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IMPORTANT PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT:  
THEIR RELEVANT ACTIVITIES DURING THE BALKAN WARS

Asquith, Rt.Hon.H.H.	Prime Minister
Benckendorff, Count	Russian Ambassador in London
Bethmann-Hollweg, Count	German Chancellor
Berchtold, Count	Austrian Chancellor
Bourchier, James D.	Balkan correspondent for <u>The Times</u>
Brailsford, H.N.	Author and Liberal journalist Leaderwriter for the <u>Nation</u>
Buxton, Noel, M.P.	(Liberal) North Norfolk Chairman of the Balkan Committee
Cambon, Paul	French Ambassador in London
Cecil, Lord Hugh, M.P.	(Unionist) Oxford University
Churchill, Rt.Hon.W.S.	First Lord of the Admiralty
Dillon, E.J.	Vienna correspondent for the <u>Daily Telegraph</u>
Durham, M.E.	Liberal journalist
Gardiner, A.G.	Liberal journalist Editor of the <u>Daily News</u> .
George, Rt.Hon.David Lloyd	Chancellor of the Exchequer
Guinness, Walter, M.P.	(Unionist) Bury St. Edmunds
Grey, RT.Hon.Sir Edward	Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
Haldane, Lord	Lord Chancellor

Harrison, Austin	Editor of the <u>English Review</u>
Hirst, F.W.	Editor of the <u>Economist</u>
Imperiali, Marquis	Italian Ambassador at London
Law, Andrew Bonar	Conservative Leader in the House of Commons
Lichnowsky, Prince	German Ambassador at London
MacNeill, J.G. Swift, M.P.	(Nationalist) Donegal, S.
Mason, David M., M.P.	(Liberal) Coventry
Massingham, H.W.	Liberal journalist Editor of the <u>Nation</u>
Morrell, Philip, M.P.	(Liberal) Burnley
Nevinson, H.W.	Liberal journalist On the staff of the <u>Nation</u>
Nicolson, Sir Arthur	Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
Ponsonby, Arthur, M.P.	(Liberal) Stirling Burghs
Prochaska, Oskar	Austrian consul in Prizrend
Scott, C.P.	Editor of the <u>Manchester Guardian</u>
Spender, Harold	Liberal journalist On the staff of the <u>Daily News</u>
Spender, J.A.	Editor of the <u>Westminster Gazette</u>

## INTRODUCTION

The period of the Balkan wars was the last major crisis which Great Britain and the European Powers passed through successfully before the outbreak of the First World War. In England, this crisis differed greatly from all previous crises faced by the pre-war Liberal Government in that upon its conclusion, the Cabinet, the Parliament, and the Press were united in their praise and defense of Britain's foreign policy. Since the Liberals had captured the reins of government by a sweeping majority in 1906, the German war-scare had gained considerable momentum. As J.A. Spender later wrote:

From 1906 till November, 1911, the prospects of war with Germany was always before us, and during the last part of this period we lived in constant dread of it. But from 1911 onwards things seemed to be gradually on the mend.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Edward Grey, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs during these years, had been severely criticised from all sides, especially from the radical elements of his own party, for not following the ideals of Liberalism in handling foreign affairs, and thereby directly increasing Anglo-German tensions. Yet by

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<sup>1</sup> J.A. Spender, Life, Journalism and Politics, pp. 4-5.



August 1913, Grey had won almost unlimited praise from all his previous critics for his personal qualities as a statesman and diplomat and for Great Britain's international status in general.

The purpose of this paper is to show how the British public was moved to renew its trust in Sir Edward Grey and led to believe that an Anglo-German conflagration was well-nigh an impossibility.

It may not be inappropriate at this point to examine just what public opinion is and how it is formulated. In order to hold any sound opinion, obviously, one must be well informed. Speeches by Cabinet Ministers and members of Parliament play an important part in formulating this opinion. Yet only through the Press can a large portion of the population become aware of these speeches and their importance to the policies and intentions of the Government. Therefore, the men who control the publications with the largest circulations hold positions of extraordinary influence. Without imputing dishonesty to the owners of newspapers or their employees, it must be remembered that the newspaper mind thinks generally in terms of circulations. In the first few decades of the twentieth century, the newspaper business

became highly competitive as many new oracles appeared. Many papers were forced to merge or change their format. Expensive armies of correspondents and photographers played a large part in not only presenting the news, but also controlling opinion by writing from a predetermined point of view. "The supplying of opinion...is poisoned at its source, if it is not, as invariably it claims to be, the honest belief of the writer or group of writers who supply it, unaffected by commercial bias."<sup>1</sup> Many confirmed Liberals owned, edited, or contributed to newspapers and journals, but they did so with firm conviction of mind and were not stimulated by monetary gain for their publication.

The newspapers and journals consulted for this paper represent a vivid cross section of opinion.<sup>2</sup> The major publications fall into four main classes. The more intellectual criticism of Grey can be found in the Manchester Guardian, which, under the editorship of Mr. C.P. Scott, produced many sound articles, the most penetrating by Mr. H. Sidebotham and Scott, himself. The

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<sup>1</sup>J.A. Spender, The Public Life, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> The following outline is included to summarize for the reader the general points of view taken by the consulted periodicals. The views of other eminent journalists and Members of Parliament will be treated as they are introduced in the text.

Guardian proposed that Great Britain should revert to an attitude of impartiality between the Powers, in fact, almost to the point of strict isolation.<sup>1</sup> The large middle group of critics were Mr. H.W. Massingham and Mr. H.N. Brailsford of the Nation, Mr. A.G. Gardiner of the Daily News and Leader, Mr. F.W. Hirst of The Economist and Mr. A. Harrison of the English Review. These publications, along with the Contemporary Review, the Edinburgh Review, the Fortnightly Review, and the Nineteenth Century and After, often contained outspoken articles by Grey's Liberal critics. It is in the fore-mentioned eight organs that one can most readily note the fluctuation in public opinion. Their contributors were equally partisan whether in favor of or against Government policy or statements.

The Times and the Spectator tried to hold to the middle of the road, but on occasion they would plunge into the raging storms and solidify their viewpoints. In a class by itself is the Westminster Gazette. Under Mr. J.A. Spender, it was Sir Edward Grey's only steady Liberal advocate. On many occasions, Spender did much to reconcile differences that divided the Liberals. He

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<sup>1</sup> R.C.K. Ensor, England 1870-1914, p. 572.

was in agreement with Grey's interpretation of the entente policy and in many European capitals the Westminster Gazette was regarded as "the organ of Sir Edward Grey." But there was no favoritism shown to the Gazette by Grey; Spender just happened to hold a view parallel to that of the Foreign Secretary.<sup>1</sup>

During the Balkan Wars, many principles of Liberalism were actively involved and English Radicals<sup>2</sup> did not hesitate to inform the Government and the public how these principles should be carried out. Often these pleas to the public bordered on what Mr. J.A. Spender, later, called playing on "the emotions of the herd."<sup>3</sup> A sense of crusading and moralizing became pronounced as certain journalists attached themselves to particular ideals. As the Press is the major link between the Government and the people, public opinion tends to become a reflection of the Press.

From the fall of 1912 to the fall of 1913, approximately the duration of the Balkan Wars, Sir Edward

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<sup>1</sup> G.M. Trevelyan, Grey of Fallodon, p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> Radical is used in this paper to denote those members of the Liberal Party most interested in advancing such traditional ideals of the party as the rights of nationality, reduction of armaments, and international co-operation.

<sup>3</sup> Spender, The Public Life, p. 110.

Grey's popularity skyrocketed. This was not caused by a change in Grey's action, but by a reorientation of the public mind toward the country's foreign policy. At the end of the Balkan crisis, many Liberals thought that they had succeeded in converting Grey to their views, weakening the system of alliances in Europe and replacing the balance of power by the Concert of Europe. It may be suggested that this view contains an element of misapprehension as Grey did not treat entente relations and Anglo-German relations separately. Grey tried to maintain both ideas and believed they could be harmonized, as he thought that peace could best be preserved through a balance of power.

The following pages trace the events and the public reaction which accompanied them, leading to a new vision of Sir Edward Grey, British foreign policy, and even the principles of Liberalism, by the people of Great Britain.

## BACKGROUND

Although the first stages in the development of the German navy did not cause great anxiety in Great Britain, by 1906 Englishmen noticed that Britain's naval supremacy, the key to the island's security, was being seriously challenged. As both Great Britain and Germany increased their naval budgets and brushed elbows in international incidents, the Liberal Press increased its campaign for a detente between the two Powers in the shipbuilding race. By the eve of the Balkan war, tension had risen to a point at which English "fire-eaters" feared a "fleet of Zeppelin airships in the clouds over England any morning" and preached that the German goal was "to plant the Prussian Eagle on the Bank of England."<sup>1</sup> Constant fear of Germany and her ambitions characterised almost the whole of Sir Edward Grey's term as Foreign Secretary and the Liberal party was often far from presenting a united solution to this problem.

In the tradition and creed of British Liberalism

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<sup>1</sup> Austin Harrison, "German Opportunity", English Review, July, 1912.

the dependence of the Government on opinion in and out of the House of Commons loomed large. The Liberals, as a party, had long been without a clear-cut program in foreign affairs.<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Secretary's position was, and had been for many years, difficult. Even in Prime Minister H.H. Asquith's Cabinet, Grey found sharp criticism from his fellow Liberals.<sup>2</sup> As he plodded through the gruelling Foreign Office daily routine, Grey constantly strove for an honourable peace, but realised that Great Britain could not revert to "splendid isolationism". Without entering any formal alliances, he hoped to maintain cordial relations with all European Powers, while, in time of crisis, backing the countries which would maintain the balance of power in Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Knapland, Speeches on Foreign Affairs by Sir Edward Grey, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> The Liberal party split over Boer War issues in 1899. In his book, Through Thirty Years, H.W. Steed states on page 392: "Mr. Lloyd George was credited with pro-German leanings, while his colleagues, Lord Morley, Mr. Charles Trevelyan and Mr. John Burns, were opposed to war on any consideration and were thus pro-German in effect. The Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, with Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Haldane, and a few others, were intelligently devoted to peace but were determined not to buy it as the price of national dishonor or insecurity." See also A History of the Liberal Party, p. 139, by Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Slessor and C.P. Scott 1846-1932, The Making of the Manchester Guardian, p. 41 by J.L. Hammond.

During the Agadir crisis of 1911, England stood by France. The Radicals deplored the fact that Great Britain should have obligated herself to offer diplomatic support in 1904 and the anti-Grey fever boiled as a war between Britain and Germany seemed imminent. When the crisis passed, new accusations of secrecy were hurled at the Foreign Office. With the fear of Anglo-German hostilities constantly before them, the public, and many Liberals, accused the Foreign Secretary of anti-German feelings. Grey's policy would have been less severely criticised had he been less secretive. The facts about Germany were not generally known, and Grey "regarded the whole subject as a departmental rather than a Cabinet matter."<sup>1</sup> A large portion of the Press considered the Foreign Office as "a veritable secret society."<sup>2</sup>

In August 1907, the Anglo-Russian Convention was signed, a convention which had the effect of combining the Franco-Russian Alliance and the Franco-British Entente into a triangle of closely knit co-operation. With this agreement, Persia was partitioned into British and Russian spheres of influence. The "isolationist" Liberals severely attacked Grey's actions; but, in 1911, when

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<sup>1</sup> J.L. Hammond, op.cit., p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Harold Spender, The Fire of Life. p. 154.



Persia was trying to construct a workable parliamentary government, Grey's pro-Russian and "anti-Persian" maneuvers were denounced as inappropriate to a British Liberal Government.<sup>1</sup> The Persian issue continued to irritate Liberals, who thought England "had given away all our effective holds on Persia,"<sup>2</sup> and only with the Balkan Wars did this criticism subside.

By the end of 1912, Grey's critics had a strong, though radical, platform.<sup>3</sup> During the past fifteen months, grave foreign complications had arisen in Morocco, Persia and the Balkans and the public felt that the Foreign Office had handled each of them poorly.

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<sup>1</sup> J.L. Hammond, op.cit., p. 48-51. C.P. Scott was Grey's most ferocious critic on the Persian issue, as he thought England had "betrayed Persia."

<sup>2</sup> Spectator, July 13, 1912.

<sup>3</sup> Before the House of Commons, on July 10, 1912, Mr. Noel Buxton stated the crux and scope of Liberal criticism: "The avowed aim [of British Diplomacy] is to follow criticism-public opinion. It is avowed by writers upon principles of diplomacy that it is the business of the Government to express in policy the trend of national aims. Certainly it is a sound doctrine that the Foreign Secretary is not entitled to pursue ideals. He is a trustee for views with which he may not agree....The whole of the Press of [the Liberal] party has displayed grave distrust with the methods...of the [foreign] policy being pursued. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, Fifth Series, Vol.40, Col.2010. To be cited hereafter as Parl. Deb.

More fuel for the anti-Grey bonfire was the fact that the Foreign Secretary laid fewer papers before Parliament, and that he spoke less often before the Parliament or to the Press, on the subject of foreign affairs, than any of his predecessors had done. Early in 1912, the Press campaigned for direct control over foreign policy by the House of Commons as it was generally held that Britain's "most vital transactions are managed behind closed doors by that secret committee called the Cabinet, which is supposed to be, but in a great many essential matters is not, responsible to the nation through the House of Commons."<sup>1</sup> Realizing that debating a government's foreign affairs would consume too much time in the House, and ignoring the fact that international policy should not always be made public, the Radicals entered upon a new program. From mid-1912, the Press campaigned for a Foreign Affairs Committee to be created, through which the autocracy of the Foreign Office might be destroyed. Such a committee, it was hoped, would have the following Radical objectives:

1. To oppose the extension of friendly understandings with foreign countries into working alliances...and thereby to vindicate for this

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<sup>1</sup> Sidney Low, "Foreign Office Autocracy", Fortnightly Review, January, 1912.

country a free hand in dealing with international questions in accordance with its own interests and sympathies.

2. To reassert the traditional sympathy of this country with the causes of national freedom and constitutional government abroad; and to advocate the free use of the resources of diplomacy in support of such cases.

3. To advocate practical measures of policy which may serve as a basis of friendly relations with Germany.

4. To advocate greater publicity of foreign affairs, and fuller Parliamentary control of the main lines of policy and of all important agreements concluded with our governments.<sup>1</sup>

English Non-conformist humanitarianism was closely associated with the Liberal party. Its special interest in the plight of peoples under Turkish misrule, radiating from Gladstone's sentiments of 1876 and 1896, were especially strong after 1878. In 1903, the Balkan Committee was organized by two Liberals, Mr. Noel Buxton and Mr. James Bryce, to further the cause of Macedonian reform.<sup>2</sup> Also active in this movement were the Liberal journalists Mr. H.W. Nevinston and Mr. H.N. Brailsford.<sup>3</sup> In the years before the Balkan Wars, the largest single element in the

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<sup>1</sup> "Our Foreign Policy and its Reform," Contemporary Review, April, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> T.P. Conwell-Evans, Foreign Policy from a Back Bench 1904-1918, pp. 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> Mosa Anderson, Noel Buxton, pp. 34-35. Both Buxton and Nevinston travelled extensively through Macedonia, making investigations on behalf of the Balkan Committee.

Liberal majority of Parliament was the Non-conformist bloc, which sometimes numbered as strong as two hundred.<sup>1</sup> Although it was influential in politics from 1903 to 1907, the Balkan Committee found the Foreign Office more difficult to move under Sir Edward Grey's regime. Grey believed that the Balkan question was inseparable from the Turkish question, which, if tinkered with, might once again lead to a European war.<sup>2</sup>

For years, Britain had defended the integrity of the Sultan's domain out of necessity, as the weak Eastern Theocracy controlled the shortest land and sea routes to England's Middle Eastern possessions and was the religious fatherland of both Egypt and India. But with each change of government in Turkey, abortive reforms failed to bring an end to the massacres and atrocities perpetrated upon the Christian population of the heterogeneous empire. The Liberals began to lose hope in the high sounding proposals

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<sup>1</sup> S. Maccoby, English Radicalism, 1886-1914, p. 495. The Conservatives in the House of Commons usually agreed with the Liberal Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary on the fundamental precepts of foreign policy. On July 25, 1912, the Conservative Leader in the House of Commons stated that "the keynote to the best possible foreign policy is the..steady and persistent friendship with the other two Powers who are united with us in the Triple Entente....This grouping of the Powers on the whole tends towards peace." Parl. Deb., Vol. 41, col. 1398.

