rapprochement with Germany became an impossibility as most Frenchmen would not
renounce their hope of recovering their lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. With the death of Queen Victoria in 1901 and the retirement of Lord Salisbury in 1902, relations steadily improved between England and France as Edward VII and his Foreign Minister, Lord Lansdowne, favored a closer friendship with France.

In 1903 King Edward and President Loubet exchanged official visits. Delcassé accompanied the French President to London, beginning a series of conversations with Lord Lansdowne which were to culminate in the signing of the Anglo-French Entente Cordiale on April 8, 1904. The agreement contained conventions settling disputes between the two countries concerning Newfoundland, Siam, Madagascar, and the New Hebrides; but more important, it guaranteed the French a free hand in the backward and brigand-ridden country of Morocco, in exchange for a free hand for the British in Egypt.

Egypt, in the words of Fay, was the "Achilles heel" of British foreign policy up to that time. All the great powers had financial and political interests in Egypt which continually hampered England's action there, and the assurance that France would not interfere was a relief to the British. Likewise, Italy, England, and Germany had political and commercial interests in Morocco which bordered on the French Empire in Africa and on

---

1 Fay, op. cit., I, 155.
Spanish posts on the Mediterranean. The French hoped either to establish a protectorate over Morocco or to annex it directly. By the time the Anglo-French Agreement was made, Delcassé had plans well advanced for the establishment of a protectorate over the greater part of Morocco. By the Franco-Italian agreement of December, 1900, France was given free hands in Morocco in exchange for free hands in Tripoli. The Franco-Spanish agreement of October, 1904 guaranteed the integrity and independence of Morocco, while secretly providing for the eventual partition of Morocco to give Spain the Mediterranean coast. German interests were completely ignored in any of the agreements about Morocco, and Germany was destined to precipitate three crises over Morocco, in 1905, 1907, and 1911, any one of which could have ended in armed conflict among the European powers.

There is nothing to indicate that at the time the Anglo-French Agreement was reached in 1904 that the negotiators had in mind any plan to isolate Germany, or to encourage France to count on England for more than diplomatic support beyond the case of Morocco. Though John Morley had been among those who welcomed the settlement of French and British differences, in the Cabinet crisis which developed in 1914 he argued that the diplomatic support in Morocco which was provided by the Entente should never have been allowed to be extended and developed to the
point where Britain was obligated to support France by intervention in a European war.

The Anglo-French Entente seems to have been almost universally acclaimed in Great Britain. Lord Lansdowne had signed the agreement with the prestige of the Conservative party behind him, the party among whom Churchill states the idea of the German menace had already taken root. On the other hand, the Liberals had been crying for peace and reconciliation with France. Liberal statesmen were somewhat short-sighted, according to Churchill, in hailing the agreement as a step to secure general peace by "clearing away misunderstandings and differences with our traditional enemy." In all the national rejoicing over the pact, apparently only one voice was raised against it--that of Lord Rosebery. In public he observed that the Entente would far more likely lead to war than to peace; and in private, that it would lead straight to war. Churchill states that Rosebery's unwelcome comment was "indignantly spurned from widely different standpoints by both parties in Britain and general censure fell upon its author."

In a speech on the second reading of the Anglo-

---

3Ibid.
French Convention Bill made before the House of Commons on June 1, 1904, Sir Edward Grey welcomed the Agreement because he believed that it would not only be a working model for other cases, but because it had great possibilities for keeping Britain in contact with France, "with a growth of friendly relations to the advantage of both countries." In his memoirs Grey remembered very well what his own feeling was when he first read the Agreement. He wrote:

It was a feeling of simple pleasure and relief. I saw all that had been most disagreeable in my experience at the Foreign Office from 1892-5 swept away. We should no longer be dependent on German support in Egypt, with all the discomfort that this dependence had entailed. I had no desire to thwart German interest, but we should now be able to negotiate with Germany without the handicap of the Egyptian noose round our necks. That was a welcome relief; but that appeared to me an incidental and not the main advantage of the Agreement—a by-product and not the chief matter.

The real cause of satisfaction was that the exasperating friction with France was to end, and that the menace of war with France disappeared.

Grey knew that Germany would not like the Agreement, but he could not see why good relations with Germany should necessarily have had to be founded on bad relations with France. Grey was certain in his own mind that the Anglo-French Agreement was nothing more at the time than appeared

6Knaplund, op. cit., p. 25.
7Grey, op. cit., I, 49-50.
in the text of it, and that it was the subsequent attempts of Germany to "shake or break it" that turned it into an Entente with the obligations of an alliance.8

The story of Britain's role in the growth of her obligations to France begins with the authorization by Lord Lansdowne of direct conversations between the English and French naval staffs, conducted on the English side by Sir John Fisher. Military conversations were also begun, but through an unofficial intermediary. Thus, Britain had begun her commitments to France before the Liberals assumed the Government under Campbell-Bannerman in 1905.

It was unfortunate for the Liberal party that unanimity was lacking in the Ministry on both domestic and foreign policies when it assumed leadership, a prevailing situation since 1886. Then, as has been noted, the first schism appeared in the Liberals when Joseph Chamberlain led the Liberal Unionists to join with the Conservatives in opposing Irish Home Rule. Chamberlain had used the Irish case as the occasion, rather than the reason, for leaving the party as he opposed the traditional free trade policy of the Liberals in favor of a protective tariff system for the Empire. Relations within the party had been strained further with the formation of the Liberal Imperialists under the leadership of Grey, Asquith,

8Ibid., pp. 50-51.
and Rosebery. They had supported the Conservatives in the prosecution of the war against the Boers in South Africa. The opposing group of "radicals" had listened to the voice of a new "socialism" demanding social reform at home, while the Imperialists held that the pursuit of domestic reform should not be followed at the expense of British interests abroad. Thus, the Liberals were counterpoised when the first demand was made upon Britain's promise of diplomatic support by the Moroccan crisis of 1905.

This crisis was precipitated late in March, 1905 by the German Chancellor, Bülow. Knowing that Russia could give no support to her ally, France, Bülow had the German Kaiser disembark at Tangier and declare that he was visiting the Sultan as an independent sovereign of a country in which all foreign Powers were equal and enjoyed the same rights. The situation was tense. Delcasse was forced to resign as French Foreign Minister, and the French agreed to submit the whole Moroccan question to an international conference at Algeciras in 1906.

