

WHAT IS DIPLOMACY?

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What is diplomacy? by Charles W. Hayward

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FOREWORD

WHAT is diplomacy? It dominates that part of political life which concerns the destinies of the greatest number of millions of the human race. It controls a human relationship which has been, and still is, the most powerful and the most prolific of all in producing disasters and miseries; yet which could be, and ought to be, the most pregnant with blessings for each individual amongst these millions.

Yet despite this, it is the one department of politics concerning which there is the most colossal ignorance.

The result of this universal ignorance is that while progress has taken place, as education advanced, in other departments of public life, diplomacy still survives in the most disgracefully primitive condition of the darkest ages of ignorance.

As in early centuries men, through ignorance, did not question the power of the medicine-men or priests to discuss and control the destinies of their souls, and dictate according to their whims whether each man's eternity was to be spent in some heaven or hell, so the democracies still, through ignorance, submit to a similarly fraudulent claim upon the part of political medicine-men or priests to use their whims or class interests unquestioningly to decide whether their present existence shall consist of earthly embodiments of either this hell or heaven.

I am not arguing that the ignorance of the peoples of former times was their crime, any more than that the present ignorance of diplomacy or international relationships is the result of universal criminal propensities. It is a calamity, and when once recognised, its continuance is a disgrace.

I do not maintain that those who wielded authority

in the ancient religious despotisms were not convinced that they were acting rightly, any more than I question that our diplomatists may honestly believe that their monopoly is the proper arrangement.

But I do most emphatically claim that in both cases there is nothing whatever except ignorance to be offered either as explanation or excuse.

In both cases the peoples were too ignorant to be conscious of their own rights and to demand their mental freedom; and the ruling castes were too ignorant to recognise that their claims had no basis whatever except class prejudice exploiting the docile ignorance which submitted to them.

As it required the horrors of the holy inquisition, the atrocities of the massacres, the cruelties of martyrdom, the silly infatuation of the crusades, and the oppressions and robberies of the self-appointed divine regents upon earth, to stimulate the peoples to throw off their ignorant servility and rescue their souls and imaginations from slavery, so it has taken past wars, years of degrading oppressions and tortures in the worship of the false twin deity of Brute Force and Hatred, culminating in the present ghastly demonstration of the failure of both religion and civilisation, to arouse the peoples to the recognition of their political ignorance, and the equally ignorant class domination.

Those of us who have recognised the dangers of the present popular ignorance concerning diplomacy possess one advantage over those who led the revolt against the ignorance which was responsible for the calamities in the earlier instance. This advantage is that we have means by which we can appeal to the peoples, and help to dispel ignorance, which were not at the disposal of our prototypes.

This fact is the explanation of the present book.

I offer it as an explanation, but in no sense as an excuse.

Considering the appalling calamity now horrifying mankind with its barbarous atrocities, I consider that the highest duty I could attempt is to do what I can