<sup>2</sup> Conwell-Evans, op.cit., p. 10.

for reform promised by the Porte. The Liberal journalist and Vienna correspondent of the Daily Telegraph, Dr. E.J. Dillon, spoke for all the Radicals when he said:

When comparing the Young with the Old Turk, one is tempted to characterize them in the words of their national saying: 'Whether it is a black dog or a white dog, it is always a dog.'<sup>1</sup>

On September 29, 1911, Italy threw her army upon the Turks in Tripoli. At the time Turkey was ruled by the Committee of Union and Progress, which had alienated the liberal Powers by reverting to policies of Ottomanization and massacre, and England was interested only as long as the battles were colorful, that is, for about one week.<sup>2</sup> As the war dragged on, Russia offered Turkey a guarantee for a Turkish Constantinople in return for freedom of the Straits for the Tsar's fleet.<sup>3</sup> Alarmed by this offer from the "protector of the Slav peoples", the Turks approached London on October 31 with a proposal for an Anglo-Turkish Alliance. Not wishing to offend Russia, Sir Edward Grey was obliged to return an evasive reply to the Porte's overtures.

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<sup>1</sup> E.J. Dillon, "The Breakdown of Turkey", English Review, February, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> Nineteenth Century, October, 1913.

<sup>3</sup> Harold Nicolson, Lord Carnock, p. 360.

His Majesty's Government has declared and observed an attitude of strict neutrality in the state of war [in Tripoli]....This attitude is one from which the His Majesty's Government cannot depart during the existence of hostilities, and they are therefore precluded from entering on any negotiations which the Imperial Ottoman Government may wish to initiate for the purpose of investing with a formal and binding character and of extending to a wider scope the friendly relations happily existing between the Ottoman Empire and this country.<sup>1</sup>

Under the impact of the Tripolitan war, the Young Turk regime began to totter. While the Turkish army was deployed in North Africa, a series of military mutinies and ill-organized revolts occurred in the Ottoman Empire, culminating in a strong rebellion of Moslem Albanians in June, 1912. The Young Turks resigned within a month and another new government was installed in Constantinople. British public opinion wholly supported the Albanians and, from this time, the Balkan Committee refused to encourage any pro-Turkish causes.<sup>2</sup> The apparent collapse of Turkey encouraged the Balkan States to take action and the first Balkan war was imminent.

The Balkan States of Servia, Bulgaria, Greece and

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<sup>1</sup> British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914, edited by G.P. Gooch and Harold Temperley, Vol. IX, pt. 1, p. 780. To be cited hereafter as B.D.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, op.cit., p. 54.

Montenegro hurriedly united by means of a series of secret treaties, into a Balkan League during the early months of 1912.<sup>1</sup> Although they had been ardent rivals, the league was the product of their fear that the Moslem Albanians would receive control of further Macedonian territory, and in the hope that together they might oust the Turks from Europe at some future date. The architect of the League was Mr. James D. Bouchier, the Balkan correspondent of The Times and a charter member of the Balkan Committee.<sup>2</sup> The secrecy of these treaties was aided and kept by another English journalist, Mr. H.W. Steed, who carried pre-treaty communications between the Balkan capitals.<sup>3</sup> On September 30, 1912, the Bulgarian and Servian armies began to mobilise and gravitate toward their southern frontiers. With the Balkan States on a war footing, peace was "at the mercy of any untoward accident."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The texts of these treaties are reprinted in I.E. Gueshoff's The Balkan League, pp. 112-133.

<sup>2</sup> H.W. Nevinston, Fire of Life, p. 282.

<sup>3</sup> Steed, op.cit., p. 360.

<sup>4</sup> The Times, October 2.

## CHAPTER I

### THE DISTANT WAR

Without waiting for his Allies, King Nicolas of Montenegro declared war on Turkey and ceremoniously fired the first shot on his birthday, October 8, 1912.<sup>1</sup> The initial shock of the isolated declaration by the smallest Balkan State puzzled British journalists. The Economist termed it "an unwelcome surprise to Europe, which had expected the Balkan League to act collectively or not at all."<sup>2</sup> Other major newspapers echoed this surprise and hoped that the war would be isolated or stopped before the other Balkan States took action.<sup>3</sup> Within the next few days tension mounted as Greece, Bulgaria and Servia made no statement concerning the action of their fellow ally. In an editorial, The Times summar-

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Riddell, More Pages from my Diary, 1908-1914, p. 94. It later became apparent that King Nicolas' action was prompted by his desire to make money on the stock market in Vienna. Steed, op.cit., p. 361.

<sup>2</sup> Economist, October 12.

<sup>3</sup> The Times, October 9; Daily News, October 9; Westminster Gazette, October 9; Manchester Guardian, October 9, 10.



ized the air of tension which existed when it said that "the lull in the diplomatic negotiations [between the Balkan Allies] seems to us to resemble the stillness before a whirlwind, rather than the calm which follows stormy weather."<sup>1</sup>

As the public eagerly awaited news of the beginning of the war, the British Foreign Office was diligently working for a peaceful solution. Unlike certain members of the Balkan Committee, Sir Edward Grey in no way encouraged the formation of the Balkan League. On the other hand, he had attempted to avert the need for such an alliance by urging Macedonian reforms and he had consistently worked to keep Austria and Russia in agreement on Balkan affairs.<sup>2</sup> But he considered that his efforts at pacifying Vienna and St. Petersburg would in no way endanger his policy of "maintaining the present grouping of the European Powers".<sup>3</sup> He had no desire to hide his movements from the House of Commons and, when describing the state of Balkan affairs, he emphasized that the peace would be kept so long as agreement could be maintained

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<sup>1</sup> The Times, October 11.

<sup>2</sup> Trevelyan, op.cit., p. 232.

<sup>3</sup> B.D., Vol. IX, pt. 2, p. 527.

between the Great Powers.<sup>1</sup>

Cognizant of the dangers of a Balkan war, the Great Powers agreed, by October 7, to send a joint statement to the Balkan States and Turkey. This note was signed and delivered by Russia and Austria-Hungary, on October 8, to the Balkan States and is reproduced in the Appendix. On October 10, a considerably different note was submitted to Constantinople bearing the signatures of the ambassadors of Austria-Hungary, Great Britain, France, Russia, and Germany. This note is also reproduced in the Appendix of this paper. These notes represented a last minute effort to stem the rising tide of nationalistic militarism in the Balkans, and their influence was not expected by many of the Powers to be sufficient to prevent a Near Eastern war.<sup>2</sup> Clearly, time was running out and the Powers were in the position of either doing nothing or submitting declarations that were not completely to their liking.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The last time, prior to the delivery of the Powers' status quo note, that Grey discussed Balkan affairs before the House was on March 25, 1912, at which time he informed them of the Foreign Office's knowledge of military conventions and economic treaties reported to exist between the Balkan States. See Parl. Deb., Vol. 50, pp.1496-1503.

<sup>2</sup> E.C. Helmreich, The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913, pp. 122-132.

<sup>3</sup> Nicolson, op.cit., p. 381. On October 9, Sir Arthur Nicolson, the British Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, wrote that the outbreak of hostilities "is not a chapter in European diplomacy which will be very satisfactory to look back upon."

The note submitted to the Balkan countries stated in part that the Powers would "tolerate at the end of the conflict no modification of the present status quo in European Turkey" while the note presented to Turkey was concerned solely with reforms in European Turkey. That these two notes were confused in the mind of the Press, and that, in fact, the Press considered that the notes sent to the opposing sides were essentially the same, seems clear from the reception accorded the news of the notes by the Press.

In general, the Press viewed the joint declarations by the Powers as "too little, too late", but took some comfort in the thought that it afforded an opportunity for England and Germany to work together.<sup>1</sup> The Daily News deplored the news that the note was sent to the Balkan States two days earlier than it was sent to Turkey. It argued that this action carried with it the implication that the Balkan League was the culprit, rather than the Turks who had "disgraced Europe for a century" by their "system of misrule".<sup>2</sup> The preceeding day, the Daily News had challenged Grey by saying that if Great Britain adhered

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<sup>1</sup> For a fuller consideration of this view, see Chapter III below.

<sup>2</sup> Daily News, October 9.

to any plan that would "merely bully the smaller states into silence it would meet with uncompromising hostility both in Parliament and the country."<sup>1</sup> The Economist thought that Grey had acted secretly, as he did not consult Parliament, and criticised him further for adding to the "distinct balance of mischief" that dominated European diplomacy.<sup>2</sup> The only major newspaper that found the Foreign Secretary's action justifiable was the Westminster Gazette, which held that "the capital aim of our diplomacy [must be] to keep Austria and Russia together on the agreed lines which fortunately thus far have been laid down."<sup>3</sup>

Hearing of the Powers' status quo proclamation, the Balkan Committee opened a new campaign, on October 10, aimed at guaranteeing that no statement on the Balkan crisis should be made permanently effective unless it provided autonomous government for the European provinces of Turkey.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Daily News, October 8.

<sup>2</sup> Economist, October 12. The Manchester Guardian and Spectator on October 12 also believed that the status quo could not be maintained, as the Turk should be removed from Europe.

<sup>3</sup> Westminster Gazette, October 8.

<sup>4</sup> The Times, October 11.

The Committee said it would do its utmost "to rally opinion in support of a policy which it believes to be more in accord with public opinion in this country."<sup>1</sup> Again, in answering critics of Grey, only the Westminster Gazette spoke out. J.A. Spender did not deny that public opinion found British policy distasteful, but he argued that when dealing with nationality questions, England must remember that many of her subjects were Mohammedans.

Our Government would...be in a perplexed condition if...it had to espouse the Moslem cause against Russia and Persia, and the anti-Moslem cause against Turkey and Austria in South-East Europe. In both cases alike we have to remember that we are a great Moslem Power, but that, we hope, will not be incompatible with the use of our influence both to prevent disensions among the Powers and to procure a real settlement of the Balkan questions.<sup>2</sup>

Hopes of restraining the armies of Bulgaria, Greece, and Servia faded as a series of communications between the Balkan States and Turkey proved fruitless. On October 17, the Balkan Committee and the Daily News united in forming and promoting the "Daily News and Leader Fund". Believing that Bulgaria was on the brink of war, editor A.J. Gardiner announced that the Fund had been formed under the chairmanship of Mr. Noel Buxton and that its humane

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<sup>1</sup> Westminster Gazette, October 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

objective was to distribute donations to the struggling Bulgarians through the International Red Cross.<sup>1</sup>

On October 17, the Balkan States of Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece declared war on Turkey and the first Balkan war - a war which Europe had worked to avert since 1878<sup>2</sup> - was a reality. The Balkan States had heard "ultimatum" language from the Powers many times. With the initiative in their hands and counting on a lack of unity among the Powers, the opportunity given to them by the Italo-Turkish war was too good to miss. The Economist, the Daily News, and the Nation all considered the war "inevitable" and believed that it would be of a short duration as winter was coming and the resources of the Balkan States were limited.<sup>3</sup> The Manchester Guardian, The Times, the Westminster Gazette, and the Spectator regarded the declaration of war in a less optimistic light. They felt that a period of grave international strife was arriving and that the British Foreign Office should treat all arising situations with the utmost of care, in order that England might not

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<sup>1</sup> Daily News, October 17. This was the first and the largest of eleven pro-Balkan relief funds founded during the Balkan wars. The second largest fund was the Turko-Balkan Fund organized by the Lord Mayor's Mansion House Committee.

<sup>2</sup> E.J. Dillen, "Sixteen of October: War and Peace", Contemporary Review, November, 1912.

<sup>3</sup> Economist, October 26; Daily News, October 16; Nation, October 21.

fall into a quarrel with any European Power.<sup>1</sup>

On October 18, Turkey and Italy signed the Treaty of Lausanne, ending their war and allowing the Ottoman Government the opportunity to draw its armies into the Balkan peninsula. The British Press believed that the Balkans could not possibly withstand the brunt of the vaunted German-trained Turkish Army. But this did not prevent the Liberal Press from lending their moral support to the cause of the Balkan Allies. The following four weeks were the most surprising of the war for both the Balkan Armies and the British public. All Europe watched in astonishment as the armies of the Balkan Alliance demolished the Ottoman Empire in Europe. The armies of the Alliance won six major battles as they swept over the enemy, leaving the Turks only a few defensive pockets in Europe.<sup>2</sup>

The speed of the Allied victories was matched in England by the growing note of hopeful expectancy which now pervaded public opinion. This was in marked contrast to the expressions of pessimism heard in England at the

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<sup>1</sup> Manchester Guardian, October 19; The Times, October 18; Spectator, October 18; Westminster Gazette, October 18.

<sup>2</sup> The Greeks were victorious at Sarandaporon (Oct.23); Servians at Kumanovo (Oct.24); Bulgarians at Kirk Kilisse (Oct.24), and at Lule Burgas (Nov.3); Greeks at Jenidje-Vardar (Nov.3), and at Salonica (Nov.8).

opening of hostilities.

The troop movements of Greece, Servia and Montenegro were followed closely by the English reading public during the remaining weeks of October. The Liberal Press was in its glory, reporting the advances of their Balkan favourites, but the fear that the Turks would eventually win was not easily dissipated.<sup>1</sup> The Bulgarian movements were kept relatively secret as no foreign correspondents were allowed to travel with the Bulgarian army.<sup>2</sup> This secrecy of movement made the Bulgarian victories all the more surprising and, as reports of these successes reached England, the Liberal Press was unstinted in its praise to that country, especially in the Daily News, Nation and Economist.<sup>3</sup> The most startling change in public opinion was reflected in The Times and the Spectator. Both held a middle of the road position when the war broke out, declaring that a substantial case could be worked out for both the Turks and

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<sup>1</sup> In the November issues of Contemporary Review, Fortnightly Review and English Review, all articles concerned with the Balkan war still foresaw a Turkish victory although the authors wrote with marked pro-Balkan sentiments.

<sup>2</sup> H.W. Nevins, op.cit., p. 283.

<sup>3</sup> Daily News, Oct. 26, 29, Nov. 4, 5; Nation, Oct. 26, Nov. 2; Economist, Oct. 26, Nov. 2, 9.



the Balkan peoples. By October 26, the Spectator could bring itself to say:

For them [the Turks] there is but one safe course, the return to Asia....After all he need be no real enemy of the Turk who wishes him well out of Europe. The Turk is essentially an Asiatic, and never has been and never will be Europeanized. If the Turkish Empire once more becomes an Asiatic Power it may have a future. It can have none in Europe, even if in the course of the next month it gains a momentary triumph or a temporary respite. For the Turks a triumph must indeed be as fatal as a disaster. All ways for Turkey in Europe lead to the inevitable end.<sup>1</sup>

Before the first battle, The Times had paraded the Turk's 'noble qualities' and spoke of him as a "our old ally...such a gentleman, such a fighting man."<sup>2</sup> On October 19, two days after war was declared, The Times rebuked King Ferdinand of Bulgaria for maintaining in his manifesto that the war was "a struggle of the Cross against the Crescent, of liberty against tyranny," and for asserting that the Allies "would have the sympathy of all who loved justice and progress."<sup>3</sup> But, following the news of the Balkan League's rapid advance and the Bulgarian victory at Kirk Kilisse, The Times reported:

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<sup>1</sup> Spectator, October 26.

<sup>2</sup> quoted in H.W. Nevinson, "Causes of Victory and the Spoils", Contemporary Review, January 1913.

<sup>3</sup> The Times, October 19.