Before the conference met Grey was apprehensive about what might happen at Algeciras. This is indicated in a letter he wrote to Campbell-Bannerman on January 9 in which Grey said:

Indications keep trickling in that Germany is preparing for war in the spring; France is very apprehensive. I do not think that there will be war: I believe the steps taken imply precautions, but
not intentions. But the War Office ought, it seems to me, to be ready to answer the question, what could they do if we had to take part against Germany, if, for instance, the neutrality of Belgium was violated. Fisher, of course, is prepared to answer the question for the Admiralty at any moment, but that only means driving the German fleet to anchor in Kiel and stay there. 9

On January 10, 1906 and again five days later, Grey was asked by the French ambassador, M. Cambon, whether Britain would give France armed assistance in case of German aggression and if she would sanction the continuation of the naval and military conversations which had begun under Lansdowne. Grey states that he knew nothing of the conversations until some time after he had entered the Foreign Office. 10 Grey told Cambon on January 10 that he could not give him a definite promise of other than a pledge of neutrality as the Government was in the midst of a general election. However, Grey told him that his personal opinion was that if France were to be attacked by Germany in consequence of a question rising out of the Anglo-French Agreement which his Conservative predecessors had made, that he felt British public opinion would favor France. Grey's conversation is recorded in a letter sent the same day to Lord Bertie, and records of the conversation were also sent to Campbell-Bannerman and Lord Ripon, the speaker on foreign affairs in the House of Lords. 11

9 Ibid., p. 115.
10 Ibid., p. 72.
11 Ibid., pp. 70-72.
Following this conversation with Cambon, Grey went to Berwick where Haldane joined him to address his constituents there in the election. Grey told Haldane that the French were concerned about a possible German move against them, and asked him if the War Office was prepared with plans should British intervention become necessary. Haldane told him that there had been before his time some general conversations, but no interchange of scientific General Staff ideas. Grey then asked if such an interchange could take place, but without committing either country to any action. Haldane replied that it could be done, and they both agreed that the Prime Minister should be consulted first; so, Haldane went to see Campbell-Bannerman a few days later.12

The Prime Minister "at once saw the point," according to Haldane, and gave Haldane the authority for directing the staff at the War Office to take the necessary steps preparatory to engaging in further military conversations with the French. Haldane points out that the Prime Minister "naturally laid down that the study proposed was to be carefully guarded, so far as any possible claim of commitment was concerned, that it was not to go beyond the limits of purely General Staff work, and further that it should not be talked about."13

13 Haldane, Before the War, p. 163.
Campbell-Bannerman's authorization of military conversations between the British and French General Staffs, in the words of Churchill, was "a step of profound significance and far-reaching reactions." As the relations between the Staffs became increasingly intimate and confidential in their discussions, Churchill points out that they constituted an "exceedingly potent tie," no matter how explicitly the two Governments agreed and affirmed to each other that no national or political engagements were involved in the conversations.¹⁴

When Grey again met Cambon on January 15 he informed him that he had been authorized to say that communications might proceed directly between the French Military Attache and the British General Grierson, but that it must be understood that these communications did not commit either Government. In a letter to Lord Bertie in Paris, Grey wrote that the intermediary who had started the conversations under Lansdowne according to Cambon, had been a military correspondent of the Times, a retired Colonel who had been sent from the War Office.¹⁵ There is nothing to reveal how far the discussions had gone through this intermediary, or even his identity.

Grey informed Bertie again that Cambon had pressed

¹⁴Churchill, _World Crisis_, I, 27.
¹⁵Grey, _op. cit._, I, 74.
him on January 31 for some verbal assurance of the stand Britain would take in the event of German aggression. Grey told Cambon that such an assurance was one which should be submitted to the Cabinet for its authority, and that he felt the Cabinet would insist that the assurance be put into writing. Grey's personal opinion was that should Germany attack France "no British Government could remain neutral." Any change in the status of their relations at that time would transform the Entente into an alliance, which was a matter too serious to be kept secret from Parliament, and Grey felt that the present circumstances did not warrant pressing the question of a defensive alliance.16

Europe passed safely through the crisis over Morocco in 1905-1906, and the settlement at Algeciras was, for all intents and purposes, a diplomatic victory for the French, who had the support there of Britain. The appearance of a German warship at Agadir in Morocco in 1911 again alerted the capitals of Europe to the possibility that Germany might be intent upon war. More important for this study, the Agadir crisis brought to a head the divergence of Lord Morley and the peace party in the Cabinet from Grey and his conduct of foreign affairs. As the Cabinet was kept informed of the diplomatic attempts

16 Ibid., pp. 77-79.
to settle the dispute in Morocco, the Ministers learned of the secret conversations which had been going on between the French and British experts. Lord Morley extracted from the Prime Minister a pledge that no further diplomatic steps would be taken which might involve naval or military commitments without the knowledge and previous assent of the Cabinet. In addition Grey was instructed to put into writing the exact nature of Britain's commitments as far as the conversations with France were concerned. This was done November 22, 1912 in the following letter to Cambon:

MY DEAR AMBASSADOR,—From time to time in recent years the French and British naval and military experts have consulted together. It has always been understood that such consultation does not restrict the freedom of either Government to decide at any future time whether or not to assist the other by armed force. We have agreed that consultation between experts is not, and ought not to be, regarded as an engagement that commits either Government to action in a contingency that has not arisen and may never arise. The disposition, for instance, of the French and British fleets respectively at the present moment is not based upon an engagement to co-operate in war.

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

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

Yours, etc., E. GREY

17Ibid., pp. 94-95.
In reply, Grey received a letter from Cambon expressing the French viewpoint in similar terms. The disposition of the fleets referred to in Grey's letter might have raised more of a question of commitment than the military conversations, though Grey's letter denied it. In 1912 the Admiralty decided to move a portion of its Mediterranean fleet to home waters to meet any possible menace in the North Sea. At the same time the French decided to concentrate in the Mediterranean and give up any attempt to match her navy against the Germans on the high seas.

The exchange of notes in November, 1912 had two distinct advantages from the British point of view, which are pointed out by Bernadotte Schmitt: first, the exchange did not have to be communicated to Parliament; and secondly, it left the hands of both countries free to decide at a given moment what they would do. 18 A possible third advantage was that the exchange ended the secrecy which had surrounded the conversations for six years. In the future, both Grey and Asquith were able to assure the Cabinet and Parliament repeatedly that there were no secret alliances or commitments which would hamper their free decision.

In the circumstances surrounding the Agadir crisis which had brought matters to a head within the Cabinet, Lloyd George assumed a peculiar position in the light of

18 Schmitt, op. cit., I, 49.
his part in the controversy in 1914. As Grey himself admits, his own conduct of Foreign Affairs had become unpopular with part of the Liberal Press and was the subject of open criticism. Within the Cabinet it did not seem possible that Great Britain could speak with a decided voice should any real danger arise out of the Moroccan question. The Liberal Imperialists conducting foreign affairs were facing opposition from the "radical" element which included Lord Morley, Lord Loreburn, Lloyd George, and usually at this time Winston Churchill. The capitals abroad were aware of this division, and, according to Churchill, they believed that Lloyd George would assume the leadership of a peace party if it were necessary.

