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MARY EDITH DURHAM AND THE BALKANS  
1900-1914

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Graduate Program in History  
McGill University, Montreal  
September 1995

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate  
Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of the degree of Masters of Arts.

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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

MARY EDITH DURHAM AND THE BALKANS 1900-1914

by Christian Medawar

This thesis is an exposition on the British traveller Mary Edith Durham and her various activities in the Balkans from 1900 to 1914. Durham earned a reputation as an ethnographer, traveller, reporter, political activist and relief worker. First, the thesis documents her experiences between 1900-1908 as a traveller in the Balkans. In this period Durham developed a keen interest for the history and cultures of the peoples of the Balkans. She also gained a solid knowledge of Balkan politics and became a familiar face in Montenegro and the Albanian territories of the Ottoman Empire. The study then describes her relief work in Albania and her efforts to lobby for the Albanian cause from 1910 to 1914, when she returned to England.

The research consists of both published works and unpublished sources, some of which have not been used for studying Durham. These include Durham's personal manuscripts, correspondence from other personal papers, and documents from the British Foreign Office archives. The research shows that Durham's views on the Balkan peoples and politics changed from 1900 to 1914. At first a supporter of the Balkan Slavs and critic of the Ottoman Empire, she became a passionate defendant for Albanian independence. The documents reveal how she lobbied ceaselessly on the Albanians' behalf, especially after the Malissori Uprising of 1911. To ensure that the Foreign Office remain informed about the political developments in Albania, she wrote despatches to many of its agents, or personal friends who were connected to British diplomatic circles. Also, through her books and numerous articles, she aimed to inform the British public about the then little known Albanian nation

The study concludes that Durham came to be recognized as an expert on Albanian and Montenegrin affairs and provided useful information for the Foreign Office. Furthermore, she successfully attracted attention to the plight of Albanian refugees in the wake of the Balkan Wars. However, she did not go so far as to influence Britain's Balkan policy. In Albania itself, she became famous for her relief work among the refugees during the rebellions of 1911, the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), and the summer of 1914 as Albania was spiralling into anarchy.

## RESUME DE THESE

MARY EDITH DURHAM AND THE BALKANS 1900-1914

par Christian Medawar

Cette thèse est un exposé sur la voyageuse britannique Mary Edith Durham et sur ses nombreuses activités dans les États balkaniques de 1900 à 1914. Durham s'est fait une réputation en tant qu'ethnographe, que reporter, et que militante politique; également, son aide humanitaire lui a valu de nombreuses éloges. Premièrement, cette thèse documente ses expériences de voyages dans les États balkaniques entre 1900 et 1908. Pendant cette période, Durham a développé un intérêt particulier pour les peuples balkaniques ainsi que pour leur histoire et les problèmes auxquels ils étaient confrontés. Deuxièmement, ce travail décrit son aide humanitaire en Albanie et ses efforts pour faire des pressions en faveur de la cause albanaise entre 1910 et 1914.

Cette recherche s'appuie sur des oeuvres publiées ainsi que sur des sources inédites, certaines d'entre elles n'ayant jamais été utilisées pour étudier Durham. Parmi ses sources figurent les manuscrits personnels de Durham, des correspondances d'autres archives personnelles, et des documents d'archives du British Foreign Office. Cette recherche démontre que les opinions de Durham sur les peuples balkaniques et la politique dans les Balkans ont changé entre 1900 et 1914. Au commencement, partisane des peuples slaves des Balkans et critique de l'Empire ottoman, Durham s'est vue devenir une fervente militante de la cause albanaise, c'est-à-dire de son indépendance. Les documents démontrent également les pressions qu'elle a faites en faveur des Albanais, en envoyant inlassablement des dépêches au British Foreign Office pour l'informer des développements politiques en Albanie. Ses livres et nombreux articles ont aussi servi à renseigner le grand public britannique sur cette petite nation alors peu connue.