Everywhere the Turkish armies have suffered reverses, everywhere their possible fate grows darker. The legions of the Balkan League are carrying victory on their banners.<sup>1</sup>

Only two weeks after The Times rebuked King Ferdinand, Sir Edward Grey announced in the House of Commons that the Powers would not be slower than other people to adjust their views to the march of events,<sup>2</sup> and, the same day, The Times spoke of the "universal agreement in this country"<sup>3</sup> that the Allies should enjoy the fruits of victory. By November 8, The Times was loudly applauding the Bulgarians' spirit.<sup>4</sup>

By the end of October, the greater portion of the British Press was asking the Government to resurrect the Concert of Europe and to impose a peace in the Balkans.<sup>5</sup> They emphasized that, since both Great Britain and Germany had no direct interests to defend in the war, they could relieve European tension if they would work together, revoke the status quo verdict of October 8 and end the

<sup>1</sup> The Times, October 25.

<sup>2</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 43, col.1000.

<sup>3</sup> The Times, November 5.

<sup>4</sup> The Times, November 8.

<sup>5</sup> Daily News, October 18, 30, Nov. 1; Economist, Oct. 19, 26, Nov. 2; Nation, Nov. 2; Manchester Guardian, Oct. 30, Nov. 6; Spectator, Oct. 26.

vexing Near Eastern question by recognizing the League's claim to Macedonian territory before the Turk could reassemble her armies for a counter-offensive.

With British opinion almost wholly on the side of the Christian Allies, the Prime Minister declared at the Guildhall on November 9 that the Powers would recognize accomplished facts and would not oppose territorial changes resulting from the victory of the Allies.<sup>1</sup> At the Guildhall, Asquith was greeted with loud cheers when he announced

things would never again be as they were before in Turkey....,that the map of Eastern Europe has to be recast, and I believe the general feeling of Europe to be unanimous that the victors are not to be robbed of the fruits that have cost them so dear.<sup>2</sup>

The British Press found itself in complete agreement with the Prime Minister's speech. The Daily News and the Nation praised Asquith and hoped that the Balkan States would receive their just claims, including an Adriatic port for Servia.<sup>3</sup> The Manchester Guardian thought Asquith's idea "good, if not carried too far".<sup>4</sup> It logically deduced that trouble could arise if the Bulgarians cap-

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<sup>1</sup> T.P. Conwell-Evans, op.cit., p.32.

<sup>2</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 56, col.2311.

<sup>3</sup> Daily News, Nov.11; Nation, Nov. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Manchester Guardian, Nov. 11.

tured Constantinople and claimed it as one of the "fruits of the victor." The Guardian also took this occasion to rebuke the Conservative paper, the Observer, for interpreting the Guildhall speech to mean that the Triple Entente had won a victory over the Triple Alliance. The Guardian said that England [and the Liberal party] would be "in a sorry plight" if the Observer's interpretation were accepted as accurate by the general public.

The Westminster Gazette termed the Prime Minister's remarks "an admirable speech." The pro-Grey organ thought the most important part of the speech was the section in which Asquith dealt with Great Britain's relationship to the European powers in these words:

The Great Powers of Europe, while each maintaining its special alliances and friendships unimpaired, are working together with the closest of touch and a frankness of freedom of communication and discussion which may seem almost unintelligible to those who believe that, because for certain purposes the Powers are ranged in different groups, they must...in times of crisis be arrayed in opposite camps.<sup>1</sup>

The Gazette hoped that this statement by the head of the Liberal Government would put an end to the "collective insanity which some [Liberal] alarmists present to us."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Westminster Gazette, November 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

The Times rejoiced "that Mr. Asquith has so explicitly affirmed the unanimous opinion of Europe that 'the victors are not to be robbed of the fruits which cost them so dear.' We welcome his assurance that the Powers are working together with the closeness of touch and frankness and freedom of communication and discussion."<sup>1</sup> On the whole, the Press felt that the Government had acted justly in revoking the status quo policy for the Near East, and the Liberals were reassured when Sir Edward Grey stated in the House of Commons on the following day that he was in full agreement with Asquith's statements.<sup>2</sup>

On November 19, only ten days after the Prime Minister's speech at Guildhall, Bulgaria accepted a Turkish proposal for an armistice. During this short period the Press continued to praise the victories of the Allies, and hoped that the Powers would attempt a mediation, as it believed that prolonging the war would not benefit any of the belligerents.<sup>3</sup> The pro-Balkan journalists were not disturbed by the fact that the Bulgarians were repulsed at the Chatalja lines, twelve miles north of Constantinople.

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<sup>1</sup> The Times, November 11.

<sup>2</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 43, col. 1782.

<sup>3</sup> Daily News, Nov. 26; Economist, Nov. 16, 23; Nation, Nov. 16; The Times, Nov. 19; Manchester Guardian, Nov. 21.

As the Daily News commented, the Bulgarians were certainly "wise to wait till the rotten fruit drops."<sup>1</sup> And, when the armistice proposal was announced, the Spectator, which usually followed a middle road in the Turco-Balkan crisis, stated that the Turks should not be allowed any toe-hold in the Balkans - not even Constantinople.<sup>2</sup>

In viewing the apparent change in the Foreign Office and even in the attitude of The Times, it would appear that the public opinion on the Balkan crisis had a direct hand in it. Although this view is still held in some quarters today, a closer study of public opinion on these matters suggests the fallacy of this opinion. Unquestionably, British opinion did change - and this swing to a pro-Balkan viewpoint was so complete that "some people even turned pro-Turk, assuming, perhaps too impatiently, that the majority must necessarily be wrong."<sup>3</sup> But it must be kept in mind that during this period the British people

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<sup>1</sup> Daily News, November 15.

<sup>2</sup> Spectator, November 23. Another indication of the public's interest in the Balkan cause is shown by the popularity of H.N. Brailsford's Macedonia, Its Races and their Future (first published in 1906) and Noel Buxton's Europe and the Turks (published in November, 1912). Economist, November 23.

<sup>3</sup> H.W. Nevinson, "Causes of Victory and the Spoils," Contemporary Review, January, 1913.

were carried away with the ideals of Liberalism; viewing the cause of the Balkan States supreme, they inflated the significance of the deeds of the League out of all proportion and reduced the Turk to an unrealistic caricature, seeing him as the unspeakable infidel who "oppressed the Sunday-school Christian with the arsenal of weapons at his girdle."<sup>1</sup> The Englishman in the street considered the fighting in the Balkans as unreal, or at best only an exciting game to be watched but not to be entered into. The principles of Liberalism were easy to advocate as long as England would not become involved. Imbued with idealism, it was easy for the public and the Press to claim that the British Government had reversed its status quo declaration because of the pressures of public opinion, and thereby herald that the Foreign Office, previously accused of secrecy, had truly become the direct voice of the people.

But this view, while on the surface, complimentary to Grey, was actually less than completely fair to him. Underlying the apparent change in attitude of the Foreign Secretary between the time of the Power's note to the Balkan States (Oct. 8) and Asquith's Guildhall speech (Nov. 9)

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<sup>1</sup> W. Peacock, "Nicolas of Montenegro and the Czardom of the Serbs", Nineteenth Century, November, 1912.

were certain generally held beliefs and attitudes that, far from supporting the public's belief that a policy change had occurred, actually demonstrate the fundamental consistency of the Foreign Office in this instance. It must first be stated that the issuance of the status quo note, coming when it did, was obviously a last minute attempt to stave off the impending war. May we not assume that, in similar circumstances, other governments saddled with the onerous task of averting war have issued statements which were recognized as eleventh hour efforts to preserve peace and not necessarily accurate reflections of the country's long range policies.

That the declaration for the status quo was as much a guarantee as a threat to the Balkan governments was generally acknowledged by the Foreign Ministers of the Powers for it stated, in effect, that if Turkey won, the Balkan states would lose no territory, while on the other hand, "everyone was aware of the unwritten principle that Christian land once freed from Turkey should not be returned to Ottoman domination."<sup>1</sup>

It should also be recalled that, while England was a signatory of the "reform" note sent to Turkey, she lent her moral support but not her signature to the "status quo"

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<sup>1</sup> Helmreich, op.cit., p. 131.



note sent to the Balkans. Since all of this information was not generally available at that time, it is not too surprising to read the glowing praise accorded the government's "revision" of policy.

More important, Germany and England were agreed in principle and therefore worked together on this occasion to further the cause of peace in the chambers of European diplomacy. From October 25, Germany and France acted with England to guarantee peace among the European Powers.<sup>1</sup> In praising the "revision" of British policy, the Press neglected to emphasize a most important part of Asquith's Guildhall speech - a part which made quite clear the fact that all the information necessary for a final judgment was not yet generally known - in which he said that: "In due course the British view will be made known, but there is no eagerness [on the part of the British Government] to go crusading."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> B.D., Vol. IX, pt. 2, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> The Times, November 11.

## CHAPTER II

### SIR EDWARD GREY'S CONFERENCE

Within a month of the outbreak of hostilities, Turkey had lost all her possessions in Europe except the fortified town of Chataldja. It was no longer meaningful for Austria to oppose or for Russia to promote the cause of "the Balkans for the Balkan peoples," as the problem had largely been settled. Only in England was the victory of the Allies completely popular.<sup>1</sup> At the outset, Austria welcomed the prospect of a Balkan war as she expected, no matter how successful the Bulgarian army might be, that the Turks would smash Greece and Servia. Austria hoped for Servian defeats, as Servia had on numerous occasions agitated the dangerous nationistic feelings of the South Slavs within the heterogeneous Austro-Hungarian Empire. As the Balkan League won battle after battle, Austria became worried. The Servians, in

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<sup>1</sup> J.A. Spender, Fifty Years of Europe, p. 350.

their victorious advance, had joined hands with Montenegro across the Sandjak of Novibazar, thereby allowing the three northern Balkan States of Montenegro, Servia and Bulgaria to form a continuous battle front against the Turks from the Adriatic to the Black Sea. When this major feat had been accomplished, the Austrian Government, deeply concerned by the direction the war was taking, decided to turn the Servians out of Sandjak. On November 26, Austrian reservists were called up and massed at their southern border. The Austrian representatives abroad were furnished with instructions to prepare for war, and Conrad von Hoetzendorff, leading member of the Austrian War Party, was re-appointed Chief of the General Staff.<sup>1</sup>

Servia had long nourished the desire of obtaining a port on the Adriatic, a development which could be accomplished only if territory of the Turkish Province of Albania were to be ceded to the Servs. In their concern, Austrian diplomats had recourse to the "Prochaska Incident," a fabrication that was exposed for the fraud it was within the month.<sup>2</sup> Since the Servs did not allow Mr. Prochaska, the Austrian Consul at Prisrend in Albania, to communicate with Vienna, the officials of the Austrian Foreign Office

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<sup>1</sup> Nicolson, op.cit., p. 382.

<sup>2</sup> Steed, op.cit., p. 363.

invented reports that their Consul had been tortured and even mutilated by the Servians.<sup>1</sup> In both points of issue between Austria and Servia, that of the Adriatic coast and that of the Austrian Consuls, the sympathy of Germany remained "strong upon the Austrian side."<sup>2</sup> Although the British Press reported these events, hardly a person in England seemed to have any notion that the consequences of an Austro-Servian conflict might be grave enough to involve all the Great Powers. H.W.Steed, in his memoirs, records that at this time the average Englishman felt that a war between the Powers over Servian demands was impossible and therefore the "people in England were living in a fool's paradise."<sup>3</sup>

The Nation and the Economist favoured an autonomous and neutralised Albania, because the principles of Liberalism "demanded" it, and also desired to forward the commercial needs and interests of Austria and Italy.<sup>4</sup> The Times also took a dim view of Servian tactics.

Servia is quickly blurring the splendour of her successes by her foolish and provocative attitude towards Austria-Hungary. All Europe

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<sup>1</sup> Helmreich, op.cit., pp.213-216.

<sup>2</sup> Economist, November 23.

<sup>3</sup> Steed, op.cit., p. 365.

<sup>4</sup> Nation, November 16; Economist, November 9.

was ready to acclaim the remarkable revival of the ancient Servian kingdom, and to give reasonable assistance in its new establishment upon a larger and more enduring basis; but nothing...can justify the refusal of the Servian Government to allow Austria-Hungary to communicate with her Consular representative at Prisrend.<sup>1</sup>

The Daily News thought that the whole matter could and should be settled by Austria and Servia, as the Balkan victories had made a new block of Powers in Europe. "Public opinion would be against Austria" if she desired to keep Servia in "economic subjection," as "Servia must have a port somewhere, and prima facie she has a right to a port on the Adriatic."<sup>2</sup> Even the Westminster Gazette treated the question lightly, believing that it would be "ridiculous" to think that Austria, Servia, or Russia would go to war over this issue, and risk dragging in the other countries of the Entente and the Alliance.<sup>3</sup>

On December 3, the fighting was practically terminated when Turkey, Montenegro, Servia and Bulgaria signed an armistice at Chataldja which included "a recognition by Turkey of accomplished facts."<sup>4</sup> This meant that the

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<sup>1</sup> The Times, November 20,

<sup>2</sup> Daily News, November 11.

<sup>3</sup> Westminster Gazette, November 11. The Spectator, November 9 and 16, also believed that none of the parties would force matters to the point of war, as the other Powers would not back them up.

<sup>4</sup> Spectator, December 7.

the Turkish Empire in Europe had ceased to exist, except for a fragment of territory in Thrace. The fact that Greece refused to sign the armistice was the first indication to Europe that the Balkan Allies were not entirely united.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly, the return of Sir Edward Grey and British foreign policy to public acceptance was greatly aided by the absence of criticism emanating from the Cabinet during the period of the Balkan wars. The fact that international tension had heightened during the Balkan crisis might be considered sufficient motivation for Cabinet members to refrain from criticising their Liberal colleagues, but the November exchange of letters between the British and French Foreign Offices actually encouraged the Cabinet to renew its confidence in Grey's policies.

In 1904, the British Admiralty invoked the Anglo-French Entente to transfer its naval strength to the English Channel and the North Sea, leaving the French navy to defend Britain's Mediterranean interests. At the time, the Press in England took this realignment of naval forces in stride, as it greatly reduced the expense of meeting the growing German naval menace. Only the Radicals seized

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<sup>1</sup> Westminster Gazette, December 4.

on its political implications and, for a few days, F.W. Hirst, H.W. Massingham, A.G. Gardiner, C.P. Scott and H. Sidebotham delivered severe lectures to the Cabinet on this dangerous departure in foreign policy, but their criticism on this point soon subsided.<sup>1</sup> The Agadir affair awakened the Cabinet to the possible British military commitments stemming from Anglo-French military conversations. The relations between the General Staffs of France and Great Britain were "exceedingly cordial" and, from this situation, rumours arose that England would send an Expeditionary Force to France, should the French request it.<sup>2</sup>

The Cabinet, in November 1912, asked Sir Edward Grey to define exactly the nature of British commitments. Although he replied that "the Cabinet, as a Cabinet, was not committed in the least",<sup>3</sup> the literalists in the Cabinet insisted that the freedom of Great Britain's hand should be stated and recorded on paper.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> O.J. Hale, Publicity and Diplomacy, p. 430.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Arthur Chamberlain, Politics from the Inside, p. 428.

<sup>3</sup> Nicolson, op.cit., p. 383.

<sup>4</sup> The several members of the Cabinet who were on the Imperial Committee of Defense had been informed of the progress and content of the military conversations as they occurred. It is worthy of note that the Cabinet representatives on this committee were from the same mold as Grey, that is, "Liberal Imperialists."

From these pressures the famous Grey Cambon Letters, exchanged on November 22 and 23, were precipitated.

Grey's letter to the French Ambassador in London stated in part:

It has been understood that such military 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 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.<sup>1</sup>

The statements contained in this correspondence were canvassed and "sifted by the Cabinet word by word."<sup>2</sup>

With such statements on file, the Cabinet was convinced that Great Britain was in no way bound to support any future French actions.<sup>3</sup> Although Grey succeeded in convincing the doubters in the Cabinet that England's freedom was unrestricted, he was unwilling to announce the affair

<sup>1</sup> Viscount Grey of Fallodon, Twenty-Five Years, 1892-1916, Vol. I, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Rt. Hon. H.H. Asquith, The Genesis of the War, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Although Grey and the Cabinet considered England free to act as she chose, the French interpreted the correspondence as committing her beyond all possibility of recall. And this misunderstanding continued until August, 1914.



to the Press or the Parliament. With the Press heralding Grey's "Liberal" Balkan policy and the Cabinet renewing its faith in the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey found himself riding the crest of a new wave of popularity born out of a rather shallow sea.