Quite the contrary, Lloyd George made an address before the British bankers at the Mansion House in London which informed the Continent that the Cabinet could pursue a unified policy and made it clear to Germany that if she meant war in this Moroccan crisis that she would have Britain against her. He said, in part:

I believe it is essential in the highest interests, not merely of this country, but of the world, that Britain should at all hazards maintain her place and her prestige amongst the Great Powers of the world... I conceive that nothing would justify a disturbance of international good-will except questions of the gravest national moment. But if a situation were to be forced upon us in

---

19 Grey, op. cit., p. 31.

20 Churchill, World Crisis, I, 45.
which peace could only be preserved by the surrender of the great and beneficent position Britain has won by centuries of heroism and achievement, by allowing Britain to be treated, where her interests were vitally affected, as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of nations, then I say emphatically that peace at that price would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure. National honour is no party question. The security of our great international trade is no party question. The peace of the world is much more likely to be secure if all nations realize fairly what the conditions of peace must be.21

Grey credits Lloyd George's speech with having much to do with preserving the peace in 1911-12.22

Ought Grey to have led Cambon to believe that British opinion would have been with France and to have permitted the continuance of the military conversations during the troubled years between 1906 and 1914? Fay says that Grey's "great responsibility and mistake" began when he permitted the conversations to continue until they involved mutual obligations which were "virtually as entangling as a formal alliance." Fay condemns Grey for revealing to Cambon his sympathy with France and his desire to give her diplomatic support, but his unwillingness to bind Britain by any formal engagement. Grey's failure to present the conversations to the Cabinet for their sanction receives Fay's sharpest criticism.

21Grey, op. cit., I, 216. See also Churchill, World Crisis, I, 42-46.

Both Fay\textsuperscript{23} and Lord Loreburn find Grey's explanation that he did not present the matter to the Cabinet in 1906 because of the general election a feeble excuse. Loreburn contends that there would have been no difficulty in summoning a Cabinet during an election to consider "so grave a matter," as many of the members of the Cabinet were in London or "within an hour of it." Loreburn rather sarcastically adds that "there are railways and post offices in Great Britain." Still in a vein of sarcasm Loreburn wrote:

The Cabinet met in January 1906. They might have been told of the 'conversations' between military experts, and of the statement made to the two Ambassadors [Cambon and Metternich] of which later Sir Edward does not say that they were ever informed at all. The military conversations must have lasted some time, and after January 1906 the Cabinet was meeting regularly.\textsuperscript{24}

Haldane defends Grey on the grounds that the Prime Minister, Lord Ripon, and Asquith had full knowledge of the proceedings in January, 1906, and that without the guidance derived from the conversations Britain could not have been ready in July, 1914.\textsuperscript{25} Schmitt questions what other policy might have been pursued in view of the fact that the Liberal Government would probably have fallen if it had tried to get a formal and open alliance with France. He asserts that it was elementary prudence to

\textsuperscript{23}Fay, \textit{op. cit.}, I, 192-209.
\textsuperscript{24}Loreburn, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 80-81.
\textsuperscript{25}Haldane, \textit{Autobiography}, p. 204.
perfect military and naval arrangements with Britain's only possible ally through the conversations.\textsuperscript{26}

In later years Grey regretted that the military conversations were not brought before the Cabinet at once. In Grey's mind at the time, the answers he gave to Cambon did not commit England to any obligation beyond the diplomatic support publicly promised in the Anglo-French Agreement. Neither Campbell-Bannerman nor Ripon suggested to him that a Cabinet should be held after "they had the full record of the conversation with Cambon before them."\textsuperscript{27} Trevelyan holds that Campbell-Bannerman was even more responsible than Grey in neglecting to bring the conversations before the Cabinet, because Campbell-Bannerman was the Prime Minister and chairman of the Cabinet.\textsuperscript{28}

When the matter came to a head in the Cabinet at the time of the Agadir affair, according to Grey, the difficulty arose from the "thing having gone on so long without the Cabinet generally being informed," and the Ministers hearing of the military conversations for the first time suspected that "there was something to conceal."\textsuperscript{29} Not all the members of the Ministry should have

\textsuperscript{26} Schmitt, op. cit., I, 50-51.
\textsuperscript{27} Grey, op. cit., I, 84.
\textsuperscript{28} Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 152.
\textsuperscript{29} Grey, op. cit., I, 93.
been uninformed about the conversations because they were discussed at the sessions of the Imperial Committee of Defence.

The South African war had revealed serious defects in the British army. The report of a commission of inquiry into the situation had resulted in the creation of the Committee of Imperial Defence in 1904. According to Asquith, who as Prime Minister had to preside over the Committee, it was a consultative body which in form consisted of such persons as from time to time the Prime Minister chose to summon. The Prime Minister was the only permanent member, but certain of the Cabinet members such as the Secretary for War, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Foreign Secretary attended as a matter of course. The Secretaries for the Colonies and India usually but not always attended. 30

That Lord Morley attended some of the sessions of the Committee is admitted in his Recollections. He tells of presiding over sub-committees of inquiry into the needs of Persia, Egypt, and India as part of the general investigation of the military requirements of the Empire begun in 1905. 31 Asquith states that Morley's investigations into India's requirements revealed that

30 Asquith, Genesis of the War, p. 113.
31 Morley, Recollections, II, 150.
reinforcements of 100,000 men might be required in the first six months of a war on the Indian frontier, and that this assumption was used by Haldane in framing his scheme for an Expeditionary Force. 32

Asquith himself presided over another inquiry into the military needs of the Empire as affected by the continent of Europe, as the result of which the General Staff was allowed to work out plans on the assumption that an expeditionary force might have to be sent to the Continent. All inquiries were finished by August, 1909. Asquith claims that by that date the Government had investigated the "whole ground covered by a possible war with Germany— the naval position; the possibilities of blockade; the invasion problem; the Continental problem; the Egyptian problem." 33

The Military General Staff met the representatives of the Admiralty War Staff at systematically held meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence, according to Haldane. He points to Lord Crewe, Grey, Lloyd George, Lord Harcourt, and Lord Morley as being in regular attendance to listen to the experts of the two Staffs. 34 He further states that from time to time the Military Staff explained the progress made in working out conceivable plans for using

---

32 Asquith, Genesis of the War, pp. 114-115.

33 Ibid., p. 116.

34 Haldane, Before the War, pp. 160-161.
the Expeditionary Force in France and in more distant regions before the full Committee, and obtained its provisional approval.\textsuperscript{35} It seems impossible that Lord Morley could have worked on the sub-committees of the Defence Committee and attended any full sessions without being aware of the Anglo-French conversations.