L'étude conclut que Durham fût capable d'attirer l'attention de l'Occident sur la condition des réfugiés albanais après les désastres des guerres balkaniques. De plus, elle fournit au Foreign Office des informations utiles, bien qu'elle n'ait réussi à influencer la Grande Bretagne en ce qui concerne ses politiques balkaniques. Par ailleurs, en Albanie, elle s'est mérité un renom pour son aide humanitaire aux réfugiés des rébellions de 1911, des guerres balkaniques (1912-1913) et de l'été 1914 alors que le nouvel état d'Albanie se voyait tourbillonner vers l'anarchie.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

*Noel-Buxton Papers* .....BP  
*Mary Edith Durham Manuscripts*.....MS RAI  
*R.W. Seton-Watson Papers*.....SWP  
*Public Record Office, Foreign Office Files*.....FO  
*British Documents on the Origins of the War*.....BD

## INTRODUCTION

In September 1900, Mary Edith Durham, a thirty seven year old Englishwoman, landed at the Bocce di Cattaro on the Dalmatian coastline at the start of a two-month vacation. Her first visit to the Balkans made so great an impression on her that she was to return there several times over a period of fourteen years. By 1914, she had earned reputations as a maverick reporter on the Balkans in general, and as an authority on Albanian and Montenegrin affairs in particular. But she was also to become well-known as a relief worker, as a lobbyist for the Albanian cause, as a popular author, and ultimately as an ethnographer. The following account concerns her activities in the Balkans from 1900 to 1914.

Historians of the Balkans have regularly drawn from Durham's work. Both Stavro Skendi and Joseph Swire <sup>1</sup> use Durham's writings as key evidence in their studies of Albania's rise to nationhood. Christian Helmreich used some of her papers for his classic, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913.*<sup>2</sup> More recently, Noel Malcolm, who has drawn from Durham's ethnographic research and social observations for his history of Bosnia, called her "one of the most perceptive of foreign observers."<sup>3</sup> John Treadway, in his excellent monograph on the Montenegrin-Austrian relations between 1908-1914, acknowledges Durham's

writings not only for their informative quality but also "for their many witty and acerbic comments, which gave spice to the frequently dull contents of diplomatic despatches."<sup>4</sup>

Soviet historians have sparingly referred to Durham's work in their own accounts of Albania's liberation movements.<sup>5</sup> In Albania during the Hoxha years reaction to Durham's work was ambivalent: Arben Puto's history of Albania's independence recognizes Durham's work as valuable for its depiction of Albania's people and culture, though limited in scope.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, Enver Hoxha himself, who refers to her "mistaken generalizations stemming from her ideological limitations," regarded her as a "defender of the cause of Albania," and capable of "objective analysis and evaluation."<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, a descendant of Durham who had recently visited Albania told me that Durham's name still fires the imagination of the population. Durham is also an authoritative source to substantiate territorial demands. In the summer of 1994 at the Public Records Office I was informed that an Albanian historian was searching for material to support Albanian claims in Kosovo. As well he wanted to use Durham's correspondence with the Foreign Office to demonstrate that the Serb and Greek states have contributed most to the violence in the Balkans this century.

Despite the undoubted importance of her work, however, Durham was a neglected figure until recently. On 20 March 1944, a few weeks after her death, L.G. Whickam-Legg, editor of the

*Dictionary of National Biography 1941-1951*, wrote to Robert W. Seton-Watson, another 'Balkanist':

I wonder whether you could help me by giving me some assessment of the value of the work of Miss Mary Edith Durham in the Balkans. It's a difficult question to answer, I know, and it's not easy for me to find a suitable person with which to compare her. The nearest approach, *qua* person interested in the Balkans, is, of the people who have been through my hands, Lady Muriel Paget, but she was essentially philanthropic and not political. We gave her a [infinity sign] which means generally 400 words (more or less). I don't know much about her, and she may not be worth including in the Dictionary, so you see from this how much I should value your advice.<sup>8</sup>

Seton-Watson's response has not been found<sup>9</sup> but her name did not appear in the 1951 edition of the *DNB*.<sup>10</sup> Happily, there has been a recent surge of interest on Durham herself. Recent works have focused chiefly on Durham as ethnographer and traveller. An unpublished MA thesis (University of Amsterdam) by Tiny van Hal seeks to construct an "ethnobiography" of Durham and uses this as a case study to show how travel literature enriches anthropological research.<sup>11</sup> Dea Birkett includes Durham in her study of Victorian women travellers, *Spinsters Abroad*,<sup>12</sup> and June Hill concisely sketches Durham as a collector of Balkan artifacts in an article in a collection of essays *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Travellers in the Balkans*.<sup>13</sup>

John B. Allcock's "Constructing the Balkans" discusses Durham's influence on the West's perceptions of the Balkans. Also, John Hodgson's "Edith Durham, Traveller and Publicist,"<sup>14</sup> along with his introduction to the republished *High Albania*<sup>15</sup> (1985), contribute to biographical material on Durham. Despite their brilliance, these last two articles are more in the nature

of character studies which provide incomplete accounts of her life and adventures, and scant details of her political activities. Indeed there is no work providing a detailed account of Durham's political activities in the Balkans in the period 1900-1914. Nor does the literature on her pay much attention to her work for refugees and victims of war and there is virtually nothing on the formation of her views.