With an armistice existing which applied to all belligerents save Greece, England requested her Foreign Office, through Parliament and the Press, to arrange a peace conference.<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward Grey did not wait for the country to request a peace conference, and by November 27, he had not only aligned representatives from the five belligerents, but had also encouraged the five other Powers to send delegates. On December 11, Grey brought the House of Commons up to date on the progress of the conferences and asked Parliament "to refrain from any further comments of a political nature on the situation" until the peace negotiations were opened.<sup>2</sup> He also stated that the choice of London was made by the belligerents and "was in no way prompted or suggested by us." On December 16, the Balkan and Turkish delegates

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<sup>1</sup> The Times, November 29; Daily News, November 29; December 4; Nation, November 30; Economist, November 30; Westminster Gazette, December 4; Parl. Deb., Vol. 44, col. 452 and Vol. 45, col. 224.

<sup>2</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 45, col. 450-2.

assembled at St. James's Palace for the first meeting of the Peace Conference, under the presidency of Sir Edward Grey, while, on the following day, the Ambassadors of the six Powers met at the British Foreign Office.<sup>1</sup>

The Press was unanimous in its congratulations on Grey's welcoming speeches at both conferences.<sup>2</sup> This chorus of praise was in complete harmony on such topics as Grey's personal qualities, the triumph of his policy, the delegates' hopes for peace, and the "atmosphere of

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<sup>1</sup> For details on the opening session, proceedings and names of the delegates at the Peace Conference see B.D., Vol. IX, pt.2, pp. 1026-63, Appendix III. The six Ambassadors at the Foreign Office were Prince Lichnowsky (Germany), Count Mensdorff (Austria-Hungary), Marquis Imperiali (Italy), M. Paul Cambon (France), Count Benckendorff (Russia) and Sir Edward Grey.

Grey recorded, in his memoirs, his capacity at the Peace Conference. "I had taken no part in the negotiations; they did not touch British interest, and were not our affair; but occasionally some of the delegates paid me an informal visit at the Foreign Office." (op.cit., Vol.I, p. 252.)

<sup>2</sup> The Times, December 17, 19; Manchester Guardian, December 17; Westminster Gazette, December 21; Daily News, December 17, 19; Spectator, December 14; Economist, December 21.

calm and impartiality to be found in this country.... England is the only country in Europe which could have welcomed the delegates with sincerity in those terms [of impartiality]."<sup>1</sup> Even many foreign papers stated that London was selected as the meeting place of the Peace Conference, because the British Government, the Press and the public were most impartial and most likely to act disinterestedly in the settlement of the war.<sup>2</sup> But, as is frequently the case, appearances were deceiving.

Only Sir Edward Grey and his Foreign Office compatriots strove for peace in a truly disinterested fashion. The British public, a large portion of the Press and the Radicals in Parliament wished for an immediate peaceful settlement, but were so imbued with the flattering portrait of the Balkan countries that they had painted in their own minds that they could not be truly be called, impartial. The campaign, by the Radicals, to further Balkan interests appeared to be paying dividends. Even in the House of Commons, on December 5 and 11, Members discussed the fact that England's Balkan sympathies were so strong

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<sup>1</sup> A quotation from Grey's opening address at the Peace Conference as cited in the Manchester Guardian, December 17.

<sup>2</sup> J.E. Barker, "The Peace Conference and the Balance of Power," Fortnightly Review, January, 1913.

that one could hardly believe that the Government held a position of "strict neutrality."<sup>1</sup> The intensity of sympathy displayed toward the Balkan Allies undoubtedly influenced their choice of London as home for peace negotiations. Even the Turks felt that England, more than any other country, might feel drawn toward their cause, as Englishmen had in the past. The belligerents were not particularly fond of England and the English, but they did hope to obtain the support of the Power which appeared to be sympathetic and to wield considerable influence among the Great Powers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> B.D., Vol. 44, col. 2478 and Vol. 45, cols. 449-50.

<sup>2</sup> Riddell, op.cit., p. 114-115, recorded this story concerning the attitude of the belligerents, which occurred on January 12, 1913. "Rufus Isaacs said that at a dinner or luncheon he sat between the Turkish and Bulgarian delegates to the Peace Conference. The Turkish envoy whispered to him, 'We are so glad to be in England. We know we shall receive sympathetic treatment and support from the country which has always been the supporter of oppressed nationalities.' Then the Bulgarian envoy whispered, 'We know that we shall receive fair treatment from your countrymen. We have had to bear so much. We are delighted to be in London - the only possible place for the Conference,' and so on."

Prior to the opening of the two conferences in London, the Liberal Press had high hopes that Great Britain and Germany would use their influence not only to restrain Austria and Russia but also to improve Anglo-German relations.<sup>1</sup> On December 2, the English Press was encouraged by the German Chancellor's speech delivered in the Reichstag in which he stated:

It is not disputed that the Great Powers will be able and will be compelled to make good their interests in the settlement of the state of things resulting from the war, and that they are called upon to co-operate on the grounds of those interests. Should there be or should there arise differences of opinion between the individual Great Powers or individual belligerents regarding the extent of this co-operation, it will be considerably easier for the Great Powers to make their demands prevail if they put forward their demands jointly.<sup>2</sup>

Typical of the way in which this speech was received by the Liberal Press in its eagerness to see an Anglo-German

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<sup>1</sup> Manchester Guardian, November 27, 28; Nation, November 30, December 7; Economist, November 30, December 14; Daily News, November 30. Those interested in promoting better Anglo-German relations received encouragement from the newly appointed and popular German Ambassador to London, Prince Lichnowsky, who in his first public speech in England (November 30) said that he was happy to state that Britain and Germany "were working side by side with the same object of maintaining European peace, and that never have their relations been more intimate and sincere than at the present." Manchester Guardian, December 2.

<sup>2</sup> As quoted in the Daily News, December 3.

rapprochement, the Daily News wrote that Germany was, no more than Great Britain, disposed to allow Europe "to go to war about a sand bank in the Adriatic."<sup>1</sup> But the Daily News also confessed that "it was unfortunate that he [the German Chancellor] did not make his language clearer."

The first major point treated by the Conference of Ambassadors was the problem of Albania. War tension between Austria and Russia had grown to a critical point as Austria refused to allow Montenegro or Servia to absorb Albanian territory, while Russia continued to defend Montenegro's persistence in besieging the Albanian town of Scutari. Facing Sir Edward Grey and the Ambassadors' Conference was the problem of how to get the Montenegrins and Servs out of Albania by measures which would meet with both Austrian and Russian approval.<sup>2</sup> The problem was temporarily solved when the six Powers announced, on December 20, their agreement on the autonomy of Albania, with a proposition guaranteeing the Servs commercial access to the Adriatic.<sup>3</sup> For this move, Sir Edward Grey and the Amba-

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<sup>1</sup> Daily News, December 3. Other similar Liberal interpretations of the speech can be found in Manchester Guardian, December 4; Economist, December 7; Nation, December 7; Westminster Gazette, December 4.

<sup>2</sup> Grey, op.cit., Vol.I, p. 263.

<sup>3</sup> B.D., Vol.IX, pt.2, p. 303.

sadors' Conference were praised from all quarters of the Press.<sup>1</sup> It was hoped that this step, which reflected the ideals of Liberalism by establishing a new state on the grounds of nationality and the unity of the Powers, would settle the almost endless bickering over claims at the Peace Conference in St. James's Palace and would be a great step to the rapid conclusion of peace. The center of anxiety had been, not at the seat of war nor in the Balkan capitals, but in those of Central and Eastern Europe, and it was hoped that Austria and Russia had finally arrived at a solution which was agreeable to all. But even with this joint declaration by the Powers, the Albanian issue was far from solved.

The tension between Austria and Russia was by no means removed. On December 17, Vienna told the world that the Prochaska affair had been exaggerated as Mr. Prochaska

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<sup>1</sup> The Times, December 21; Manchester Guardian, December 21; Daily News, December 21; Economist, December 28; Spectator, January 4, 1913. It is noteworthy to call to the attention of the reader the strong words of praise heaped upon Grey on this occasion by one of his previously most outspoken critics, Mr. A.G. Gardiner of the Daily News: "But even more deserving of congratulations /than the Albanian decision/ is Sir Edward Grey. The Ambassadorial Conference was his idea. Throughout the Balkan crisis he has been jealous for peace. He has gone far to show that he knows the art of making that zeal fruitful of good results."

had not been maltreated. In return, she received a very bad press from all European organs who denounced the Austrian Foreign Office for allowing the cumours to persist as long as they had. The Manchester Guardian and the Daily News attacked Austria's action as "incomprehensible" and "unpardonable."<sup>1</sup> Austro-Russian relations turned from bad to worse on January 6 as Russia declined to dismiss her reservists. Meanwhile, the first reports of Bulgarian and Servian atrocities perpetrated against Turks and Albanians appeared in England.<sup>2</sup> On January 9 this matter of the atrocities by the Balkan armies was reviewed in the House of Commons.<sup>3</sup>

Because the Balkan Allies could not decide on the division of the spoils, as Albania was classified as a new and independent country, the Peace Conference was suspended on January 6. The British Press did not take the breakdown of negotiations seriously and, with the Government, maintained an optimistic outlook.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Manchester Guardian, December 21; Daily News, December 18.

<sup>2</sup> Economist, January 9.

<sup>3</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol.46, col.1344.

<sup>4</sup> Westminster Gazette, January 7; Manchester Guardian, January 7; The Times, January 7; Daily News, January 7; Grey, on January 7 and 16, told the House of Commons that the Powers were still in touch with one another and planned no immediate action. Parl. Deb., Vol.46, cols. 975,2265.



On January 23, while many Englishmen were reading an editorial in the Westminster Gazette analyzing the improving prospects for peace, the Young Turks succeeded in effecting a dramatic change for the worse in the situation. The Turkish navy had suffered defeats off Tenedos and Lemnos, on January 18, at the hands of the Greeks, who had not signed the armistice of November last. When the Turkish Grand Council agreed to the peace terms, the Young Turks denounced their Government for ceding the town of Adrianople to Bulgaria and revolution broke out. The leader of the Young Turks, Enver Bey, deposed the Grand Vizier and shot Nazim Pasha, the Turkish Commander-in-Chief.<sup>1</sup>

The Turkish coup d'etat was unanimously regarded by the English Press as a major threat to peace and it criticised the Turks for their ill-timed action.<sup>2</sup> On January 30, the new Turkish Government retracted all her previous proposals and agreements and her representatives walked out of the Peace Conference at St. James's Palace. By the

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<sup>1</sup> For details, see E.C. Helmreich, The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars 1912-1913, pp. 268-71.

<sup>2</sup> Manchester Guardian, January 24; The Times, January 24; Westminster Gazette, January 24; Daily News, January 24; Economist, February 1; Spectator, January 25.

third of February, the Balkan Allies ended the armistice by renewing hostilities against Turkey.

In a ten week period, from the Bulgarian acceptance of the Turkish proposal for an armistice to the renewal of hostilities on February 3, Sir Edward Grey's leadership had become an object of praise for the British public. The Cabinet was satisfied by the Grey-Cambon exchange of letters and the public and Parliament heartily approved of the work of the Peace Conference and the Ambassadors' Conference in London. Grey's popularity was on the upswing, but how much the praise issued from the hearts of ex-critics and how much was merely caused by the tendency to unify the country in a time of crisis was yet to be tested.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE RENEWAL OF HOSTILITIES AND THE ANGLO-GERMAN RAPPROCHEMENT

With the renewal of the war, the British Press reflected the disappointment of all England and hopes for an immediate settlement faded.<sup>1</sup> As hostilities continued, troop movements and war stories were given less predominance in the newspapers and journals. It appeared that, because of the prevailing confusion of reports received from the battle fronts, it became very difficult to discern what the various dramatic personae really felt, thought and aimed at.<sup>2</sup> The Turks had used the armistice to strengthen and reorganize their forces behind the Chataldja lines, massing 170,000 men who were adequately

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<sup>1</sup> The Times, February 4; Manchester Guardian, February 4; Daily News, February 4; Westminster Gazette, February 3; Economist, February 8. Sir Edward Grey's disappointment and his views on how "nationalism" were always secondary to his greater goal of peace are recorded in a letter he wrote to one Ella Pease on February 1 (Trevelyan, op.cit., p. 233): The Balkan crisis drags out its agony: the dreary part of Foreign Affairs is that nothing can be dealt with on its own merits. Things have to be sacrificed to keep the peace between the Great Powers.

<sup>2</sup> E.J. Dillon, "Political Masked Ball", Contemporary Review, February, 1913.

provided with food and munitions.<sup>1</sup> Reflecting the disappointment in Great Britain at the withdrawal of the armistice, The Times criticised Turkey's lack of wisdom for not having "at once accepted the advise of the Powers without reserve, and consented to relinquish the whole of Adrianople,"<sup>2</sup> while the Economist censured the Bulgarians in these terms:

If the Bulgarian people are to be seduced from the path of peaceful and industrious progress by the glamour of militarism, the Bulgarian State will end in Bankruptcy, a disappointed and discredited debtor of Krupp and Creusot....[The guns] have spoken long enough. The war can already be called the most cruel and blood thirsty of modern times.<sup>3</sup>

Although the Press did not show great interest in the daily events of the renewed war, the Balkan Committee continued its work of rallying public sympathy toward the causes of the Balkan States, especially those of Bulgaria. The chairman of the Committee, Noel Buxton, had travelled with the Bulgarian General Staff while doing relief work during the winter months of 1912.<sup>4</sup> In a series of articles in The Times,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Concerning the rallying of Turkish forces see G.F. Abbott, "Peace?", Nineteenth Century, January, 1913.

<sup>2</sup> The Times, February 4.

<sup>3</sup> Economist, February 8.

<sup>4</sup> Conwell-Evans, op.cit., p.33 and Anderson, op.cit., p.55.

<sup>5</sup> The Times, February 12,13,15,21,22,25.

he gave a detailed account of the Bulgarians' earlier campaigns in Thrace which corrected many of the exaggerated victories reported when that front was closed to foreign correspondents. His facts were avowedly presented from the Bulgarian point of view, but it was the first authorized report on the campaigns. At approximately this same time, he wrote articles in the Contemporary Review, emphasizing the poor hospital conditions and the Bulgarian sufferings to the point of pathos, and in the Nineteenth Century, describing the noble qualities and indomitable spirit of the Bulgarian peasants and leaders uprooted by the tyrannical Turks.<sup>1</sup>

On February 14 in the House of Commons, Sir J.D. Rees [Unionist] and Mr. Walter Guinness [Unionist] made strong accusations that not only the Press, but the Government as well, was often speaking in pro-Balkan terms and that the Mohammedans in India were becoming more restless with each outburst.<sup>2</sup> These Unionists had no argument with the Foreign Secretary or his policies, but criticised the partiality shown occasionally by such Cabinet members as Mr. David Lloyd George and Mr. Winston

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<sup>1</sup> N. Buxton, "The Wounded in the Balkan War," Contemporary Review, February 1913 and "With the Bulgarian Staff," Nineteenth Century, February 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 48, cols. 1462-4.

