

EUROPE IN CONVALESCENCE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649578344

Europe in Convalescence by Alfred E. Zimmern

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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ALFRED E. ZIMMERN

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G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press
1922

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DEDICATED
TO ALL THOSE
IN EVERY COUNTRY OF EUROPE
WHO HAVE THE COURAGE
TO LOOK FORWARD

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PREFACE

IN letting this volume go forth the scholar in me is making a concession to the citizen. It is not the book I planned to write; or, rather, to be more precise, it is not the whole book. But the prospect that the country will be called before long to pass judgment on the policies of the present administration makes me feel that I ought not to withhold such contribution as I can offer, out of a somewhat unusual experience towards the discussion of European issues.

My last volume on this subject, a collection of war-time essays, was published in the summer of 1918. At that time I believed, in common with the great bulk of my fellow-countrymen, that the British Commonwealth was the political embodiment of the most powerful idealistic association; the most powerful influence for justice, honour, and public right in the world at the present time; and I gave free and reasoned expression in my writings to ideals for which so many of my own and a younger generation, whose influence in our public affairs we miss more and more as the barren days go on, have given

PREFACE

their lives. I have never stooped to propaganda or partisanship; nor is there a word in my previous volume regarding the fundamental idealism of the British peoples, or the potentialities of the British Commonwealth, which I would wish to retract.

But if the British peoples stand where they did, the same cannot be said of their embodied authority, of the Government which still now in 1922 as in 1918, represents them—the peoples of the Dominions and of India as well as of Great Britain—before the world. Since December, 1918, when we elected a Parliament pledged to violate a solemn agreement made but five weeks earlier, we stand shamed, dishonoured, and, above all, distrusted before mankind; and not until we have publicly acknowledged, and made what amends we yet can for the wrong then done, can the lips of true lovers of Britain be unsealed again.

Readers of this volume, and of the appendices attached to it, can judge the issue for themselves. I leave it to them to decide how far the General Election of 1918 was a turning point in European history, and whether the odious wrangling over the reparation justly owing to the civilian populations of the invaded districts, which has confused and disgraced the public life of Europe during the last three years, is not due chiefly to the selfishness and cowardice of British politicians. Others, upon whom