John H. Morgan attempts the most penetrating inquiry into the working of Morley's mind in his volume of reminiscences and appreciation of the man. He states that Morley spoke of Grey "with an aspirsty which was neither fair, nor just, and was, indeed, the expression of a rankling sense of irritation at having been involved in a foreign policy in regard to which he could never, despite all his mental struggles, disengage himself from a measure of responsibility as a member of the Committee of Imperial Defence."\textsuperscript{36}

Haldane denies the charge that the discussions of possible perils and preparations made against them went on in the Committee of Imperial Defence without the Cabinet being cognizant of them. Haldane recalls that after Morley had left office he told him that he had not known about them. Haldane reminded Morley of "meeting after meeting at which he had listened to the detailed explanations given to the full Committee by the

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Tbid.}, p. 163.

\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Morgan, op. cit.}, pp. 39-40.
Director of Military Operations of the progress of the examination of the question how we could best resist an attack through Belgim should one come." Then Morley and Haldane looked through the Defence Committee papers which Morley had kept, and there they found one "recording proceedings at a comparatively early meeting at which a detailed exposition with maps was set out." To this one Morley had added a note in his own handwriting, doubting if he ought to approve of it, but doing so because it was in the interest of European peace. There is no authority for this episode other than Haldane, but it was repeated by several of Morley's contemporaries, mostly as a means of emphasizing that Morley returned to the theme that the British and French conversations had been a secret to which the Cabinet had not been a party, almost as if it were an obsession with him. In most obsessions there is usually an association of guilt.

Naturally Morley's notes of the Committee papers do not dispose of the question of the Anglo-French conversations. As Morgan points out, one would want to know not merely how much was said in the Committee, but how much was whispered outside of it. It is incredible

37 Haldane, Autobiography, pp. 243-244.
38 Morgan, op. cit., p. 43.
39 Ibid., p. 47.
that Morley could have been a member of the Committee of Imperial Defence, the Government spokesman in the House of Lords on foreign affairs for some time, and an intimate associate of his Cabinet colleagues, and at the same time have been completely in the dark as to the status of the British and French relations as a result of the conversations. His bitterest protests may have been made on the grounds that he deplored that "secret" type of diplomacy being conducted by his opponents in the Liberal Imperialist League, rather than on the grounds that he personally was uninformed.

The Anglo-Russian Entente

When the complete history of the twentieth century is written, its writers may have to point to Russia as the key to the international situation of this whole century, and, at the same time, acclaim Lord John Morley as a prophet who predicted that the only victor in the first World War would be Russia, and that such a victory would not be good for Western civilization. Even today the world scene seems to prove Morley right, while a backward glance to 1900, through two World Wars and the Moroccan crises, attests even more to the validity of Morley's predictions.

When the Revolution inside Russia forced the Russians to withdraw from World War I in December, 1917,
the Russian regime was left at the mercy of the Germans by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and the Western allies were forced to take up the battle in the East to prevent the transfer of German troops to the West. At the Versailles conference the Russians had no seat, yet the Germans were forced to denounce the treaty of Brest-Litovsk and Russia was left virtually as she had been at the outbreak of the war in 1914.

Russia must assume her share of responsibility for the war in 1914. Russian desires in the Dardanelles were akin to her interest in the Balkans and her support of Serbia. Russia's mobilization was followed by the German declaration of war, a war into which France was bound to enter because of her alliance with Russia. England was drawn into the conflict through the intimacy of her relations with France and her attitude toward Belgian neutrality, which was bound to be violated in a war between Germany and France. England was not obligated by her 1907 Agreement with Russia to assist her, but England's Ententes with both Russia and France had added strength to the Franco-Russian alliance. Perhaps, as Lord Loreburn believed, if the Russian Revolution had come earlier, "the whole train of causes which brought about the tragedy of August, 1914 ... would have ceased to be sources of danger for the future so far as the general peace of Europe was concerned."¹

¹Loreburn, op. cit., p. 278.
In 1904-1905 the strength of the Franco-Russian Alliance was weakened considerably by the defeat the Russians were suffering at the hands of the Japanese. The Anglo-French Agreement itself was in rather a peculiar position because Britain was committed to recognize Japanese interests in Korea by her Alliance with Japan signed in 1902. The Agreement Britain later signed with Russia in 1907, though not an alliance, purported to settle their differences in the Near East and relieve the Russian threat on the Indian border. It was viewed in Germany as another link in her "encirclement," while in Britain the whole idea of friendship with Russian despotism was repugnant to many. It is difficult to ascertain when Lord John Morley first began to depurate any commitments which might bind England to Russia as there is evidence that he co-operated with Grey in drawing up the Anglo-Russian Agreement.

"It was not so easy to create friendship with Russia as with France," Grey states in his memoirs, as "something was constantly happening in Russia that alienated British sympathy or stirred indignation."2

The despotism of the Czar, the gross mistreatment of the Poles, and the persecutions of the Jews in Russia were contrary to British ideals. On the other hand,

---

2Grey, op. cit., I, 149.
British interests in Asia were in such intimate contact with those of Russia that there was constant friction which at any time might become so dangerous that it could threaten the strength and security of the Empire. The British were particularly anxious to prevent any further Russian advances in the vicinity of the Indian frontier.

Morley was in the India Office at the time negotiations were seriously begun in 1907 to arrive at some agreement with Russia. According to Trevelyan, Morley was "most helpful" at the time as he assisted in breaking down the block to the negotiations made by the Indian Government in demanding as the British sphere of influence the whole of Southern Persia, including the whole coastline on the Gulf.\(^3\) In its article on Morley in the *Dictionary of National Biography* the statement is made that Morley "shared responsibility for the entente with Russia, which, by relieving him from anxiety about the Indian frontier, made much easier the paths to economy and reform in India."\(^4\)

The Agreement, as finally made by the two countries, divided Persia into three areas—a northern Russian sphere, a neutral sphere, and the British in the south. Both pledged themselves to observe the "integrity and independence" of Persia, while agreeing neither to intervene

---


in the internal affairs of Tibet, nor to send representatives there. Russia recognized Afghanistan as outside her orbit, and agreed to conduct all her relations there in the future through the British Government. There were no secret clauses in this Agreement. Grey was the principal author of the Agreement, but there is no question as to whether it had the sanction of the Cabinet or Parliament as the document was publicly recognized.

