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An Introduction to Volume 8 of *The New Age*

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Introduction

The six months spanning volume eight of *The New Age* were dominated by the ongoing constitutional crisis that had been roiling Britain for the past two years. Ever since the House of Lords had rejected the Liberal Party's 1909 "People's Budget," which had introduced steep new taxes on wealthy landowners, Liberals and Conservatives had been in profound disagreement as to how to define the powers of this chamber. Liberals regarded the Lords' veto of a finance bill as a dangerous new innovation, a blatant effort by this hereditary estate to establish for itself powers long thought superseded. Conservatives considered the act a necessary and heroic check against socialism and the possible future introduction of Irish Home Rule.

Even after an election fought on this issue returned the Liberals to power in January 1910, matters remained embittered and unresolved. Although the Lords finally passed the much despised "People's Budget," efforts by the Liberals to pass a Parliament Bill permanently limiting the power of the chamber met with stiff and angry resistance. Eventually, after King Edward died in May 1910, an effort was made to reach a compromise. Liberals and Conservatives convened a Constitutional Conference, a series of secret meetings aimed at resolving their differences. But exactly a week after the first issue of volume eight appeared--on November 10, 1910--this conference collapsed in acrimony, setting the tone for most of what would follow during the next six months.

For a brief period a quick resolution seemed imminent. A general election in late December, the second in less than a year, returned the Liberals to power and appeared to set the stage for final passage of a Parliament Bill. But party tensions continued to run high, and the first four months of 1911 were marked not by the passage of legislation but by continuing rancor and parliamentary debate. It would not be until May 15 that a Parliament Bill would be passed, and it would not be until August 10 that the House of Lords would reluctantly--under threat of a mass creation of Liberal peers--assent to it becoming law.

Other notable events of this period included the brief resumption in November 1910 of Suffragette protests and an outbreak of labor violence during the same month in South Wales, the latter a foretaste of the unprecedented labor disturbances of 1911-12. Diplomatically, the six months under review were relatively uneventful. British military tensions with Germany had cooled, as had public concern with naval rearmament, and would not heat up again until July 1, 1911, when the arrival of the German gunboat Panther in Agadir, Morocco threatened to trigger a general European war.

Events of the Period

International

- Germany's machine-tool industry overtakes that of Britain, providing further evidence of the comparative superiority of the German economy.
- Portugal continues its efforts to build a republic following the October 5, 1910 overthrow of its monarchy. [See 08:76, 08:219-20, 08:267, 08:318-9, 08:390-1.]
- The Mexican Revolution begins in November 1910. Violence escalates during the next five months. On January 25, 1911, United States cavalry are sent to preserve the neutrality of Rio Grande and guard US territory against Mexican insurgents. [See 08:76, 08:101, 08:603.]
- In Turkey, the new ruling committee of the Young Turks struggles with problems of foreign debt and internal reform. The Ottoman Empire continues to weaken, threatening the stability and balance of power in Europe. [See 08:4, 08:27, 08:53, 08:77, 08:102, 08:315, 08:415, 08:435, 08:603.]
- November 4-5, 1910--Tsar Nicholas II with his new foreign minister, Sergei Sazonov, agrees with German Kaiser Wilhelm II at Potsdam to cease opposition to the Baghdad Railway on the condition that Russia is given a free hand in North Persia. Britain is dismayed by Russia's negotiations with Germany on the railway
question, perceiving it as a potential weakening of the Triple Entente. [See 08:4, 08:76, 08:172, 08:221, 08:244, 08:267, 08:292, 08:315.]

- November 25, 1910—US steel magnate Andrew Carnegie founds the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, to conduct research into international law, economics, and history and advance international understanding.

- February 23, 1911—The French Chamber of Deputies votes to build two battleships, strengthening the naval power of the Triple Entente. [See 08:340.]

- February 27, 1911—Radical-socialist discontent following the French government's violent suppression of a major railway strike leads to the resignation of Aristide Briand's center-Left ministry in France. [See 08:435, 08:459.]

- March 25, 1911—A fire at the New York Shirtwaist Company kills 146 workers, most of them young immigrant women trapped by barred factory exit doors. A huge public outcry in the US subsequently results in stronger state fire and anti-sweatshop laws.

- April 13, 1911—The US House of Representatives votes in favor of the direct election of senators.

**Imperial**

- Continued record immigration of Britons to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The ascendancy of French Canadians in Canadian politics is threatened by the influx of British immigrants. [See 08:101, 08:233.]