Churchill. Rees and Guinness requested that Cabinet Ministers should not show indifference toward the suffering of the Turks and that the Radicals should show "a wise reticence in discussing reports of atrocities in the Balkan peninsula while the war was going on."<sup>1</sup> The renewal of the war had found its echo in anti-Turk sentiments in Parliament. Although England still favoured the Balkan cause, it was becoming tired of war. As the war progressed, it received less and less attention. Mr. E.J. Dillon noted the pulse of Europe when he stated:

It is becoming a vulgar conflict without an avowable purpose, a mass massacre of brethren as well as of unwilling adversaries, a calamity to several cultural peoples and a disgrace to Europe and humanity.<sup>2</sup>

The British public was well aware that the real difficulties of the Balkan situation were to be found in the clashing of interests between Russia and Austria-Hungary, of Slavism and of Germanism. In March, April and May, war tension among the Powers moved towards a crescendo. The Greeks continued to defeat Turkey, occupying the cities of Janina, Argyrocastro and Tepelm in Albania and the Isle of Samos, between March 6 and 21. The Bulgarians waited

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> E.J. Dillon, "The World is Tires of the War," Contemporary Review, April, 1913.

outside the walls of Adrianople, while the Montenegrins continued their seige of Scutari. As vehemently as Russian diplomacy backed the Balkan Allies, Austria opposed them. Even with these pressing matters at hand, the Liberal journalists continued to be optimistic toward the possibility of an Anglo-German rapprochement.<sup>1</sup>

On the surface, the work of the Conference of Ambassadors and the co-operation of England and Germany appeared heartening and had led the British Press to continue their hopeful pleas for a detente between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. At this time articles appeared in the Economist, the Nation, the Westminster Gazette and Manchester Guardian which hope-fully spoke of an Anglo-German rapprochement.<sup>2</sup> The Nation

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<sup>1</sup> The hope of bettering Anglo-German relations had glowed in England since the Haldane Mission of early 1912. The mission to Berlin proved a failure in its main objective of finding a naval construction agreement. The Germans refused all Lord Haldane's proposals "as no mention was made of [a British] neutrality" guarantee. (B.D. Vol.VI, pp.713-4.) The curious feature of the Haldane mission was its effect upon publicity. Most of the public never knew that it had failed in its most ambitious intentions, as it was portrayed in the Press as a new move toward bettering relations between the two countries. For this incident see Hale, op.cit., pp.423-433; Viscount Haldane, Before the War, pp.156-161; E.L.Woodward, Great Britain and the German Navy, pp.322-337.

<sup>2</sup> Economist, February 15; Nation, February 15; Manchester Guardian, February 3; Westminster Gazette, February 10, 21, March 12, 26, May 31, June 24.

and the Gazette merely stated arguments in favour of such a rapprochement, the Nation holding that France was a necessary party and that England and Germany should draw "an orbit broad and generous enough to include all three Powers." The Guardian and the Economist held a more optimistic view, typified by the Guardian when it referred to the Anglo-German entente "which so many people feel is now assured." This false impression, widespread in Radical circles, did not affect Grey's actions. The Foreign Secretary continued to strive for better relations with Germany as he believed that they would ease international tension without withdrawing England from her position beside France and Russia in the two balanced Power groupings which, in Grey's thinking, were fundamental to the peace of Europe. But while the British public was assuming that their motives for improving relations with Germany were matching Germany's - that is, the guaranteeing of a permanent peace for Europe - Berlin's motives were not so altruistic. In a letter to the Austrian Chancellor, Count Berchtold, on February 10, German Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg noted that both Austria-Hungary and Germany might gain from acting in unison with British desires for peace in the Balkan crisis in the hope that they might win the neutrality of



Great Britain in a European war which appeared inevitable in the near future. In part the letter stated:

The attitude of England is one of the many indications that the Entente policy has passed its highest point, and that we may look for a new orientation of English policy if we can get through the present crisis without any quarrels. Of course we are dealing with something which is only in the first stages of development, and a certain time must pass before the fruits ripen. But I think it would be a mistake of immeasurable consequence if we attempt a solution by force - even though many interests of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy favour such a solution - at a moment when there is even the remotest prospect of entering this conflict under conditions far more favourable to ourselves.<sup>1</sup>

When sharp increases in French and German armaments in March raised questions in the Liberal Press<sup>2</sup> and since the Grey-Cambon letters of November, which had satisfied the Cabinet as to British commitments, were never made public, Parliamentarians approached Asquith for further information.

On the first day of the new session, March 10, Lord Hugh Cecil [Unionist] approached the subject in a reluctant manner. While not wishing to criticise the Government,

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<sup>1</sup> Die grosse Politik der europaischen Kabinette, 1871-1914, Vol. XXXIV, pt.1, pp.436-8, as quoted in E.L. Woodward, Great Britain and the German Navy, p. 399.

<sup>2</sup> Manchester Guardian, March 4,10; Daily News, March 10; Nation, March 1; Economist, March 1,8.

he stated:

There is a general belief that this country is under an obligation, not a treaty obligation, but an obligation arising of an assurance given by the Ministry in the course of diplomatic negotiations, to send a large armed force out of this country to operate in Europe. This is the general belief. It would be very presumptuous of anyone who has not access to all the facts in the possession of the Government-.<sup>1</sup>

At this point Mr. Asquith interrupted to say "...this is not true." Two weeks later, on March 24, Mr. J. King (Liberal) again asked the Prime Minister for an explanation of Britain's commitments and received the following assurance:

As has been repeatedly stated, this country is not under any obligation not public and known to Parliament which compells it to take part in any war. In other words, if war arises between European Powers there are no unpublished agreements which will restrict or hamper the freedom of the Government or of Parliament to decide whether or not Great Britain should participate in a war.<sup>2</sup>

These statements by the Prime Minister on March 10 and 24 reassured the British public and the Liberal Radicals about England's freedom and thereby prevented any serious disturbance of the new friendliness shown to

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<sup>1</sup> see Parl. Deb., Vol. 50, col. 1316.

<sup>2</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 50, col. 42.

Grey by his former critics.<sup>1</sup> Even though Asquith had said in his speech, opening the new session of Parliament, that "each group...remains unimpaired in relations to its own members"<sup>2</sup>, the Press believed that the bonds imposed by the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance had been loosened considerably. Reacting favourably to the Prime Minister's statements, they did not take him to task for his reference to European groupings. The Nation recognized that Asquith inferred that Britain was within the European groupings but thought that his "welcome and decisive" denial of military obligations was more important.<sup>2</sup> The Daily News, most enthusiastic on March 25 in commenting on Asquith's remarks and, overjoyed at the assurance

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<sup>1</sup> Daily News, March 11, 26, 28; Manchester Guardian, March 17; Nation, March 15; Economist, March 29. The Westminster Gazette showed its usual praise for Grey, March 26.

<sup>2</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 50, col. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Nation, March 25. Asquith's definition of Britain's place in European politics "carries us, indeed, somewhat further than may be wise from the position of uncommitted friendship marked out for an island Power." But the Nation was happy to report that "our participation in a Continental conflict, even if it should come about, would not be a matter of treaty obligation or of necessary duty. Of no other Power can this be said."

of England's international independence, spoke strongly of stamping out the last vestiges of commitment rumours.

The legend of a secret military understanding between this and any other country must be destroyed in the last form it has assumed [*i.e.*, Anglo-French commitments]. Such legends are dangerous to the peace of Europe. They are the fictions which the Jingoists weave into international hatred and dread, and they should not be allowed even the remotest excuse for life.<sup>1</sup>

The reception given these reassurances was uniformly approving and general throughout Great Britain. Grey's policies which had, most naturally, in a country of literate individualists as England was, not always been unanimously approved. But the relief that these assurances provided the public brought the Government to a new level of popularity.

On March 25, Sir Edward Grey appeared in Parliament to divulge the Government's views on the Albanian situation.<sup>2</sup> After noting that the removal of all serious divisions of public opinion between the Great Powers was more important than securing agreement between Turkey and the Balkan Allies, he pointed out that the Albanian problem was the greatest single remaining threat to peace. If the boundar-

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<sup>1</sup> Daily News, March 25.

<sup>2</sup> see Parl. Deb., Vol. 50, cols. 1496-1502.

ies of Albania were drawn too large it would "encroach unfairly on the legitimate aspirations and aims of Montenegro, Servia and Greece", but if the country was made too small "it could not have a separate existence in the future." After asking Montenegrins and Servs to evacuate Albanian territory, Grey asked that the seige of Scutari be lifted immediately. The Foreign Secretary pointed out that, since the Powers had agreed that Scutari should go to Albania, "the taking of that place [by Montenegrins and Servs] would involve a useless, purposeless and criminal amount of suffering, which I am sure would alienate all sympathy in this country."

Grey's statement received immediate praise in the House. He was followed by the Prime Minister who commented that the Foreign Secretary had

the united support of the House of Commons and of the opinion of this country....there has [never] been a chapter in our foreign policy where there have been so few discordant notes, or where the Government had to acknowledge so fully and gratefully...the patriotic support which the Opposition has given to us.<sup>1</sup>

Even Mr. Philip Morrell, a prominent member of the Balkan Committee, congratulated Grey for his "most welcome statement" which was "listened to with intense interest...in

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<sup>1</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol.50, col.1508.

every quarter of the House."<sup>1</sup>

The Press was no less hesitant to approve of the Government's view on the Albanian situation and to hope for better international relations and speedy and lasting peace.<sup>2</sup> The Spectator gave its "sincere assent" to the assertions of Grey and Asquith that the war, "with all its devastation and misery," must be ended and "that that is the opinion of the united British people."<sup>3</sup> The Daily News was again the most optimistic supporter of the Government as it believed the Balkan States would follow any decision of the Ambassadors' Conference because

they have come to a point when a continuance of war threatens more danger to them, than to their enemies....Sir Edward Grey's statement...opens up the brightest prospect for peace yet visible in the troubled sphere of the Balkans.<sup>4</sup>

But the war continued and the sieges of Adrianople and Scutari dragged on. Of the two, it appeared that Scutari would be the first to fall,<sup>5</sup> but fearing that the Powers might intervene, the Bulgarians stormed and captured Adrianople on March 26, hoping that their action would be

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<sup>1</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 50, col. 1518.

<sup>2</sup> Manchester Guardian, March 26; Westminster Gazette, March 26.

<sup>3</sup> Spectator, March 29.

<sup>4</sup> Daily News, March 26.

<sup>5</sup> Westminster Gazette, March 22.

received as a fait accompli when the time came to redistribute the spoils of war. This Bulgarian victory was greeted with mixed opinion in the British Press. The Times viewed the fall of Adrianople as the "last great obstacle to the conclusion of peace...removed...[and it] ought to terminate the war."<sup>1</sup> The Daily News did not blame the Bulgarians for taking matters into their own hands as it believed the victory was necessary to satisfy Bulgarian politics" as she has borne the real brunt of the struggle with the Turks" and therefore deserves the city as a war prize.<sup>2</sup> But the Manchester Guardian criticised the act as a "waste of life", believing that they should have waited for the Ambassadors' Conference to decide on the future ownership of the city.<sup>3</sup>

As The Times had hoped, Turkey immediately petitioned for peace. Fighting on all fronts ended, with the exception of the seige of Scutari by the Montenegrins. For the moment it appeared that a Balkan settlement was within reach, but in reality the unresolved situation at Scutari held within itself the most vexing problem to be faced by the Great Powers during the Balkan crisis.

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<sup>1</sup> The Times, March 27.

<sup>2</sup> Daily News, March 27.

<sup>3</sup> Manchester Guardian, March 27.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SCUTARI AFFAIR AND THE TREATY OF LONDON

Although the Powers agreed on the autonomy of Albania on December 20, the exact boundaries of the new state proved to be the greatest single obstacle to unanimity at the Ambassadors' Conference in London. Russia was determined to make Albania as small as possible in order that more territory might be divided among Montenegro, Serbia, and Greece. Opposing Russia on every proposal favoring the Balkan countries was Austria, who desired to see Albania as large as possible. As the Ambassadors' Conference continued, it degenerated more and more into a diplomatic battle for concessions between Austria and Russia. In mid-March, one of the Conferences' most critical problems was solved when the purely Albanian town of Djakova was ceded to Serbia.<sup>1</sup>

Austria had been prepared to go to war over this point, but, on March 21, she announced her willingness to allow the city to pass into Servian hands in return for more effective protection for the Albanian and Catholic minorities in all the territory being transferred to Serbia and Montenegro,

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<sup>1</sup> For this incident see Helmreich, op.cit., pp.284-292.



and that other northern boundary questions would be drawn in accordance with the Austrian proposal. With the settlement of this question, the greater problem of Scutari now faced Europe.

The King of Montenegro, on March 28, refused to terminate the seige of Scutari until he had consulted his Allies, an obvious diplomatic move to gain more time for a possible fait accompli comparable to that of the Bulgarians at Adrianople. The Powers retaliated by deciding to hold a naval demonstration, in hopes that the fear of intervention might coerce the Montenegrins into retiring from their position.<sup>1</sup> The British Press realized that Montenegro was playing with the tinder which might ignite a "great war". The Times backed the Powers' decision for a naval demonstration as "a first step for making their admonitions effective."<sup>2</sup> The Westminster Gazette gave hesitant support to the naval demonstration, fearing that it might be the first step toward direct intervention.

The difficulty about any form of intervention is that nobody can say with any certainty where it will stop, or how far it can be kept within the limits to which the Powers have agreed.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This action was officially made known to Parliament on April 2. Parl. Deb., Vol. 51, col. 365.

<sup>2</sup> The Times, April 1.

<sup>3</sup> Westminster Gazette, April 2.

The Nation noted that at the heart of whole affair, it was primarily the prestige of the Powers that was at stake.

If Europe, having declared that Scutari is Albanian, allows it to go to Montenegro, the frontiers of the new state will be drawn not by Europe but by military accident. There will be nothing to prevent the retention of the whole of its northern half by Servia, and the whole of its southern half by Greece.<sup>1</sup>

The Daily News, closely associated with the Balkan Committee and its campaign for sympathy towards the Balkan Allies, now found itself caught between two opposing ideas. In attempting to harmonize its policy of defending the interests of the Balkan Allies with the decision of the Powers to hold a naval demonstration, the paper frankly admitted to its readers that it preferred not to state whether the Powers decision was "good" or "bad" and it spoke of both Grey and the Montenegrins in favourable terms

Everyone is sorry for the failure of Montenegro [to capture Scutari]....It is still less worth while to risk the peace of Europe and the new accommodations of conflicting interests among the Powers which have been secured with so much patience and self-effacement by Sir Edward Grey.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nation, April 5.

<sup>2</sup> Daily News, April 1.

One week after the naval demonstration was initiated, the Montenegrins still showed no signs of ending the seige. Austria had threatened to attack Montenegro and Servia if the seige was not lifted, but, in England, the public still felt certain sympathy toward the sturdy Montenegrins rather than for the new Albania, created by the Powers. All views were not, however, as severe as Sir Arthur Chamberlain's Unionist, who stated on April 6,

All the Albanians in the world are not worth the bones of a British Grenadier, and why we pull the chestnuts out of the fire for Austria is not clear. It is the price of peace, I suppose, and, if so, it must be paid.<sup>1</sup>

Even the Westminster Gazette, on April 7, showed discomfort in backing the Government's coercion of the struggling Montenegrins.

The necessity of coercing Montenegro is, of course, a disagreeable one, and lends itself outwardly to all manner of prejudice and misrepresentation. For that reason, it is necessary always to keep clearly in our minds what is at stake in the matter....

However this may be, and however much the natural man in us may sympathize with the burly defiance of King Nicholas, it is impossible to say that the demand is an unreasonable one, as between the Powers and the Allies, or that it ought not to be conceded, if its concession<sup>2</sup> will establish the peace between the Powers.

<sup>1</sup> Chamberlain, op.cit., p. 545.

<sup>2</sup> Westminster Gazette, April 7. These sentiments were stated the day on which Sir Edward Grey was to describe and defend his actions before Parliament.

Although the British public preferred to see the city of Scutari ceded to the Montenegrins, Sir Edward Grey believed the peace of Europe more important than one city. Therefore Grey backed the Austrians' claim that Scutari should remain a part of Albania, as he believed "if a good settlement of Albania would mean war between two or more Great Powers, and an inferior settlement would secure peace between them, the latter has to be preferred."<sup>1</sup> Grey took this bold step of backing Austria rather than England's fellow Entente member, Russia, as a means of pacifying Austria and disproving the German legend of British "encirclement."<sup>2</sup>

This act proved to be the turning point in the London Conference of Ambassadors, but Grey, in announcing the action of the Conference, did not go into his reasons for siding with Austria. On April 7, he appeared in Parliament to state the reasons for the Government's decision not to back the Montenegrins' claim to Scutari. It is important to note that the Foreign Secretary spoke of the situation solely in terms of the rights of the Albanians, logically enough in view of the Liberal party's traditional sympathy for nationistic yearnings. In part he stated:

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<sup>1</sup> Ensor, op.cit., p. 573.