Grey's own attitude towards British relations with Russia can be traced through his speeches. Speaking on foreign policy on October 29, 1905 Grey stated:

> It is urgently desirable that Russia's position should be re-established in the councils of Europe. The estrangement between us and Russia has, in my opinion, its roots not in the present, but solely in the past. It may be, perhaps it must be, that confidence between the two countries must be a plant of slow growth; but the conditions should be favorable to its growth, and it should be the business of both Governments to foster and encourage those conditions.\(^5\)

A few months after the Agreement was signed Grey spoke at Berwick in his own constituency on December 19. He pointed to the Anglo-Russian Entente as one which would "relieve both nations from the strain of anxiety, and, by removing one constant cause of friction, it will enable the two nations to treat all other matters which may arise between them in the future in a friendly spirit; and if peace between England and Russia is assured, depend

\(^5\)Knaplund, op. cit., p. 30.
upon it, it is in the interest of social reform and internal development in both countries, and it is a valuable contribution to and an important element in securing the peace of the whole world."\(^6\)

In the House of Commons on February 17, 1908 Grey assumed a defensive attitude which may indicate that there were objections to the Anglo-Russian Convention. He was emphatic in assuring the House that Britain had not sacrificed anything in Afghanistan or Tibet. In Persia they may have sacrificed some trading advantages, but in his opinion that possibility was exceedingly "remote," judging from his observance of events in Persia in the past. Grey asked anyone criticizing the Agreement to "study impartially the situation in Persia in the last twenty years, and then to say whether Russia has gained anything which there was any reasonable prospect of our getting for ourselves."\(^7\)

In 1908 King Edward VII made a visit to the Czar which was not entirely popular with the British. Grey, in defending the King's visit before the House on June 8, was prophetic regarding Russia, but not in the sense that Morley was. Grey stated:

I see in Russia a great race, much of its power undeveloped still, its character still growing, not yet come to its full strength, but

\(^6\)Ibid., p. 41.
\(^7\)Ibid., p. 75.
with new thoughts and new energies beginning to stir the race. I am convinced it will have a great part in the world. Much of the peace of the world may depend, and much of the welfare, both of Russia and ourselves, must depend upon the relations between us.

Only one other member of the Cabinet of 1914, Lord Loreburn, has recorded any fears similar to those of Morley. Loreburn attacks the creation of intimate relations with France as a renunciation of the policy approved by Gladstone in 1870, because they created a situation which "indirectly constrained us to abide the consequences of Russian policy in the Balkans, and to stake the British Empire in defence of France against the consequences of her Russian Alliance." Loreburn concludes that "in effect it left the peace of Great Britain at the mercy of the Russian Court." 9

In discussing Morley's part in the Anglo-Russian arrangements, Morgan makes the observation that Morley's expressed differences with Grey's policy were, for the most part, "afterthoughts." 10 If this is true, the first expression Morley gave of his attitude towards Russia's role was when he urged his Cabinet colleagues in 1914 to consider the possibility that Russia might emerge pre-eminent on the Continent and be detrimental to Western

---

8Ibid., p. 103.
Again in his letter to Asquith on August 4, 1914 he stated that he could not be a party to a policy which swore Britain to France, at the same time binding Britain to Russia and whatever demands Russia might make upon France.¹²

Morgan recalls two other conversations he had with Morley regarding Russia; one on September 13, 1914, and the other, February 15, 1918. In the first, Morley stated that he had always opposed the Anglo-Russian Agreement, and that he saw Russia as the real aggressor and the country most likely to gain out of the war.¹³ In the second, Morley berated the idea that the war was inevitable; and that as he had said to Asquith at the time of the crisis, he felt that Britain was only "playing Russia's game."¹⁴

When all Britain was acclaiming Russia as "a new and mighty star in the firmament of Liberal powers," Morgan credits Morley with remembering that "Russia does not change, and . . . that whatever might be her political innovations, she would prove at the end of the war to be as aggressive abroad, and as ruthless at home, as she had

¹¹Morley, Memorandum on Resignation, p. 6.
¹²Ibid., p. 31.
¹³Morgan, op. cit., p. 42.
¹⁴Ibid., pp. 49-50.
ever been under the Romanoffs."\textsuperscript{15} How true later events have proved Morley's observation to be!

In 1923 H. W. Massingham, a British publisher and editor, wrote of Morley, following his death that year:

Morley's place in history depends in some degree on what becomes of Europe. If it sinks once more into a scene of anarchy and bloodshed, men will look to the life and teachings of John Morley with growing reverence for their truthfulness.\textsuperscript{16}

This statement is a cliche which has been used often in speaking of the great men of the world's history; but in Morley's case, when one considers his attitude toward Russia, there is truth in it, whether that attitude was based upon foresight or reflection.

The Foreign Office

As Morley sought in his Memorandum on Resignation to exculpate himself from responsibility for Britain's entry into the war and to implicate Asquith, Grey, and Haldane, he assailed the manner in which the Foreign Office conducted affairs without the knowledge of the Cabinet or Parliament. He was not alone in making this criticism, for both Loreburn and Lloyd George held the same view of the Foreign Office's management.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 49-50.

In defense of his own conduct of foreign affairs, Grey stated that the members of the Cabinet were kept in touch with the current work of the Foreign Office to a far greater extent than with the work of any other, and that while he was in office "other Ministers could find information about every matter of importance in the papers that were circulated to the Cabinet." The only exception of importance that Grey remembered was the record of his conversations with Cambon in January, 1906, and of course, this was the exception on which Morley based his strongest attack. Grey tells in detail in his memoirs how copies of official telegrams were sent every day in printed papers enclosed in a pouch to each Cabinet Minister, who later either kept, burned, or returned them.1

In two speeches before the House of Commons, Grey referred to the difficulties attached to discussing foreign affairs before the House. During the negotiations for the Agreement with Russia on August 1, 1907 Grey stated:

I think that we are as open and free with regard to information about foreign affairs in the House of Commons as any other Government in any other Parliament of Europe. I will always endeavour to give the utmost information in my power, but there are many difficulties in conducting the

1Grey, op. cit., II, pp. 266-267.
business of the Foreign Office and being in the House of Commons at the same time. I can only beg the indulgence and the confidence of the House, without distinction of Party on either side, and I express the hope that it may prove that it is possible for the House of Commons to have a direct touch with the Foreign Office by having the Minister charged with foreign affairs among its Members.

Later, in debates over Persian and Moroccan affairs on December 14, 1911 Grey lamented that there was not an invention by which it was possible to publish papers in the House which would not be known elsewhere. He assured the House that:

The motive for secrecy in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred is not to withhold information from the House, but is the difficulty of giving the information to the House without giving it to the world at large; and the knowledge we give to the world at large may cause difficulties abroad which are unnecessary. . . . I wonder if the House realizes how embarrassing it sometimes is to answer supplementary questions on foreign affairs. It is easy enough, but as the House knows, every one of those answers given from this bench by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is liable to be reported in foreign newspapers and taken there as the deliberate, considered utterance of the British Government.

Asquith claims that there was a "daily intimacy and unbroken confidence" between himself and Grey, and that important questions of foreign policy were always laid before the Cabinet where "they were open to the fullest investigation and discussion before final and

2Knaplund, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

3Ibid., pp. 187-188.
binding decisions were taken." As an example, Asquith cites the manner in which the Cabinet "canvassed and sifted" every word that was used in the exchange of letters between Grey and Cambon in November, 1912 which defined the mutual obligations imposed upon France and Britain. He does not suggest, however, that there was always complete unanimity among the Cabinet during the years before the war.  