- At the end of 1910, Lord Hardinge succeeds Lord Minto as viceroy of India. In the face of ongoing Bengali protests and terrorism at the 1905 partition of Bengal, he recommends reunification. This eventually takes place on December 12, 1911. Indian nationalism continues to gain adherents. [See 08:233, 08:280, 08:423, 08:510-11.]

- January 1, 1911—Roger Casement of the consular service is knighted for humanitarian work in the Congo and Brazil.

- February 22, 1911—Following several months of nationalist protests against providing British naval subsidies, Canada's Parliament resolves to preserve its union with the British Empire, albeit with control of its own fiscal policy. [See 08:101.]

- February 28, 1911—Australian Prime Minister Andrew Fisher announces plans to nationalize monopolies.

- During April and early May preparations begin for an Imperial Conference, scheduled to open in London on May 23, 1911.

**Domestic**

- In late 1910, labor activist Tom Mann begins publication of *Industrial Syndicalist*, a monthly magazine that rejects parliamentary methods and advocates "direct action." In November, he joins with Ben Tillett and Havelock Wilson to form the National Transport Worker's Federation, which unites 36 unions of seamen, dockers, and carters. Along with widespread working-class anger at a decline in real wages, these developments prepare the ground for the spread of syndicalist doctrine and an explosion of worker strikes over the next several years.

- November 7, 1910—Violence breaks out in Tonyandy and Rhondda during a two-month old Welsh coal strike. Tensions continue through the remainder of the month. National Miner Federation efforts to resolve matters are rebuffed, and the strike continues for another eight months. [See 08:51, 08:98-9, 08:362-3.]

- November 10, 1910—The Constitutional Conference breaks up. Differences over Irish Home Rule prove insurmountable. [For discussions of the conference, see 08:01-3, 08:25-6, 08:49-50, 08:73-5, 08:289-90.]

- November 18, 1910—"Black Friday." After Liberal Prime Minister Herbert Asquith lets it be known that a Conciliation Bill will not be passed before the next election, the W.S.P.U. (Women's Social and Political Union) briefly resumes its campaign of militant protest, breaking a truce with the government that had been in place since January. A large assembly of suffragettes march on Parliament. They are brutally repressed by police, and 120 women are arrested. [For discussions of women's suffrage, see 08:98, 08:105, 08:241-2, 08:245-6, 08:268, 08:317-8.]

- December 19, 1910—The December general election maintains the Liberals in power. The results are nearly the same as earlier in January. In the previous election the results had been: Liberals 275, Conservative-Unionists 273, Irish Nationalists 82, Labor 40. In the December election the results are: Liberals 271, Conservative-Unionists 273, Irish Nationalists 84, Labor 42. The Liberals continue to depend on Irish Nationalists and Labor to form a working majority. [See 08:75, 08:78-9, 08:145-7.]

- January 3, 1911—"The Siege of Sidney Street." At Stepney, two alleged Russian anarchists suspected of having committed political murder are besieged in the house where they live. In a moment of tragically comic political panic and overreaction, troops are deployed, shots are fired, and Home Secretary Winston Churchill arrives to take personal charge of matters. Both suspects eventually perish in a fire. [See 08:265, 08:296, 08:339.]

- February 6, 1911—Ramsay MacDonald becomes chairman of the Labor Party.

- February 21, 1911—Liberal Prime Minister Herbert Asquith introduces a new Parliament Bill in the House of Commons. Under its terms, similar to those of the previous session, finance bills would need approval only by the Commons, and any other bill rejected by the House of Lords would become law once it had been passed by the Commons in three sessions (effectively two years). [For discussion of the Parliament Bill, see 08:290-1, 08:386-7, 08:409-10, 08:433-6, 08:457-8, 08:506-7, 08:529-30, 08:553-4, 08:577-8, 08:601-2.]

- April 24, 1911—The House of Commons rejects a Conservative-sponsored amendment to the Parliament Bill providing for a referendum in the case of bills of exceptional gravity. [For discussions of the pros and cons of resorting to referendums, see 08:98, 08:121-3, 08:149-50, 08:241-2, 08:245-6, 08:268, 08:317-8.]

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Literature and the Arts

Internationally, the period under review was a time of great excitement and experiment in the arts.