<sup>2</sup> Grey's letter to Ella Pease, 1 February 1913 as quoted in Trevelyan, op.cit., p. 233.

The operations of Montenegro against Scutari are part of a war of conquest, and there is no reason why the same sympathy that was felt for Montenegro or other countries contending for liberty and national existence should not be extended to the Albanian population of Scutari and its districts, who are mainly Catholic and Moslem, and are contending for their lands, their religion, their language, and their lives. For these reasons His Majesty's Governments have no hesitation in being parties to the argument of the Powers about Albania....

It was decided that the littoral and Scutari should be Albanian, while Ipek, Prizrend, Dibra, and [after much negotiation] Djakova should be excluded from Albania. This arrangement leaves a large tract of territory to be divided between Servs and Montenegrins as the fruits of victory.<sup>1</sup>

On the same day the German Chancellor gave a speech before the Reichstag stating the Powers' decision to cede Scutari to Albania. The Chancellor gave his personal thanks to Sir Edward Grey for his "devotion and conciliatory spirit," which met with applause from the members of Reichstag, and hoped that the Powers would continue to "co-operate in the most energetic manner."<sup>2</sup>

But Sir Edward Grey's important statement was "very badly received" on the Liberal side of the House.<sup>3</sup> The noted journalist, Harold Spender, wrote that Grey's speech provoked a "notable demonstration of anger" in the House

<sup>1</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 51, col.817.

<sup>2</sup> quoted in Daily News, April 8.

<sup>3</sup> Chamberlain, op.cit., p. 546.

of Commons gangway and that, in his view, "the Tories... were full of delight over the bullying of a small nation [Montenegro] - that is their food - but the Radicals and Labour were gravely disturbed."<sup>1</sup>

With the noteworthy exception of the Daily News, the majority of the Press was in reluctant agreement with Grey. This is exemplified by The Times' comment that the Foreign Secretary's statement was "severely logical," concluding that England was "a party to a [naval] demonstration because we are a party to the agreement which it is intended to uphold."<sup>2</sup> The Liberal organs faced the problem of accepting an irrevocable decision by the Government or staunchly holding to their previous pro-Montenegrin policy. The Economist dropped all pro-Montenegrin support by claiming that the continuation of the seige was "not a war against the Turks, but against the freedom of Albania" and took the opportunity to praise Grey's abilities.<sup>3</sup>

It is more and more obvious that Sir Edward Grey and Great Britain have been standing between Europe and a great war. His firmness, good faith, good temper, and good sense have, we trust, saved the situation.

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<sup>1</sup> Daily News, April 8.

<sup>2</sup> The Times, April 8.

<sup>3</sup> Economist, April 12.

The Manchester Guardian not only favourably accepted the statement made by Grey, but viewed any further Liberal opposition as unwarranted.<sup>1</sup>

The case for Albania is exceedingly strong as Sir Edward Grey put it, and it deserves the respect of all English Liberals.... There is, in Sir Edward Grey's opinion, no conflict between justice and high expediency. Both urge us insistently in the same direction - the direction that has been taken.

To the Liberals who challenged Grey's decision and maintained sympathy toward the small countries, the Guardian said:

We are in some difficulty to appreciate the grounds of the opposition.... There can be small bullies as well as large.

The Nation, in praising Grey's "illuminating statement" excused itself from further defending the Montenegrin cause by analyzing an important subcurrent in the public's mind.<sup>2</sup>

If there is any division of opinion among Liberals on the merits of Sir Edward Grey's policy, it is, we believe, because the very name of Montenegro is linked with the hypothetical memory of Gladstone, and rings musical to our ears in Tennyson's lines. It is one thing to admire the superb stand which these Montenegrins made against the Turks, and quite another to approve of their purely predatory adventure against an Albanian city and district.

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<sup>1</sup> Manchester Guardian, April 8.

<sup>2</sup> Nation, April 12. This paper turned so anti-Montegrin that it believed the only reason they wanted Scutari was to take their rich corn lands, slaughter most of the inhabitants, and "forcibly...Slavise the survivors."

Of all the major Radical organs, only the Daily News, backed by the Balkan Committee, continued to carry the pro-Montenegrin plea. Admitting that the Powers' decision could not be reversed, as it was necessary to the preservation of peace among the Powers, the News of April 8 tried to rally the Radicals' and the public's sympathy toward Montenegro. An article by the Radical journalist Harold Spender "proved" that Scutari was a Montenegrin city with population figures "based on the evidence of their [Montenegrin's] schools" in that city.<sup>1</sup> In this same issue of the News, an editorial written by Gardiner observes the position of the Liberals and sympathizes with the plight of the Montenegrins.

To say that the demand made of Montenegro by the Great Powers and the refusal of Montenegro to submit to it places English Liberals in a painful position is altogether an inadequate description. They are in a situation through no fault of their own, in which the best that is open to them is a choice of evils....We do not believe that the inclusion of Scutari is at all indispensable to the erection and well-being of the new Albanian State. We do believe that it is practically essential to the economic development of Montenegro on the only lines of which her barren soil and cramped sea-board admit.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Harold Spender, "Montenegro and the Powers", Daily News, April 8. Spender also noted that "no blame attaches to Sir E. Grey, who has been faced with the problem of solving the insoluble, but it is a strange outcome of our Anti-German ship building naval policy that the first exercise our Navy should be - to the tune of Tory cheers - on behalf of the German against the Slav."



Admitting that the Powers' decision was necessary for the peace of Europe and therefore irreversible, the News asked that the Montenegrins receive compensation for their loss.

Montenegro appeals to the sympathy of the world. If Great Britain and Germany can help to make her retreat easier by showing her that she has that sympathy, and by giving it some practical form by way of compensation, they will put the crown on an effort for which diplomacy may well claim enduring credit.

The presence of the Powers' ships had little effect on King Nicholas, as the Montenegrin army continued to shell the town of Scutari. On April 10, the Powers changed the naval demonstration into a pacific blockade of Montenegrin ports in hopes they would be able to force the besiegers into submission. In the following three weeks, England and all of Europe waited for a break in the war-tension.<sup>1</sup> There was the constant threat of a great war as Austria wanted momentarily to expel the Montenegrins, while Russia was prepared to repel by force of arms, any military action taken against the small Balkan state. At midnight on April 22-23, Scutari surrendered to the Montenegrins.<sup>2</sup> Russia considered the capture of Scutari as altering the tense

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<sup>1</sup> Tension was so great that Parliament refrained from discussing the Balkan situation during this period.

<sup>2</sup> Montenegro notified England of her victory at 3 A.M. on April 23. Parl. Deb., Vol. 52, col. 367.

international situation and, for the sake of peace, hoped the city would go to Albania. Relaxing her pro-Montenegrin demands, she encouraged France and England to act with the Triple Alliance in finding a peaceful solution while she, herself, would serve to relax tension by remaining aloof.<sup>1</sup>

Hearing of this Montenegrin victory, the British Press reacted along anti-Montenegrin lines. The Manchester Guardian considered the storming of Scutari an "even worse waste" of life than the Bulgarians' assault on Adrianople because "Montenegro knows the town can never be hers."<sup>2</sup> Previous to the actual fall of Scutari, the papers cited had decided to back the Government's policy of coercing Montenegro to evacuate "Albanian" Scutari in order to preserve the peace of Europe. The last oracle of pro-Montenegrin leanings, the Daily News succumbed to this view only after Scutari had capitulated.

On April 24, the Daily News in affect retracted its "proved" thesis of a Montenegrin populated Scutari by printing and favourably commenting upon a letter received from Miss Edith Durham, a Liberal journalist and prominent member of the Balkan Committee. Having resided for long

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<sup>1</sup> For this incident see Helmreich, op.cit., p.315.

<sup>2</sup> Manchester Guardian, April 24. See also Westminster Gazette, April 24; The Times, April 24; Economist, April 26; Nation, April 26; Spectator, April 26.

periods of time in Scutari, she spoke with authority when justifying Albania's claims to the city and claiming that Spender "created" the great Serv population of Scutari.

To the resident, the vast Serv population which he [Spender] describes is invisible....Rarely indeed is the Serv tongue heard....Mr. Spender's figures as to population are said to be based upon the evidence of their [the Montenegrin's] schools.' As the Montenegrins possess but one small school there, and that for Orthodox Servs - and not for Moslems - these figures are of no value. How can a Moslem population be calculated upon schools that do not exist?

Albania is a small nation. Alone it cannot stand up against the combined bullying of the Allies. It behoves Europe to see fair play. Already the wholly Albanian town of Djakova has been sacrificed as a sap to Russia - an intolerable piece of bullying. Be Liberal, Mr. Spender, by all means, but do not give away Albanian territory.<sup>1</sup>

In an editorial on the same page the Daily News conceded the point on the nationality of the town, but countered with a plea that other concessions be made to the Montenegrins.

If the Powers ultimately insist on her evacuation of Scutari, they can hardly refuse her some modification of her frontiers either by land or sea. In another column Miss Durham, whose sympathy and sacrifices for Albania and its people have been unbounded, gives her reasons on ethnological grounds for the retention of Scutari by Albania. Against this it is fair to remember that during the revolt of 1911 in Albania, apart from which it is quite possible that the liberation of the Balkans would not have been effected, Montenegro - the poorest state in Europe - harboured many thousands of refugees who turned to her as a natural protector and

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<sup>1</sup> Daily News, April 24. Another member of the Balkan Committee, Mr. H.N. Brailsford, stated strong pro-Albanian sentiments in his article, "Albania and the Allies," Contemporary Review, May 1913.

were not disappointed....Montenegro has defied the Concert, it is true. The Concert of Europe can probably compel her to obedience. But the case is one, if ever there was one, not for coercion but for generous treatment, inspired by broad sympathies and knowledge, and a genuine desire for a permanent settlement in the Near East.<sup>1</sup>

From April 23 to May 4, the Montenegrins occupied Scutari and the possibility of a European war remained imminent. Parliament did not discuss the Balkan's nationality problems during this period, fearing that some statement might be misinterpreted by any of the other Powers. Following the fall of Scutari, when the whole of the British Press backed the decision of the Ambassadors' Conference, reports of a rift between the Balkan Allies reached England and public opinion began to question the ultimate aims of conquest of the "Christian" Balkan States. As Montenegro continued claiming Scutari, disregarding the tension which she aroused between the Powers, the British public became less interested in territorial claims for the Allies. This disinterestedness towards claims made by the Balkan States is in marked contrast to what had appeared in British newspapers only a few months before.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> This gradual disenchantment with Balkan nationalism will be treated in Chapter V.

On May 3, the Westminster Gazette included a poem by Saki [H.H. Munro] entitled "Quatrains From the Rubaiyat of a Disgruntled Diplomat" which pointed up the growing disillusionment following the Scutari affair.<sup>1</sup>

Awake! for in the columns of the press  
Arrive grave tidings of much storm and stress,  
And lo, the hunters of the East have got  
The Sultan's leavings in a fearful mess.

They sometimes say that nowhere blooms a rose so red  
The rose, as where some buried Caesar bled;  
But when too many Caesars resurrect  
In one small garden - storms are overhead.

We argued much about it and about,  
How best the Ottoman to bundle out,  
And now behold, the least of all his heirs  
Conspires the ordered scheme of things to flout.

And lately in the lecture hall agape  
Men listened to a Norman Angell shape,  
"How vain is mortal sovrainty," it cried  
-Yet see the struggle one small town to rape!

Two heads are better far than one, 'tis held,  
Yet to this observation I'm impelled,  
The Montenegrin Eagle wears two heads-  
Pray what the profit if both heads are swelled?

Great Britain and all of Europe uttered a great sigh of relief, on May 4, as King Nicholas agreed to evacuate Scutari. The Ambassadors' Conference, on the following day, decided on international occupation of that city. The British public, Press and Parliament were overjoyed at the Montenegrins' decision. Prime Minister Asquith made an official

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<sup>1</sup> Westminster Gazette, May 3. The poem's second stanza refers to the antiquity of the Albanian race, which had been conquered by the Romans.

announcement of the action before the House of Commons on May 5 and added:

This is very satisfactory news, and is a decision on which the King of Montenegro is to be congratulated, both in the interest of his own country and of international peace.<sup>1</sup>

The Westminster Gazette termed King Nicholas' action as "a wise decision in the interests of Montenegro,... [and] a convenient one for the Great Powers and the Allied States,"<sup>2</sup> while The Times viewed it as "momentous and most wise."<sup>3</sup> The Manchester Guardian also heartily approved while adding that

In saving herself [from the punishment of the Powers] Montenegro has saved Europe too, and we hope that it will be remembered in her favour. Nothing is said about compensation, but if it can be found without great unfairness to Albania it should be given.<sup>4</sup>

The Daily News, which had been the paper most interested in territorial gains for Montenegro [as well as the other Balkan Allies], did not state its immediate approval or disapproval of King Nicholas' decision but busied itself in reviewing how the situation affected British Liberals, while pleading for Montenegro's "good name." In view of

<sup>1</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 52, col. 1703.

<sup>2</sup> Westminster Gazette, May 6.

<sup>3</sup> The Times, May 5.

<sup>4</sup> Manchester Guardian, May 4.

its close connection with the Balkan Committee, which at this time was beginning to question the "relative honesty" of their own pro-Balkan sympathy campaigns,<sup>1</sup> and its past policy of supporting the Balkan Allies in an outspoken way, the Daily News found itself in an uncomfortable position for the third time in a month. On April 1, the News had given its reluctant support to a naval demonstration which was bent on coercing one of the Allies, while on April 24 it "admitted" that Scutari was ethnically an Albanian town, and not Slavic as the paper had previously held. Now that Montenegro had allowed the future of Scutari to be decided by the Powers - a group who, weeks earlier, had decreed that the town would go to Albania - the continuation of any campaign for a "Montenegrin Scutari" appeared quite futile. The Daily News was faced with three choices: to continue to preach against the Powers' decision and in favour of Montenegro, to retract its previous policy as erroneous, or to find a way to circumvent the matter without appearing to vacillate.

On May 5, the day after the Montenegrins capitulated to the will of the Powers, the Daily News carried no editorial comment on the incident. But on the editorial page of that issue appeared an article by H.W. Massingham

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<sup>1</sup> This transformation is discussed in Chapter V.

which, along with praising Grey's labours, was decidedly anti-Montenegrin in tone, asking that England and the other Powers force Montenegro into submission.<sup>1</sup> It was not unusual for the Daily News to print submitted articles of value, but the fact that this particular article, written apparently before the Montenegrins agreed to give up Scutari, appeared on May 5, seems to have been part of a design for gradual acquiescence to the majority opinion.

The following day, May 6, the Daily News contained an editorial which alluded only indirectly to the submission of Montenegro, but dealt mainly with the refutation of Massingham's rabid anti-Montenegrin article. After noting that the Montenegrins could have continued her resistance to the will of the Powers, the News stated that if she had refused to submit,

she would have opened a very difficult question for British Liberals, to many of whom the proposal made by a contributor /Massingham/ yesterday that they should join in the coercion of Montenegro would have been frankly intolerable, none the less so far the concerted efforts which have been made during the past few weeks to disparage her conduct in the war on far

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<sup>1</sup> Massingham who was the editor of the Nation denounced Montenegro for trying "to steal as much of Albania as she can get. She /Montenegro/ has behaved in this war with singular cruelty and perfidy, and her King has shown himself as a reckless and unprincipled man. He is quite willing to set the world in a blaze in order to cook his own meat of stolen goods, and it is the grossest folly to give him the tribute of a sentimental tear." Daily News, May 5.



from an impartial evidence. Montenegro has lost the fulfillment of her hopes. There is no reason why she should also be despoiled of her good name.