The purpose of this thesis is to help fill these gaps, at least in part. It is based both on her own published work, and on unpublished material. The latter includes journals and correspondence from the Mary Edith Durham Manuscripts (Royal Anthropological Museum), letters from the Noel-Buxton Papers, (McGill Redpath Rare Books Collections), correspondence with the Foreign Office, (Public Records Office) and a few documents from the R.W. Seton-Watson Papers (School of Slavonic and East European Studies).

The essay is divided in four chapters. Chapter I deals with Durham's first eight years in the Balkans (1900-1908), from her first landing to her return to England after her third visit of northern Albania. The following three chapters describe her last four years in the Balkans. Chapter II covers the period from Durham's return to Albania (April 1910), to her relief work in northern Albania after the Malissori Uprising (October 1911). Chapter III continues with Durham's activities in northern Albania until the start of the First Balkan War in October 1912. And finally, Chapter IV looks at Durham's involvement with the

Albanians during the Balkan Wars up to her departure from Albania at the start of World War I. The conclusion will summarize the findings of the study.

\*\*\*\*\*

It has been impossible to include diacritical marks and accents. Changing names of places is common in Eastern Europe and makes it difficult to keep a standard that will satisfy everyone. In general I have tried to keep the names of cities as Durham used them, that is as they were currently known before 1914, ie. Scutari rather than Skodra or Skoder, Kortcha rather than Korce, Constantinople rather than Istanbul. Another difficulty has been with family names, for example, Plamenac rather than Plamenatz. Generally, Turkish names are spelled as Durham did.

Finally, I would like to thank the following people and institutions for kindly granting authorization to use their archival material: I am grateful to Beverly Emery from the Royal Anthropological Museum (Museum of Man) for allowing me to see at least some of the Durham Manuscripts; to Dr. Richard Virr and the McGill Redpath Rare Books Collection for permission to use the Noel-Buxton Papers; to Christopher Seton-Watson for access to the R.W. Seton-Watson Papers at the School for Slavonic and East European Studies in London; and to the Public Records Office. I would also like to express my gratitude to Gill Trethowan, Durham's great grand niece for sharing with me some scraps of information on Durham's early life.

## ENDNOTES

## INTRODUCTION

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7. Cited from Hodgson, "Edith Durham, Traveller and Publicist," in *Black Lambs & Grey Falcons: Women Travellers in the Balkans*, ed. John Allcock & Antonia Young, (Huddersfield: University of Bradford, 1991), 9.
8. L.G. Wickham-Legg to R.W. Seton-Watson, 20 March 1944, box 6, Durham file, SWP.
9. At least not in Seton Watson's own papers.
10. Her named has recently been added to the supplement edition. See Harry Hodgkinson, s.v. "Durham (Mary) Edith," *The Dictionary of National Biography: Missing Persons*, ed. C.S. Nicholls, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
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CHAPTER 2  
"CITIZEN OF THE WORLD"

Little is known of Mary Edith Durham's life before her first voyage to the Balkans in 1900. She was born in Hanover Square, London, in 1863, the eldest of eight children. A student at Bedford College and at the Royal Academy of Arts, she exhibited at the Royal Academy, the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolours, and The Institute of Painters in Oils. She also illustrated the Reptile volume of the *Cambridge Natural History*, as well as her own books.

Durham's father, Arthur E. Durham, gained distinction as head surgeon of Guy's Hospital (London) and her grandfather, William Ellis, was a celebrated economist and friend of John Stuart Mill.<sup>1</sup> Her family figured prominently especially in the medical establishment and four members of the family, Mary included, were registered in the *Who's Who*.<sup>2</sup> While achieving eminence in their respective professional fields, they were also involved with various charitable organisation and community projects.<sup>3</sup>

Before she went to the Balkans, Durham asserted she led an uneventful life, caring for her ailing mother until the age of 37. Eventually, this brought her to a state of personal crisis, and the family physician recommended her a leave for a minimum of

two months each year in order to avoid mental and physical exhaustion. "Completely exhausted by constant attendance on an invalid relative [her mother]", she commented in retrospect, "the future stretched before me as endless years of grey monotony, and escape seemed hopeless."<sup>4</sup> It was under these conditions that she set sail with a friend on an Austrian Lloyd ship from Trieste for the Dalmatian coast in 1900.<sup>5</sup> As she recounted later, she "went to the Balkans mainly to draw, and for a change".<sup>6</sup>

We need not look further than this to explain her reasons for choosing the Balkans as a destination. It was cheap and as an artist, she may have been inspired by Edward Lear's *Journals of a Landscape Painter in Albania*.<sup>7</sup> Durham herself was often at pains to explain that she never expected to become involved in Balkan politics. Indeed, Durham was probably as ignorant of Balkan life and politics as most others in England. We may therefore begin this study with a very brief survey of the situation there as it was when Durham arrived in 1900.