- In April 1910, Umberto Boccioni, Giacomo Balla, Gino Severini, Luigi Russolo, and Carlo Carra publish *Technical Manifesto of the Futurist Painters*, and Italian Futurist painting flourishes.
- Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque continue their Cubist experiments in Paris. Marcel Duchamp completes *Nude Descending a Staircase* and *Sad Young Man in a Train*.
- Wassily Kandinsky finishes his *First Abstract Watercolor*, arguably the first fully nonobjective painting, and he and Franz Marc begin assembling a collection of essays titled *The Blue Rider*. This will become the manifesto of an experimentally minded group of artists in Munich who will exhibit together under that name from 1911-1914. The group will include Paul Klee, August Macke, Jean Arp, and Maurice de Vlaminck.
- Rainer Maria Rilke publishes *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* and begins work on his *Duino Elegies*.
- Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, featuring Vaslav Nijinski, continues to break new ground. Following the June 4, 1910 premier of *Schéhérazade* (music by Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov) and the June 24 premier of *The Firebird* (music by Igor Stravinsky), the company premieres *La Sphére de la Rose* (music by Carl Maria von Weber) on April 19, 1911. The June 21, 1911 opening of the Ballets Russes in Covent Garden lies just around the corner.
- Anna Pavlova founds her dance company and begins tours that will bring ballet to new audiences worldwide.
- On a more popular front, John Philip Sousa takes his band on a world tour.

Domestically, literature and the arts were generally less experimental.

- Edwardian writers George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, and Arnold Bennett, all of whom have been key contributors to *The New Age* since its founding, continue to produce significant work. Shaw publishes *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets* and a volume comprising *The Doctor's Dilemma*, *Getting Married*, and *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet*. He also premieres *Fanny's First Play* at the Little Theater. [See 08:259, 08:497-8, 08:516-8, Literary Supplement to "The New Age," April 6, 1911:01-2, 08:561-2, 08:616.] Bennett publishes *Clayhanger*. [See 08:160.] Wells publishes *The New Machiavelli*. [See 08:325, 08:353-5, 08:372, 08:373, 08:399-401, 08:566, 08:613.]
- British painting is dominated by the Neo-Impressionist work of *New Age* contributor Walter Sickert and the "Camden Town Group."
- The late Romantic Edward Elgar and English nationalist Ralph Vaughan Williams are Britain's most important composers. Two weeks after the completion of volume eight of *The New Age*, on May 11, 1911, Elgar conducts the first performance of his *Violin Concerto*.
- Norman Angell publishes *The Great Illusion*, a study of the economic futility of war. [See 08:303-4.]
- The London Palladium opens as a music hall on December 26, 1910. Music hall is far and away the most popular form of entertainment of this time.

But change was in the air.

- British exposure to continental experiments in the visual arts increases dramatically when Roger Fry introduces the art of Paul Cézanne, Paul Gaugain, Henri Matisse, and Pablo Picasso to London with his "Manet and the Post-Impressionists" exhibition at the Grafton Galleries from November 6, 1910-January 15, 1911. [See 08:89-90, 08:135-6, 08:140-2, 08:223-5, 08:404, 08:488-9.]
- E.M. Forster's *Howards' End*, published earlier in 1910, continues to garner widespread acclaim. [See 08:257.]
- New impulses in poetry begin to manifest themselves. William Butler Yeats's 1910 volume *The Green Helmet and other Poems* further develops the more concrete and direct style introduced by the poet in *In the Seven Woods* (1904). Ezra Pound, who by the end of 1911 will become a regular contributor to *The New Age*, begins to shed his Pre-Raphaelite influences with the publication of *Provença* (1910) and *Canzoni* (1911).
- Joseph Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* appears in serialized form in *The English Review*. The importance of his work to modern literature is increasingly recognized. [See 08:255-6.]
- Katherine Mansfield's first collection of short stories, *In a German Pension* (1911), is published to immediate praise only a few months after the completion of volume eight of *The New Age*. Most of its stories were first published in the magazine between February and August 1910.

The Journal Itself

The format and pricing of volume eight remained unchanged from volume seven. Each of the volume's 26 issues was 24 pages in length and cost three pence. In addition, as in previous volumes, several issues were followed by supplements. These ran 8-16 pages in length and were paginated separately from the rest of the magazine. There was one small mix-up in the identification of issue numbers. Issue number 23 was wrongly identified as issue 22 on the title page.