Thus the News withheld direct editorial approval or disapproval of King Nicholas' decision, by taking the opportunity to criticize fellow Radicals who had reversed themselves under the pressure of a possible European war and were now writing anti-Montenegrin copy. But in his regular Tuesday column on the same day and page, H. Spender approved the Montenegrin surrender by stating that "looked at all round, this was both the best - and therefore the bravest - thing that Montenegro could do."<sup>1</sup>

Between May 6 and 14, the five Powers who participated in the naval blockade completed their occupation of Scutari.<sup>2</sup> With tension greatly reduced a debate was held in the House of Commons on the subject of Albania and Montenegro.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Aubrey Herbert [Unionist] and Mr. Walter Guinness [Unionist], both avowed pro-Albania members, and Mr. David Mason [Liberal] and the Rt. Hon. J.H. Whitehouse [Liberal], both avowed pro-Montenegrin members [yet not members of the

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<sup>1</sup> Daily News, May 6.

<sup>2</sup> Nevinston [Op.cit., p.285] described the scene thus: "...the flags of the Great Powers now fluttered high on the fortress, strung side by side, like Monday's wash. Only five flags, for Russia stood aside, fearing to hurt the feelings of Montenegro, her little parasite."

<sup>3</sup> For the text of this debate see Parl. Deb., Vol.52, cols. 2298-2329.

Balkan Committee<sup>7</sup> stated their appreciation to and confidence in Sir Edward Grey's actions of the past few weeks. The debate was closed and the feelings of the House summarized by Mr. Acland when he said that "the only expression of feeling I can give upon the matter of Scutari is a sigh of relief."<sup>1</sup>

By mid-May, international tension had considerably faded as the Peace Conference reconvened in London and the Ambassadors' Conference continued to press for an immediate settlement. On May 9, the Westminster Gazette heartily praised the Concert while prodding those dissenters who had thought the Powers could not present a united front successfully.

To an incessant chorus of critics, dissecting its weaknesses, lamenting its dilatoriness, predicting its inevitable breakdown, it has lumbered on with much creaking and groaning of its inner parts, and occasional dead stops, but somehow surviving and surmounting what on looking back we perceive to have been an uncommonly stiff piece of road. There may be other rocky places to come before it gets safely to the far side, but certainly at this stage it deserves a cheer. For it has done precisely what the worldly-wise said it could never do.<sup>2</sup>

The co-operation shown between Great Britain and Germany during the Ambassadors' Conference stimulated the

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<sup>1</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 52, col. 2326.

<sup>2</sup> Westminster Gazette, May 9.

Germany during the Ambassadors' Conference stimulated the Radicals to continue in their erroneous belief that Sir Edward Grey had changed his policy and that England was now moving toward much improved relations with Germany. The Daily News held that the Balkan war had aided in Grey's "process of illumination" and that although he "is not in the habit of admitting all the world to the secret of the working of his mind...one may hazard the guess that for some time he had come to doubt the wisdom of the [anti-German] policy pursued since 1906."<sup>1</sup> And the Manchester Guardian added to this general belief when it stated that the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe "is no longer a primary object of British policy."<sup>2</sup>

On May 29, Sir Edward Grey was present in the House of Commons for a Foreign Office debate. By that time, the signing of a peace treaty between Turkey and the Balkan Allies was momentarily expected, so before the subject matter of the debate was entered into, the Members of the House took the opportunity to express their gratitude to Grey for his work in staving off a European war and for relaxing tensions between the Powers. All quarters of the

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<sup>1</sup> Daily News, May 15.

<sup>2</sup> Manchester Guardian, May 28.

House were eager to pay tribute to their Foreign Secretary and even those who had been most critical of his policy in the past could find only words of praise.<sup>1</sup> Even Mr. Arthur Ponsonby [Liberal], a prominent member of the Balkan Committee, found Grey's actions completely satisfactory; but he, like many other Members of Parliament paid tribute to Grey that day, was under the impression that their Government had completely re-orientated their foreign policy. In part Mr. Peabody stated:

The former policy, which I think was a pernicious policy, of dividing Europe into two camps which regarded one another with suspicion and jealousy, has been abandoned, and I hope has been abandoned for good. By instituting the Concert the chief feature has been that Germany and ourselves have been drawn more closely together. It is that rapprochement between these two Powers that brought the really remarkable series of affairs that ended in what we hope will be in a few days a completely unclouded sky.<sup>2</sup>

When the long-winded carnival of congratulations had finally expended itself, Mr. Swift MacNeill [Liberal] and

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<sup>1</sup> For this incident see Parl. Deb., Vol. 53, cols. 369-389. This great laudatory outburst was enthusiastically reported by the Radical Press. The Daily News [May 30] said that Grey "may be confident that the House spoke the mind of the whole nation." On May 31 the Nation stated that

Sir Edward Grey must clearly make a precious offering to the gods, for never, we suppose, has any British Minister, certainly any Foreign Minister, listened to such a choric harmony of praise as greeted him in the House of Commons on Thursday night.

<sup>2</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 53, col. 373.

Mr. Noel Burton [Liberal] asked the Foreign Secretary to consider the desirability of establishing a Foreign Relations Committee in order that the Foreign Office might be kept in closer touch with the opinion of the House.<sup>1</sup> This plea for a Committee was considerably weaker than that made in July of 1912 and made no mention of "secrecy" in the Foreign Office. Since the previous July, when demands were made to oust the Foreign Office "autocracy" and to let the House of Commons have a direct voice in the formulation of foreign policy, Grey had satisfied most of the demands for such a "Foreign Affairs Committee." During the Balkan war he had improved Anglo-German relations, reassured the public that England had no military commitments to the Entente Powers, fostered the cause of national freedom abroad, and kept the public well informed as to the main lines of Great Britain's foreign policy. Although fuller Parliamentary control of policy had not been granted, Grey had demonstrated his capabilities in successfully guiding all of Europe through the Balkan crisis. This left the advocates with only two weak arguments: that a Foreign Relations Committee could keep the Foreign Office informed on public opinion, espec-

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<sup>1</sup> For the presentation of this request see Parl. Deb., Vol. 53, cols. 402-406.

ially when Parliament was asked to remain silent [as in the Moroccan incident of July, 1911], and that such committees had already been established in France and in the United States.

Sir Edward Grey, therefore, had very little difficulty in answering MacNeill's and Buxton's request. Backed by his successes during the Balkan war and speaking the same day on which the House had given him almost unlimited praise, he merely pointed out that the Foreign Office disclosed all treaties and that the control foreign affairs by Parliament was a constitutional point which could not be treated during the present Foreign Office Vote.<sup>1</sup>

On May 28 Sir Edward Grey told the Balkan delegates that those of them who were willing to sign the preliminary peace treaty without any alterations should do so immediately, promising them England's moral support. Considering it useless for them to discuss minor points and continue to cause delay, he said that those who refused to sign at once would be asked to leave London.<sup>2</sup> Under this threat, all the belligerents' delegates signed the Treaty of London

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<sup>1</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 53, cols. 455-456.

<sup>2</sup> For this incident see Gueshoff op. cit., p. 87. Also Nicolson, op. cit., p. 388.

on May 30.

Almost the entire British Press congratulated Grey for successfully ending the war and pressing the delegates into signing the treaty.<sup>1</sup> The Manchester Guardian was the only newspaper to qualify its tribute to Sir Edward Grey. Mr. C.P. Scott had not fully forgiven Grey's action on the Persian issue of 1911. The Guardian, therefore, qualified its praise for Grey by stating that

Grey fails when dealing with ideals [as Persia] ...[but] the idea of a Concert has always had strong attraction for him. He really believes in the supremacy of law in international relations; the rules of international equity are not to him a collection of legal abstractions, but moral entities for which he has a genuine enthusiasm.... In the Near Eastern crisis the conception of the Concert and of law was the big hinge on which everything else turned....[Therefore] we rejoice that this statesman has been an Englishman and a Liberal Foreign Secretary.

In late May and early June, Grey's popularity had reached its zenith. Parliament and the entire Press hailed him as the man who had saved Europe from a catastrophic war and the public renewed their confidence in his handling of Great Britain's foreign policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Westminster Gazette, May 31; Daily News, May 31; Nation, May 31; Economist, June 7; The Times, May 31; Spectator, May 31.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SECOND BALKAN WAR AND THE END OF THE AMBASSADORS' CONFERENCE

In early June, conflicting reports appeared in England of border skirmishes and outrages perpetrated by the former Balkan Allies against one another. This unrest, smouldering in the Balkans, was ready to burst into flame at any moment. The Greeks and Servians had failed to gain much territory , which they had hoped for, when the new Albanian State was constituted. They hated the successful Bulgarians and claimed that Bulgarians were systematically massacring their peoples in cold blood.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. J.D. Bouchier, The Times' correspondent in the Balkan peninsula, wrote an important series of articles, in June, which , in dealing with the formation of the Balkan League, pointed out to the English public that the Allies had been originally united only in their desire to defeat Turkey, having been unable to agree on the future boundaries in the event of their victory.<sup>2</sup> Although England tried to remain optimistic that another Balkan war would not

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<sup>1</sup> Chamberlain, op. cit., p. 547.

<sup>2</sup> J.D. Bouchier, "Origins of the Balkan League," The Times, June 4, 5, 6, 11, 13.



occur, she saw that " the saddest spectacle in recent history is the contrast between the unity of the Balkan people in the hour of danger and their dissensions in the hour of victory."<sup>1</sup> The Westminster Gazette, in early April, termed the "disconcerting statements as to the way in which the armies of the Allies are being arranged against each other...[as] all very tiresome."<sup>2</sup> The public's gradual withdrawal of interest in the claims of the Balkan Allies is reflected in the pronouncements of the Balkan Committee, which had campaigned since the previous October to have the public's wishes carried out by the Government.

The Balkan Committee's fear that the Balkan Allies would not easily find an ethnically equitable settlement of their boundary disputes was supported by a letter written by Bouchier to Buxton on April 20.

I am horrified by the state of feeling I find here [in Sofia] and at Belgrade. At Belgrade they are more demonstrative - here "still waters run deep." The Servians cynically say they will not keep their treaty with Bulgaria because "the balance of power must be preserved in the Peninsula." They are very indignant and say they will give them "a taste of the bayonet." There is of course an end of all treaties if they are to be

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<sup>1</sup> Spectator, June 14.

<sup>2</sup> Westminster Gazette, April 23.

broken in this way....At Belgrade they coolly talk of a Servo-Greek attack on Bulgaria though, under the treaties of alliance, both Servia and Greece are bound to Bulgaria for terms of years. ...The only remedy for the situation is arbitration in some form or other; another<sup>1</sup> campaign would be a scandal and a disgrace.

The Balkan Committee, in the spring of 1913, showed a slight alteration in its objectives, bringing itself up to date with public opinion. On April 23, Buxton, chairman of the Balkan Committee, congratulated Grey on his management of foreign affairs, and , on May 29, he renewed his campaign for the Committee's basic objective of ousting the Turks from Europe.<sup>2</sup> They withdrew their support for any territorial claims made by the Balkan States, and, on July 17 and 22, Buxton asked Grey in the House of Commons to settle the disputed Balkan borders by creating a new state of Macedonia.<sup>3</sup>

With the hope of avoiding another conflict by arranging mediation, Tsar Nicholas of Russia sent telegrams to the Kings of Servia and Bulgaria. The Tsar's optimistic communication asked for the immediate cessation of all military operations and that representatives be sent to

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<sup>1</sup> The complete text of this letter can be found in Conwell-Evans, op.cit., p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> For Buxton's speeches on these two points, see Parl. Deb., Vol.52,col.497 and Vol.53, cols.407-408.

<sup>3</sup> See Parl. Deb., Vol.55, cols. 1404 and 1835.

St. Petersburg when Russia would act as mediator in their disputes. When the Balkan countries submitted th this request on June 12, all England sincerely hoped that the problems would be solved peacefully, and without necessitating armed intervention by the Powers.<sup>1</sup> On June 14, the Nation stated its impression of the general belief existing in England.

The Tsar's intervention has made it all but certain that there can be no second Balkan War. ...We believe, however, that this talk of armed intervention involved a sort of "lese-majeste" against public opinion and the resources of civilization. No one of the Balkan States is strong enough or isolated enough to ignore the effects of public opinion. They stand or fall together in this matter.

Anxious for peace, Buxton asked in the House on June 12 if England would also be mediator, but Grey answered that according to the treaty existing between Bulgaria and Servia, Russia should be the sole arbitrator.<sup>2</sup> Grey added the warning that "the Balkan Allies must be aware that if they fight each other respecting the fruits of victory, they might risk what they have hitherto gained

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<sup>1</sup> The Times, June 13; Westminster Gazette, June 12; Daily News, June 13; Nation, June 14. Also see E.J. Dillon, "The Czar's Telegram and the Smothered Balkan War," Contemporary Review, July, 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 53, col. 1758.

in the war with Turkey." But the hope that the Tsar's intervention would suffice to keep peace seemed doomed to disappointment as the weeks wore on.

On June 30, the main body of the Bulgarian army marched against Servia and Greece. No declarations of war were made as no Balkan State wanted to disregard outwardly the Tsar's telegram, which was regarded as a peremptory fait pax.<sup>1</sup> The Westminster Gazette, The Times, Economist and Nation voiced their disapproval of the continuing hostilities.<sup>2</sup> The Manchester Guardian took this opportunity to criticise Sir Edward Grey and the Concert for not putting "the position it had won a few months earlier to its best possible use," and asked that the Concert reconvene and take action.<sup>3</sup> The Nation answered the Guardian on July 5 in an editorial titled "Where was the Concert?"

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<sup>1</sup> On this point see Spectator, July 5 and E.J. Dillon, "The Latest Phase of the Balkan Crisis," Contemporary Review, August, 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Westminster Gazette, July 1, 5; The Times, July 1; Economist, July 5; Daily News, July 1; Nation, July 5.

<sup>3</sup> Manchester Guardian, July 2.

We can well believe that Sir Edward Grey was influenced singly and solely by the convention that Russia was the natural agency to reconcile Allies whom she had a share in bringing together. ...We have no criticism of Sir Edward Grey, except that he has been too modest, too little aware of the power of his own prestige, and, as usual, too slow to realize the limits of Russian competence and Russian good faith.<sup>1</sup>

In the first two weeks of July, the Bulgarian army collapsed before the combined attacks of Greece, Servia and Rumania.<sup>2</sup> With the Balkan Allies at each others' throats, the British public saw "in a flash how slender was the basis of their union."<sup>3</sup> As reports of atrocities committed by all the warring parties reached England, the earlier excessive enthusiasm for the triumphs of Balkan unity were replaced by extreme disgust at the fratricidal strife taking place in the Balkans.<sup>4</sup> Partly in anger,

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<sup>1</sup> Nation, July 5.

<sup>2</sup> Rumania, who had mobilised on July 3, joined in the hostilities on the grounds that she deserved territorial compensation as the Balkan Allies had conquered a large section of the Rumanian race (namely the Kutzo-Vlachs) in the previous Balkan war. For a complete statement of Rumania's claims see G.F. Abbott, "The Rumanian Factor in the Balkan Problem," Quarterly Review, April, 1913. The Daily News considered Rumania's claims as "piracy." Daily News, July 1.

<sup>3</sup> Spectator, July 12.

<sup>4</sup> In 1914 the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace published a Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars, which in part, tried to discover the authenticity of the atrocity reports made during the wars. Brailsford and Hirst represented Great Britain on the Commission of Inquiry.

partly from sheer ignorance and indifference, the majority of Englishmen thought:

If these Balkan barbarians must exterminate one another before peace comes, than the sooner they complete the task the better. We, at least, take no interest in the methods employed. These Balkan States are all tarred with the same brush, they are all savages, and their doings and mutual recriminations interest us not at all.<sup>1</sup>

In the House of Commons, on July 14, Mr. David Mason [Liberal] asked Sir Edward Grey to take action, either alone or jointly with the Great Powers to "impose an armistice" in the Balkans.<sup>2</sup> Mason noted that Grey held a "unique position...both in this country and in the councils of Europe" and that his influence was "second to none among foreign ministers." He argued that the Turks, who were massing their troops along the Bulgarian border, were about to march her troupes through the disputed territory toward Adrianople. He concluded his plea for action by saying that

this House, this country, and this Government... [would be] in a humiliating position if we are to have this solemn farce of a Peace Conference and a Treaty drawn up, and if anarchy is to be the result! If chaos is to continue, it is a reflection on our common civilization and our common humanity.