To Churchill, Asquith was a man who knew where he stood on every question, and who gave the impression of "measuring all the changing, baffling situations of public and Parliamentary life according to settled standards and sure convictions." Churchill saw in him a sense of scorn, "lightly and not always completely veiled, for arguments, for personalities and even for events which did not conform to the pattern he had with so much profound knowledge and reflection decidedly adopted." In the Cabinet Asquith was "markedly" silent, never speaking a word in Council "if he could get his way without it," and when, at the end of a discussion, Asquith summed up "it was very rarely that the silence he had observed till then, did not fall on all." If one can trust Churchill's judgment of Asquith, it seems

---


not quite fair to condemn Britain's policy always as "Grey's policy" with a forceful character like Asquith at the head of the Cabinet. Undoubtedly, in the crisis of 1914, Asquith's concern was for unanimity in the party and the Cabinet, as well as the nation, but it left Grey to bear the full brunt of the attack of the pacifists.

Haldane regrets that he did not take a more active part in the general business of the Cabinet, a Cabinet he pictures as being more like a meeting of delegates. The Cabinet had no secretary, no agenda, and no minutes were kept. The Prime Minister knew "too little of the details of what had to be got through to be able to apportion the time required for discussion," and as a result two or three Ministers could hold the floor for an entire session. In the sessions, Churchill was "as long-winded as he was persistent;" but Lloyd George was "very good." Crewe, when he intervened, "did so in long speeches." According to Haldane, neither Campbell-Bannerman nor Asquith sufficiently controlled the Cabinet discussions. He summarizes his appraisal of the Cabinet's work thus:

In those days we lived as a Government too much from hand to mouth, dependent for our achievements on the initiative not of the body as a whole, but of individual members. There ought to have been much more systematic consultation among members specially interested, and more frequent social intercourse. But these were the days of social functions of a different kind on an extended scale
as part of the routine of Government, and the opportunities for conference were consequently deficient. A luncheon party came punctually at 1:30 and made an end to serious discussion. Much good work was done by the individual Ministers in a Government the members of which worked hard. But from imperfect method not nearly enough team work was accomplished.5

Why did not the British Government between 1906 and 1914 discuss in public a situation which it understood well, and appeal to the nation? Haldane believes that to have done so would have been to "increase the difficulty of averting war."7 The public had a right to expect the British Ministers to "spare no effort for peace and for security," but Haldane believes the public was "too sensible to ask for every detail of the steps taken for the attainment of this end." Members of Parliament knew that there were matters about which it would have been "mischievous" to encourage discussion, and "the wisest among them do not press for open statements which if made to the world would imperil the very object which Parliament and the public had directed those responsible to them to seek to attain."8 Haldane's defense of the Liberal Government before the war is in general terms, but there would have been no need for him to defend it at all if it had not been open to some criticism.

7Haldane, Before the War, p. 11.
8Ibid., p. 2.
From the critical viewpoint Lloyd George states that during the eight years preceding the war, the Cabinet devoted a "ridiculously small percentage" of its time to the consideration of foreign affairs. This was partly due to the fact that between 1906 and 1914 the Governments and Parliaments were engaged in controversies over domestic affairs which were also bitterly disputed between the political parties; such as, education, temperance, land taxation, the Parliament Act, Irish Home Rule, and the disestablishment of the Church in Wales. Lloyd George admits that certain aspects of foreign policy were familiar to the Ministers who attended the sessions of the Committee of Imperial Defence, but he contends that the Cabinet "as a whole were never called into genuine consultation upon the fundamental aspects of the foreign situation." He noted a "reticence and a secrecy which practically ruled out three-fourths of the Cabinet from the chance of making any genuine contribution to the momentous questions then fermenting on the Continent of Europe." Nothing was ever said about Britain's military commitment, and there was an air of "hush hush" about every allusion to Britain's relations with France, Russia, and Germany. Direct questions were answered with "civility," but were not encouraged. Other than the Prime Minister and Grey, only Loreburn, Morley, Crewe, Haldane, and Ripon were expected to "make any contribution on the infrequent occasions
when the Continental situation was brought to our awed attention."  

An injustice is done to Grey and Asquith, in the opinion of Loreburn, by those who impute to them a desire for war or a wish to injure Germany, but he does not absolve them from any blame in the manner in which they permitted Britain to be drawn into the war. Their first fault was in permitting Britain to depart from her traditional policy of neutrality and allowing the French Entente to develop until it was "transformed into the equivalent of an Alliance." Then followed their mistake of "concealing from themselves and others the true character of what was being done, and imparting to Parliament their sanguine conclusion that they had kept free from engagements, without imparting also the facts which would have awakened apprehension." Their duty, Loreburn states, was to have warned Parliament of the danger, and prepared to meet it. Their final mistake came when the actual crisis arose in 1914 and the Ministers could not make up their minds or take a firm resolution in time, because Britain's foreign policy had been conducted "on lines of their own choice, without reference to, almost without regard to Parliament, and therefore could not have any confidence that the resolution they might arrive

Lloyd George, op. cit., pp. 43-46.
at would have the indispensable support of the nation."\(^{10}\)

To Loreburn, and most likely to Morley, a Minister "who acts in the dark and chooses his own instruments and his own advisers" is as dangerous as an unconstitutional sovereign.\(^{11}\) Had Grey and Asquith foreseen the possible effects of their "acting in the dark," particularly in Britain's relations with France, they probably would have taken the Cabinet as a whole into their confidence, if only to preserve their beloved principle of Ministerial solidarity.

\(^{10}\) Loreburn, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

\(^{11}\) Ibid., p. 308.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The Cabinet crisis in 1914 was the beginning of the end for the Liberal party in Britain. By 1924 the Labor party had supplanted the Liberals as the chief Opposition to the Conservatives in the House of Commons, and the Liberals had to be content with the third ranking position in the House. The resignation of Lord John Morley seems to have marked the end of the great Gladstonian traditions of Liberalism, and to have heralded a new storm of dissension which the party could not weather.

Gladstone had followed Sir Robert Peel in joining the Liberals in repudiation of Conservative agrarian policies, and had assisted in instituting the free trade policy of the Liberal party. From 1846 to 1886 the Liberals under the great leadership of Gladstone had been in power most of the time. For the next ten years they were in and out of the Government until Gladstone resigned in 1894. A decade of Opposition ended in 1905 for the Liberals and they gave the realm ten years of domestic reform up to the outbreak of the war. The advocates of
free trade, the champions of Home Rule, the statesmen of neutrality—it was unthinkable that their party could fall from its position of pre-eminence in British politics.