The organization of the magazine also remained largely the same. *The New Age* still opened with "Notes of the Week," an analysis by editor A.R. Orage of the major political events of the preceding week, followed by a diverse range of political, scientific, religious, and cultural contributions. As in previous volumes, the first half of each issue was primarily political in outlook and was anchored by Orage's "Notes" and the column "Foreign Affairs," written by J.M. Kennedy under the pseudonym "S. Verdad." Similarly, the second half of each issue was largely cultural and organized around Arnold Bennett's literary column "Books and Persons," which appeared under the pseudonym "Jacob Tonson." Art critic Huntly Carter and drama critic Ashley Dukes remained regular presences in the
magazine. However, music critic Herbert Hughes, long a mainstay of The New Age, ceased to be a contributor. The closing pages of the magazine were made up of correspondence and advertisements. Although these are not discussed below, they provide extraordinary insight into the reception and business dealings of the magazine.

In direction and outlook, volume eight of The New Age continued to be a dynamic site of anti-capitalist intellectual debate, albeit one that could no longer be identified with Fabian socialism or any other political ideology. Although it still published a wide range of articles written from a self-consciously socialist perspective, it increasingly made space for the contributions of critics of state socialism and parliamentary politics, including Hilaire Belloc, J.M. Kennedy, and Allen Upward. In the cultural realm, a wave of hostile commentary about George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells provides evidence of a similar skepticism about the literary old guard. Indeed, under A.R. Orage's editorship no political or artistic outlook was sacrosanct, and this fierce commitment to the free exchange of ideas is the identifying feature of The New Age at this time. The magazine was clearly breaking with its roots, but it had yet to formulate or fully embrace a new viewpoint.

In tone, volume eight was becoming somewhat more dour. While many contributors still displayed the kind of wit and humor that had defined earlier volumes, a certain severity of expression was beginning to come to the fore. See, for example, A.E. Randall's methodical skewerings of Shaw [08:516-8, Literary Supplement to The New Age, April 6, 1911:01-2, 08:561-2] and J.M Kennedy's rather intemperate attacks on the Fabian Society [08:557-8, 08:609].

**Principal Topics and Series**

**Political**

- The Party System--In keeping with the magazine's growing suspicion of parliamentary politics, Hilaire Belloc and Cecil Chesterton continue their influential criticisms of secret party funding, which they believe render the House of Commons an anti-democratic tool of the rich. See in particular Chesterton's "The Path to Democracy" and Belloc's "The Party System." See also two key references to the publication of The Party System, a book co-authored by both men and partly consisting of articles previously published in the magazine. In the first, Orage declares the volume "by far the most important political work of the present day" [08:339]. In the second, A.E. Randall gives the book a surprisingly positive review [08:365-6].
- Women's Suffrage and Feminism--Interest in these matters remains strong. See the fifteen-page "Symposium on Women's Suffrage" that appears as a supplement to the February 2, 1911 issue of the magazine. This is a treasure trove of information about leading intellectuals' attitudes about suffragism and militancy. Among the notable, albeit mostly male, participants are Hilaire Belloc, Arnold Bennett, Mona Caird, G.K. Chesterton, Havelock Ellis, Florence Farr, Ford Madox Hueffer, Max Nordau, Charlotte Stopes, and H.G. Wells. See also W.F.L. (Women's Freedom League) founder Teresa Billington-Greig's important three-part series "Emancipation in a Hurry." These articles proclaim Billington-Greig's break with "the militant suffrage movement" and contribute to the continued development of an anti-suffrage strain of feminism in The New Age. For other discussions of suffragism and feminism, see 08:41, 08:98, 08:105, 08:139-40, 08:173-4, 08:344, 08:368, 08:412-3, 08:439, 08:486, Literary Supplement to The New Age, April 8, 1911:12.
- Labor Organization--This topic is conspicuous by its absence. Although it remains a key concern for several contributors, especially Cecil Chesterton, it is rarely addressed directly in this volume. Even the South Wales miner's strike is referred to only a handful of times. This will change in future volumes when the rise of syndicalism and the growth of labor strikes bring labor concerns back to the forefront of discussion. [See 08:51, 08:98-9, 08:342, 08:362-3.]
- The British Empire--While not a primary focus of this volume, there are a number of contributions, both imperialist and anti-imperialist, that address events in Egypt, India, Canada, Nigeria, and the larger empire. Of probable greatest interest are writings by and about Egyptian nationalist Duse Mohammed. He provides several piercing criticisms of British imperial rule, and his newly published book In the Land of the Pharaohs is the subject of two respectful review essays [08:174, 08:366-7, 08:387-90, Literary Supplement to The New Age, March 16, 1911:2-3, 4]. See also 08:101, 08:210-11, 08:233, 08:423, 08:510-11.
- Turkey and the Ottoman Empire--Among the more interesting series appearing in this volume is Allen Upward's "Bankrupt Turkey." In this series, Upward mocks the widely held idea in Europe that Turkey is now a "constitutional" state protective of all races. "The motive of the [Young Turk] rising was not democratic, but imperialist and anti-imperialist, that address events in Egypt, India, Canada, Nigeria, and the larger empire. Of probable greatest interest are writings by and about Egyptian nationalist Duse Mohammed. He provides several piercing criticisms of British imperial rule, and his newly published book In the Land of the Pharaohs is the subject of two respectful review essays [08:174, 08:366-7, 08:387-90, Literary Supplement to The New Age, March 16, 1911:2-3, 4]. See also 08:101, 08:210-11, 08:233, 08:423, 08:510-11.
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**Scientific**