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<sup>1</sup> A.H. Trapmann, "The Shortest and Most Sanguinary Campaign on Record," Nineteenth Century, October, 1913. This article, written in October, contains a capsule review of British public opinion, some four months earlier, during the second Balkan war.

<sup>2</sup> For Mason's request see Parl. Deb., Vol. 55, cols. 1026-8.

The Foreign Secretary admitted that language too strong could not be used to define the "deplorable situation" and the "painful features" which existed in the Balkans.<sup>1</sup> Then Grey fired a salvo into the ranks of those who would ask the Government to jeopardize peace by "imposing an armistice."

Who is to impose peace? Am I, or is the Government to come down to this House and ask for a vote of credit to make use of the Crown to impose peace in the Balkan Peninsula?... The Concert of Europe has not to deal with questions of this kind.

As to the Turkish problem, Grey restated the fact that Turkey had repeatedly assured England that she intended to occupy only the territory up to the Enos-Media line,

which was agreed upon by the peace signed not by us, as the hon. Member seemed to imply, but by the Balkan States and Turkey the other day. So long as Turkey adheres to that intention and occupies up to the Enos-Media line I do not see that exception can be taken to her action.

Grey Closed his speech with the reminder that the most important thing was to keep the Powers in touch with one another and "that no one of them should take any action which is likely to cause difficulties in the future."

Grey's statement was favourably accepted by the Economist and the Daily News, who understood the diffi-

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<sup>1</sup> For Grey's reply to Mason see Parl. Deb., Vol. 55, cols. 1029-1031.

culties involved if the Powers were to intervene.<sup>1</sup> But the Manchester Guardian continued to press for the Powers to take action. The Guardian was "deeply disappointed" and stated that

Sir Edward Grey's speech...was the most depressing that we remember reading since a celebrated speech of Lord Roseberry's explaining why England must resist its<sub>2</sub> passionate impulse to stop the Armenian massacres.

On July 15, the Turkish army crossed the Enos-Media line and captured the Bulgarian town of Ainos.<sup>3</sup> The Daily News hoped that the Powers would intervene and keep the Turks out of Europe and asserted that "the Powers have shown a plentiful poverty of spirit in recent days, but they could not tolerate a flagrant outrage of this kind."<sup>4</sup> Enraged by the Turks re-entrance in Europe, Buxton tried to persuade the House to press the Government to take action against the new invaders before the "Christian

<sup>1</sup> Economist, July 19; Daily News, July 15.

<sup>2</sup> Manchester Guardian, July 17.

<sup>3</sup> Another revolt in Turkey on June 11 had deposed the government which had, by the Treaty of London, ceded Adrianople to Bulgaria. On June 12, the Westminster Gazette and The Times deplored this revolt. The Gazette stated that "so long as Coup d'Etat follows Coup d'Etat,...it is useless to look for 'union and progress' in Turkey", referring to the Committee of Union and Progress which came to power.

<sup>4</sup> Daily News, July 18.



population of Thrace is...exterminated."<sup>1</sup> But the Speaker of the House, echoing the opinion of most Englishmen, halted Buxton by stating that

it is very desirable that the matter should be left in the hands of the Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs in conjunction with the other European Powers, and the House should not take to pronounce upon the matter until the Governments have decided upon what course of action they will take.

In a speech at the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce on July 21, Asquith stated the Government's attitude<sup>2</sup> and the following day, at the request of Buxton, Grey made it known to the House.

I cannot say whether the matter will be reserved for the Conference of Ambassadors in London in particular. The Prime Minister's statement was to the effect that the Powers will reserve their judgement upon the settlement as a whole. By what method they will take that into consideration is, of course, a matter which they will decide when the time comes.<sup>3</sup>

The Times noted that all England was united in denouncing "the rash step taken by the Turks" and in the Government's policy not to interfere at this time.<sup>4</sup> The Westminster Gazette was satisfied with Asquith's decision and noted

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<sup>1</sup> For this speech see Parl. Deb., Vol. 55, cols. 1721-1722.

<sup>2</sup> The text of this speech can be found in The Times, July 21.

<sup>3</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 55, col. 1835.

<sup>4</sup> The Times, July 23.

that he was

as explicit about the Balkan situation as the occasion warranted, and at all events he makes it clear that the British Government objects in toto to the naïf suggestion of the Turkish Government that the Enos-Media line can be extended to include Adrianople.<sup>1</sup>

But events moved too rapidly and before the Powers could decide on the method of making their will felt in Constantinople, the Turkish army under Enver Bey recovered both Adrianople and Kirk Kilisse on July 22 and an armistice became effective on July 31. The delegates of the belligerents gathered for a Peace Conference at Bucharest on July 30. Although the fighting had ended and negotiations were underway, the British Press still hoped that the Powers would intervene and impose fair and therefore, permanent peace.<sup>2</sup> But Sir Edward Grey continued to hold his former ground, refusing to yield to the Press's desire to prevent a settlement that would permit Turkey's return to Adrianople and therefore Europe. On July 31 he reminded the House that it was futile to attempt to force Turkey to live up to a treaty (Treaty of London) that had never been signed.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Westminster Gazette, July 22.

<sup>2</sup> Daily News, July 31; Westminster Gazette, July 31; Manchester Guardian, August 1; Nation, August 2; Spectator, August, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 56, col. 701.

As the Powers withheld action for fear of creating undue tension among themselves, the conference at Bucharest proceeded apace. The Treaty of Bucharest was signed on August 10 between Greece, Rumania, Servia, Montenegro and Bulgaria and the second Balkan war was officially ended.<sup>1</sup> The final Balkan settlement left Bulgaria greatly reduced in size and strength as all her enemies received territory from her, including Turkey's re-extension into Europe beyond Adrianople.

Great Britain showed "general satisfaction" that the warfare was ended, but strongly disapproved of the harsh terms that were imposed on Bulgaria.<sup>2</sup> The public disliked the terms of peace, not because of a sympathy to the Bulgarian cause, but because they realized that such a demanding treaty did not help to remove the strong hatred which the belligerents still held; and these, England feared, might well explode again once the countries had time to recover.<sup>3</sup>

The Nation of August 9 attacked the Bucharest Peace, but stated that it gave public opinion a chance to "recover its balance and sanity" and to notice its own curious

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<sup>1</sup> Economist, August 16.

<sup>2</sup> The Times, August 11, 12; Manchester Guardian, August 11; Daily News, August 11; Westminster Gazette, August 12; Economist, August 16.

<sup>3</sup> Nation, August 9.

fluctuations.<sup>1</sup>

The success of the Balkan League against Turkey led to estimates of the victor States as extravagant in one direction as the depreciation of recent weeks has been excessive in the other.... None of the Balkan peoples have yet fully emerged from the state of savagery to which Turkish rule had condemned them all....The difference between the Turkish and Balkan rule is that the one is never civilised; the other lapses into partial barbarism only in times of war....The public is disposed to wash their hands of the whole affair in the Balkans....Public opinion wasted its virtue in passing moral judgments on the Balkan States, and it exhibits in the process, a memory and more hypocrisy than self-knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

The Treaty of Bucharest inaugurated a long truce rather than a stable peace among the Balkan States as their war ended for want of fuel. The Balkan Committee continued to campaign in vain against the Treaty, arguing that the problem of Macedonia would not be solved until Servia and Greece returned Bulgarian districts of Macedonia to Bulgaria. As late as March 7, 1914, Bouchier wrote to Buxton, deploring the situation in Macedonia.

It is only a mockery to abolish Turkish rule in the Balkans if it is to be succeeded by what is a worse tyranny in many ways - hundreds of refugees are still coming into this country (Bulgaria) from Macedonia, especially from the portion now governed by the Greeks.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nation, August 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Conwell-Evans, op.cit., p.35. On August 30, 1913, the Balkan Committee started the Balkan War Relief Fund, with Buxton as Chairman and Gardiner as Treasurer. Economist, August 30.

With a Balkan treaty of peace signed, the Ambassadors' Conference held its last session on August 11.<sup>1</sup> The following day Sir Edward Grey told the House the Powers' views on the Conference and the Treaty of Bucharest, showing that they preferred not to take action for fear that it might lead to greater complications.

It is true, of course, that there has not been unanimity between the Great Powers....The opinions expressed in the different countries on the merits of the different points of the Treaty of Bucharest differ, but there are no differences of opinion which show a tendency to divide the different groups of Great Powers into opposing camps. And so...the meetings of Ambassadors have been adjourned primarily because it is essential that the personnel of which they have been composed should have some rest.

If there should be interference with the Treaty of Bucharest it should be minimum of interference, and that...treaty should be regarded as valid,... It is quite clear that it is futile to suggest modification of the Treaty...unless the Powers... are prepared to assert their will by force.<sup>2</sup>

Grey again received a chorus of praise and congratulations from the House for his work with the Concert. Mr. A. Bonar Law, the leader of the Opposition, summed up the congratulations when he said that Grey played "a leading

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<sup>1</sup> For the closing speeches see B.D., Vol.IX,pt.2,pp. 1066-8. In his memoirs Grey spoke of the end of the Conference thus: "There was no formal finish; we were not photographed in a group;we had no votes of thanks;no valedictory speeches; we just left off meeting." Grey,opcit.,p.262.

<sup>2</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol.56,cols.2282-2292.

part" in maintaining the peace of Europe and concluded:

I am not speaking merely for my own party. On the whole, I think the support which he has received from his country has been almost greater than has ever fallen to any Foreign Secretary in the past.<sup>1</sup>

Buxton also congratulated Grey but based his praise on "more positive ground", namely that "the division [of Europe] into groups is largely gone."<sup>2</sup>

The Press was almost unanimous in their praise for Grey as the Spectator, The Times, the Westminster Gazette, the Economist, and the Nation devoted long editorials filled with complimentary phrases to the subject.<sup>3</sup> Even the Daily News, which had for a long time vigorously backed the causes of the Balkan States, praised Grey and the Concert. The News noted that if only Turkey would get out of Europe "we shall acquiesce in any final settlement accepted by Europe."<sup>4</sup>

Underlying the rise of Sir Edward Grey's popularity in Great Britain during the Balkan wars, was the public's

<sup>1</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 56, cols. 2297-2299.

<sup>2</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 56, col. 2300.

<sup>3</sup> The Times, August 13; Westminster Gazette, August 13; Nation, August 16; Economist, August 16; Spectator, August 16, 23. Only the Manchester Guardian on August 16 denounced the Concert and Grey for not intervening at the Bucharest Peace Conference.

<sup>4</sup> Daily News, August 13.

assumption that not only was England in no way committed to her entente partners, but that sympathy with Germany had reached the point of a complete reconciliation. But as the country was praising Grey's detachment from continental affairs in August 1913, the Foreign Secretary continued to maintain his policy of improving relations with Germany while respecting his entente friendships.<sup>1</sup>

The extent to which Grey's critics had reversed themselves between the Autumn of 1912 and the Autumn of 1913 may be seen in a speech delivered to the House some seven or eight months later. The speaker was Arthur Ponsonby, who, with Noel Buxton, had been a leader of Grey's Liberal critics before the Balkan wars.

A few years ago...there was a considerable state of tension in Europe....there was a general impression that at any moment [Anglo-German] hostilities would break out....That was the time when the policy of the balance of power in Europe was being very strongly supported - the policy of dividing Europe into two great armed and hostile camps....Then came the trouble in the Balkans and things changed. The policy of the balance of power was exchanged for concerted action among the Powers. ...it brought about a very much better state of relations between ourselves and Germany....that is all good and these improved relations continued.... We owe a great debt of gratitude to the Foreign

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<sup>1</sup> On August 11, 1913 Sir Edward Grey wrote to Sir G. Buchanan: "There is no question of German sympathies here in any sense that affects our understanding with Russia." B.D., Vol.IX, pt.2, p.980.

Secretary for this improvement, and we are grateful to him for the way in which he has maintained peace so far as this country is concerned during the eight years he has been in the Foreign Office. That fact is appreciated most deeply by everybody in this country.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Edward Grey, whose reputation had undergone a number of interesting reversals in the preceeding two years, now stood in the highest favor in all quarters of the land as England enjoyed her last few months of peace before the Great War.

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<sup>1</sup> Parl. Deb., Vol. 64, col. 1397.



## CONCLUSION

By the conclusion of the Balkan Wars, Sir Edward Grey's popularity in the House, the Press, and with the general public had reached its apex. This represented a considerable change from the position he held ten months earlier when the policies of the Foreign Office were the subject for criticism, not only by the Opposition, but, frequently by members of the Majority and the Liberal Press. This change in opinion came about as a result, not of changes in Grey's policies and principles, but of a reorienting of the public mind toward the country's foreign policy and the worth of that policy for England.

Finding a solution to the threat posed by the growing German naval power while at the same time maintaining cordial relations with France and Russia was the great problem that faced Grey throughout his term of office and was, in effect, the matrix of his foreign policy. With complete indifference to the praise or criticism of the Press, Grey strove constantly to improve Anglo-German relations without losing his entente partners. The Balkan troubles afford an illustration of Grey's conception of

the part which Great Britain should play in international situations in which no direct British interest was involved, but which endangered the general peace of Europe. Grey, almost alone in England, saw the Balkan wars in their proper perspective. They were a series of skirmishes, which, if not properly contained and quickly settled, could bring all the Powers of Europe to a disastrous war.

During the ten month period of the Balkan wars, the opinions of the British Press and public exhibited that peculiarity of opinions in a vital democracy - frequent, and often violent, change. The Government's "withdrawal" of the status quo note was taken to be a reversal of policy whereas it was, in effect, a continuation of a generally accepted European policy. The fervour, generated by the efforts of the Balkan Committee, for the nationalistic yearnings of the Balkans, after news of the atrocities, the Scutari affair, and the renewal of hostilities degenerated into a simple relief fund for victims of the Balkan wars. General concern over the degree of England's commitments to France resulted in the Grey-Cambon letters assuring all Englishmen that England, and England alone, would decide when she was to go to war. The Press

and the public optimistically extended this to mean that England had reverted to a position of equally amicable relations with all nations. This, coupled with the co-operation exhibited by England and Germany at the Ambassadors' Conference, was taken as proof that all major differences between these countries had been removed.

Grey's apparent reticence to make public the workings of the Foreign Office impelled certain Radical-Liberals to urge the establishment of a parliamentary committee to introduce, more effectively, the voice of the public into the formulation of foreign policy. By the close of the Ambassadors' Conference, where Grey had so notably reflected public attitudes and desires in his capacity as presiding officer, the concern over the alleged secrecy in the Foreign Office, deprived of nourishment, died a natural death.

The fluctuations in public opinion that accompanied all these events were induced by information, emotion, and misinformation. By the fall of 1913, a rare degree of unanimity in public opinion had come about as a result of Grey's success in steering England safely through a series of potentially dangerous incidents.

## APPENDIX

### Note of October 8 to the Balkan States:

The Russian and Austro-Hungarian governments declare to the Balkan states:

1. That the great powers strongly deprecate all measures that are likely to cause a disturbance of peace;
2. That basing themselves on article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin and acting in the interest of the populations, they take in their hands the execution of the reforms in the government of European Turkey, it being understood that the reforms do not infringe the sovereignty of H.M. the Sultan nor the integrity of the Turkish Empire. The declaration reserves for the powers the liberty of examining in common these reforms;
3. That if, notwithstanding all this, war should break out between the Balkan states and the Ottoman Empire, they will tolerate at the end of the conflict no modifications of the present territorial status quo in European Turkey.

### Note of October 10 to the Turkish Government:

The undersigned ambassadors of Austria-Hungary, Great Britain, France, Russia, and Germany have been instructed by their governments to inform the Sublime Porte that the five powers take note of the intentions which the Turkish government has publicly announced of introducing reforms, and will immediately examine with the Sublime Porte, in the spirit of article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin and the Act of 1880, the reforms which the situation in European Turkey necessitates and the measures for guaranteeing their execution in the interest of the populations. It is understood that these reforms will not infringe the territorial integrity of the Empire.

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