The party had survived the schism led by Joseph Chamberlain and his Liberal Unionists in 1886 over Home Rule, an issue which seemed to be on the verge of a triumph for the Liberals when the European conflict broke out. The resignation of Gladstone had been viewed with foreboding by venerable Liberals like Morley and Lord Ripon who feared that there was no replacement for his leadership, yet the Liberals won their greatest victory in the election of 1906. When the leadership fell to Lord Rosebery, it became the target of a revolt by Lloyd George over the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church, and the Rosebery Ministry lasted less than a year, thus transferring the Government to the Conservatives. During that period of Opposition the Liberals had divided over participation in the Boer war, but still they were able to unite their Radical Pacifists and Liberal Imperialists to resume the administration of the Government in 1905, and to continue governing with practical unanimity until they were faced with the problem of British intervention. With the resignations of Burns and Morley and the promise of Conservative support, the Liberals appeared to be armed with a national unity which could defeat any foreign foe, but ultimately they were destined not even to overcome
the disaffections within their own party and to prove the exception to the rule that political parties "die hard."

The vacancies left by Burns and Morley were filled by Lord Lucas and Lord Kitchener, and the Liberal Cabinet remained intact until May, 1915 when a crisis was precipitated by a public quarrel between Churchill and Admiral Lord Fisher. Fisher, with Conservative support, opposed the diversion of men and materials to the Dardanelles project sponsored by Churchill in the Admiralty. Churchill was forced to resign and the only solution seemed to be the formation of a coalition Cabinet of Liberals, Unionists, and Conservatives. There had been confusion in the Liberal Government from the outset of the war; first over sending an expeditionary force to France and then over operations against Turkey. Too, the new national unity which had replaced partisanship in 1914 was short-lived as the pre-war Irish controversy reared its head in September with an accompanying growth of bitter feeling between Bonar Law and Asquith. Of the group who had opposed British intervention in the first place, only Pease and Harcourt remained in the First Coalition Cabinet formed in June, 1915. McKinnon Wood, Beauchamp, Simon, and Hobhouse were left out, while Balfour became the First Lord of the Admiralty and Bonar Law assumed the Colonial Secretaryship.
Lloyd George, who had been expected to lead the pacifist secession in August, 1914, became the militant leader of the Liberals, and by December, 1916, with Conservative support, he was able to push Asquith out of the Ministry and become Prime Minister himself. In the Second Coalition Cabinet Churchill was brought back as Munitions Minister by Lloyd George, and Balfour moved to the Foreign Office, excluding Lord Grey from the Cabinet. In this Ministry not even the moderating counsels of Samuel, McKenna, and Crewe were to be heard, and the last of Morley's non-interventionist colleagues, Pease and Harcourt, were removed from the scene. Of the Liberal leaders in the controversy only Lloyd George and Churchill remained, and the other coalition members enjoyed the position of bearing none of the responsibility for Britain's intervention while in the end they were to be recognized for their successful conduct of the war.

In the "khaki election" following the Allied victory in 1918 the coalition platform sponsored by Lloyd George won a huge victory, but his Government lasted only three years. In 1922 the Unionists decided to withdraw their support from Lloyd George, and in the subsequent elections the Conservatives won a majority and the Liberals split between the followers of Lloyd George and Asquith, with a few going over to the Conservatives and
a few to Labor. For the first time Labor became His Majesty's Opposition. The power, the prestige, and the glory of the Liberal traditions the party had inherited from Gladstone passed into virtual obscurity.

Lloyd George can not be extricated from all responsibility for the fate of the Liberal party. Like Plutarch's Alcebiades, he was a chameleon who could adapt himself to his company. During the Boer war he had led the pro-Boer sentiment among the Liberals in opposing the Conservative conduct of the conflict. In the Home Rule controversy he had been on the side of moderating counsels while the bulk of the party fought for the Bills. At the time of the Agadir affair Lloyd George had surprised even his own Cabinet colleagues by defying Germany, and yet during the last days of July and the first of August, 1914, he led the pacifists to think that he might champion their cause in the Cabinet. Almost rabid in his denunciation of Grey and his foreign policy, Lloyd George apparently felt no qualms about accepting the posts of Munitions Minister, War Minister, and finally the Premiership in the Coalition Cabinets which governed during the war. In ousting Asquith from the Cabinet in 1916 Lloyd George was even willing to accept Conservative support. There is almost a touch of sadness in the fact that when Lloyd George was elevated to the peerage in 1925 and for the first time
became the official leader of the Liberals, his party had wasted to a mere shadow of its former greatness.

"True it is that politics make strange bedfellows," the old adage states, and no finer proof of it can be found than in the political life of Lloyd George. Of course, this can probably also be said of Winston Churchill who deserted the Conservatives in 1904 to work with the Liberals for twenty years, only to return to the Conservative fold again in 1924. There is no evidence that charges of inconsistency in the pursuit of their political policies can be brought against either Grey or Asquith, despite their departure from Gladstone's ideals in the formation of the Liberal Imperialist League. Only Lord Morley seems to have remained a true Gladstonian Liberal, working for the preservation of the Empire without any new acquisitions of territory, and for its peaceful continuance aloof from the quarrels of the European continent. It matters little whether or not Morley's differences with the Liberal Imperialists were well-considered reflections after August, 1914, his resignation was the act of a man with convictions of long-standing. Events might have altered those convictions had he stayed in the Government, but his age and his pre-eminence as a literary figure rather than a politician make it unlikely. His weakness as a political leader is
revealed in the Cabinet crisis itself, for none of his pacifist sympathizers followed him out of the Cabinet. There was only a small number of the Ministry's twenty-one members who favored British intervention, and a strong leader probably could have induced a large group to withdraw. Morley was not the man to do it, and had he been able, the break-up of the Government in August, 1914 might have had disastrous consequences for Britain.

This study is not the place to argue whether Grey was right or wrong in the policies he pursued as Britain's Foreign Minister, but there is no doubt that the crisis in the Government in 1914 was brought on by the Anglo-French conversations and their resultant obligations to France, and in turn to Russia. Grey was at fault in permitting them to continue without the knowledge and sanction of the Cabinet until it was too late. For the most part the debate during the controversy, both within and without the Cabinet, occurred on circumstances which had not yet arisen, as even up to the time Grey's conversation with Cambon on Sunday, August 2, the Germans had committed no hostile action. The very nature of the British Government seemed to preclude that its action had to be determined finally by events, and the violation of Belgian neutrality provided the occasion for Britain's intervention, while the commitments to France, to which Morley objected, remained the reason.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Newspapers

The Times (London) July 7, 9, 14, 27, 30; August 5, 1914.

Diplomatic Documents

Gooch, G. F., and Temperley, H. W. V. (eds.). British
Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914.

Public Documents

Hansard. Parliamentary Debates (fifth series). Vol. 65
(1914).

Memoirs

Asquith, Herbert Henry. The Genesis of the War. London:
Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1923.