- Eugenics and Racial Development--These remain major topics of discussion, often of a quite negative cast. There are symposiums on "Crime and Insanity" [08:81-3] and "Racial Development" [08:175-6, 08:471-3], in which the topic of "racial degeneracy" is freely explored. There is also a respectful review of Havelock Ellis's Sex and Society, in which the social function of motherhood is dispassionately examined. But most individual discussions of these subjects are, as in recent volumes, oppositional and polemical. In "Eugenics and Evidence," A.E. Randall scorns the idea that there is any hard scientific evidence linking pauperism to
Cultural

- The Post-Impressionist Exhibition--This landmark event in British cultural history inspires considerable comment, most of it suggesting the necessity of reexamining artistic principles. In "The Post-Impressionists," George Calderon speaks of the exhibition's transformative effect on his perception of more conventional art. "Go forth and pass along the streets and note how flat, stale, and unprofitable have become all those engravings, pictures and statues in the art dealers' windows, that represent the bare photographic semblance of reality, with dramatic meanings laid on it, not drawn out of from it." [See 08:89-90.] In his column "Books and Persons," Arnold Bennett contemplates his own literary obsolescence. "[S]upposing some writer were to come along and do in words what these men have done in paint, I might conceivably be disgusted with nearly the whole of modern fiction, and I might have to begin again." [See 08:135-6.] In his art column, Huntly Carter regards the exhibition as a clarion call for greater "freedom" in the arts. "We must, will be ourselves. We will see with our own eyes, do with our own hands, think and talk in our own language." [See 08:140-2.] See also 08:223-5, 08:137-8, 08:161, 08:162, 08:200-1, 08:211, 08:229-31, 08:233-5, 08:297-9, 08:329, 08:377, 08:417, 08:422-3, 08:582-4, 08:606.

Religious

- In keeping with the longstanding interest of editor A.R. Orage in providing a spiritual countercurrent to modern materialism without falling back on a dogmatic understanding of Christianity, there are a number of broadly religious articles and reviews in this volume. See in particular M.B. Oxon's "Theology," where he seeks to achieve a "theological and cosmological" understanding of "matter and consciousness." See also 08:33-4, 08:137-8, 08:161, 08:162, 08:200-1, 08:211, 08:229-31, 08:233-5, 08:297-9, 08:329, 08:377, 08:417, 08:422-3, 08:582-4, 08:606.

Editorial

- A.R. Orage's "Unedited Opinions"--In addition to editing The New Age and writing "Notes of the Week," Orage contributes a series of brilliant critical dialogues on a vast range of topics. These include "On Progress" [08:84], "The Superman" [08:107], "Modern Novels" [08:204], "The Education of Public Opinion"
Other

- "A Statesman's Mind"--In response to what is perceived as H.G. Wells's false characterization of Niccolo Machiavelli in his novel *The New Machiavelli*, editor A.R. Orage publishes a series of short political aphorisms by the Italian Renaissance political philosopher. See also A.E. Randall's two-part article "The Two Machiavellis," in which the protagonist of Wells's novel is unfavorably compared to the Machiavelli of historical record [08:353-5, 08:399-401].
- "American Notes"--A series of anonymously penned articles detailing a British intellectual's impressions of New York City.
- "Don in Arcadia"--The further musings of G.F. Abbott's comic-satirical Oxbridge Don, together with his friends Chesterham and Shav. See the discussion of "The Philosophy of a Don" from the editorial introduction to volume seven for more particulars on this series.