Dedicated to Sir Edward Grey, the work traces
the stages leading to the outbreak of the war
from the viewpoint of a man bearing a large respon-
sibility in Britain's role for nine years before
1914. The author admits to being "scrupulously
niggardly in imparting information as to proceed-
ings in the Cabinet" during that period.

Asquith, Earl of Oxford and. Memories and Reflections
1852-1927. Vol. II, Boston: Little, Brown, and
Company, 1928.

Of value for this study were the extracts
it contained from contemporary notes made during
the critical days in July and August. It sup-
plements very well the above work by the same
author.

The Cabinet crisis is most fully covered in this volume with Churchill's inimitable appraisal of personalities and events. Large portions are devoted to his work in the Admiralty.


No question referring to Britain's entry into World War I could be fully investigated without these two volumes covering Grey's conduct of foreign affairs. The Anglo-French Entente and "conversations" are covered in detail. Its documentation is the work of J. A. Spender as Grey's eyesight was failing rapidly when it was written.


Published after his death, this book shows more objective thinking than the work listed below. Its worth is in Haldane's opinions of the part he played in events and his association with Morley which he depicts.


Strictly a defense of his work in the War Office, too many pages are devoted to analysis of Germany, German leaders, and German thinking with a view to placing the whole blame on Germany.


An apologia, this work attempts to refute the criticism that Lichnowsky misled the German government as to England's attitude. Care has to be taken in reading it as the German ambassador was definitely sympathetic towards Grey.


For this study, the author's attack on Grey
and his opinions of Grey's shortcomings were of most interest. There is some discrepancy in details concerning the critical period before Britain's entrance into the war when contrasted with the other memoirs.


Written too soon after the Allied victory for objectivity, Loreburn presents the point of view that the war could have been averted if the Liberals had been true to their traditional principles, and outspoken in regard to what they were doing in their foreign policy.


Without this little volume this study could not have been attempted, as it provides a basis for comparison and contrast with the other contemporary accounts. It tells not only Morley's part in the controversy, but fully explains the reasons why he felt compelled to resign. The book was not published until 1928, five years after Morley's death.


This work gives an insight into Morley's attitude toward his contemporaries, politics, literature, and into all the opinions which give a man a particular character.

REFERENCE WORKS


BOOKS


Containing a detailed account of the formation of the Coalition Governments during the war in Britain, this book reflects the Conservative attitude. It proved most helpful in arriving at the conclusion that the end of the Liberal Party's prestige was imminent at the time of the Cabinet crisis.


This is a collection of twenty-one essays written over an eight year period about political and military leaders, none of whom were alive when the essays were written. All throw some light on the course of events of the first quarter of the Twentieth century, but those on Morley, Asquith, and Rosebery were rich in information for this study.


Though completely without reference to the Cabinet crisis, these volumes provided the necessary background for comprehension of Britain's policy through their detailed accounts of Britain's financial, industrial, and agrarian history.


Though Rosebery had no part in the 1914 controversy, he was an influence on both Grey and Asquith as he helped to form the Liberal Imperialist League. He left the political scene in 1905, but this biography is the work of a man who was a moderating influence in the Cabinet in 1914 and 1915.


Fay's five causes of World War I are almost
universally known and accepted, but his condemna-
tion of Grey's conduct of foreign affairs was not
fully appreciated or questioned until these volumes
were read in the hope of finding some significance
in the Cabinet crisis.


Speeches in this book include important ones
made by Grey, Asquith, Bonar Law, Lloyd George,
Kitchener, Bethmann-Hollweg, Woodrow Wilson,
and Lord Robert Cecil. A twenty page foreword
commenting on the speeches is worthwhile reading.

Gooch, G. P. *Recent Revelations of European Diplomacy.*

This book is an invaluable approach to the
study of any question relating to World War I
as it introduces works which throw some light
on the outbreak of the war and also gives some
evaluation of their contents.

Gwynn, Stephen (ed.). *The Letters and Friendships of Sir
Cecil Spring Rice.* Vol. I, Boston: Houghton,
Mifflin Company, 1929.

As ambassador to the United States, Rice
was not in a position to observe the crisis at
home, but here one can find opinion supporting
British intervention

Headlam, J. W. *The History of Twelve Days.* London:
T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1915.

Unfortunately this history deals wholly with
the diplomatic correspondence of the twelve days
prior to Britain's intervention and not of the
action in the Cabinet. Its sole authorities are
the diplomatic correspondence published by the
various governments.

Hendrick, Burton J. *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page
1855-1918.* Vol. I, New York: Garden City Pub-
lishing Co., Inc., 1927.

An objective analysis of any situation is
not obtainable in this book. To Page, Grey was
a hero who would have made a good American after
"using a little sand paper."

Intended as a supplement to the *British Documents*, the speeches included in this volume show Grey's attitude toward Britain's relations with France and Russia and his belief that Britain's interests outside the Empire should be protected.


Its subject matter is just what the title implies, and was used in this study for its references to Gladstone's policies.


The author sets as his task the filling in of the gaps he saw in Grey's memoirs and the correction of Grey's mistakes, in the course of which he attacks Grey and the Anglo-French Entente. Lutz's background in the period was acquired as the official German translator of the *British Documents*.


Marder presents the history of British naval policy from 1880 to 1905, examining the root forces underlying British naval expansion; the interplay of naval and foreign policy; and the effects of technical innovations, public opinion, and party politics upon naval policy.


Four chapters deal with Morley's literary works, while the remainder of the book attempts to picture Morley's mental attitude to the situation in 1914. The author, though an intimate of Morley's, achieves an almost impartial portrayal of Morley.

Any consideration of Anglo-Russian relations, or of British intervention in the war, should include this work as Nicolson supposedly had much influence over Grey in the Foreign Office on these matters.


Extremely biased against Grey, this volume is unique in its attempt to use the psychological approach in studying Britain's intervention by interpreting men's minds and motives before the war.


Unlike Fay, Schmitt devotes most of his general work on the war to the events and personalities involved within the year prior to its outbreak. Schmitt is less critical of Grey, and believes Britain followed the only course open to her.


Freely using an unpublished autobiography, Trevelyan presents a good picture of Grey's public and private life. Grey's wishes and desires in his private life were such that one must know them in order to appreciate fully the work he did as a public figure.


Ripon was a Liberal who served with Gladstone, yet was sympathetic to Grey. He was a contemporary of Morley and had served in the Colonial Office and as Viceroy of India. The changing attitudes among the Liberals on foreign policy can be traced in this work.
ARTICLES


UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL


The writer presents the viewpoint that the violation of Belgian neutrality was not the cause of England's declaration of war, but was used by Grey to rally British public opinion to the support of a pre-established pledge to France.


For this study this work was valuable for its clear presentation of the problems facing Britain which forced her to abandon her "splendid isolation."