The 19th century had been a period of rising discontent among the Balkan nations living under Ottoman domination. This culminated in the Eastern Crisis of 1876-1878 which prompted a political reorganization of the region at the Berlin Congress (1878). The Treaty of Berlin (1878) aimed to maintain a balance of power not only between the great powers but also among their client states in the Balkans. But important Balkan issues remained unresolved. Although Serbia, Greece and Rumania attained full independence, neither Serbia's nor Greece's demands were

fully met; Bulgaria became a tributary state of the Ottoman Empire and lost the province of Rumelia to the Sultanate; Macedonia, contested by Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian irredentists, remained under Ottoman rule; Bosnia also remained formally part of the Ottoman Empire but was given to Austria-Hungary in trusteeship pending constitutional reform of the Porte.<sup>8</sup>

By 1900, a perception that the Treaty had failed to satisfy the Balkan states' basic demands encouraged English liberals to lobby against it.<sup>9</sup> Thus, groups such as the Balkan Committee, founded by the Liberal Noel Buxton and James Bryce, actively supported and lobbied for Christian minority groups in the Balkans. Heirs of Gladstone's agitation against the Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria in 1876, they identified largely with the Balkan Christians living under the Ottomans and were critical of British policy which sanctioned Turkish rule in the peninsula in order to counterbalance Russian influence there. Their aim was to influence both public opinion and British policy in the Balkans.<sup>10</sup>

Two Balkan 'nations' remained in obscurity. The first was the ethnically Serbian principality of Montenegro which had resisted complete domination by Turkey for centuries. This fiercely independent attitude earned Montenegro the reputation of being the spearhead of the Greater Serbian movement. After the Berlin Congress, it was awarded Ottoman territory, including the port of Dulcigno (Ulcinj), which was ethnically Albanian.<sup>11</sup> The

Albanians had no state of their own, yet there were four Albanian-speaking provinces (*vilayets*) at the western edge of the Ottoman Empire - Janina, Scutari, Monastir and Kossovo, the latter of which contained a significant Serbian population too.<sup>12</sup>

Despite their ethnic differences, Balkan peoples were socially similar, not least the Montenegrins and Albanians, among whom Durham was to spend most of her time. Naturally, Albanian, an Indo-European language, was distinct from the Slavic dialects of the region. But clan and tribal loyalties dominated social relations for both Montenegrin and a great number of Albanians. There were few commercial centres in both, and northern Albania shared a mountainous landscape with Montenegro where sheep herding was the most common activity. Montenegrin men had a reputation as shepherds and for feuding, while women raised crops. Similarly, Albanian men lived according to ancient codes and customs, engaging in interminable feuds among themselves or outsiders.<sup>13</sup>

Notwithstanding the overall ethnic homogeneity of the Albanian lands, the Albanian communities were divided by clan, dialect and religion. In the north, especially these circumstances made it difficult to organize a centralized patriotic movement. Dialects varied north (Gheg) and south (Tosk) of the Shkumbi River; the highlanders of the north representing ten percent of the population, were Catholic; mostly in the south were the Greek Orthodox Albanians with twenty percent of the

overall population; the remaining seventy percent were Muslims, though many of these followed the unusual Bektashi version of Islam.<sup>14</sup>

Other elements discouraged the rise of national sentiment too. The economic organization of the north and south varied sharply. The northern tribes were mountain people while the lives of the southerners revolved around the *ciftlik*, ("large farms"), themselves run by native Albanian *beys*. The agrarian south was also more prosperous than the mountainous north, although less independent from Constantinople.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century Albanian patriotism had found a voice in émigré communities. Among these were groups in Italy such as the *Comitato Nazionale Albanese* (Rome) and the *Collegio San Adriano* (Naples). There were others, both Muslim and Christian, in Cairo, Bucharest and Sofia, which published nationalist magazines and journals.<sup>15</sup> This heterogenous group hoped to foster a sense of patriotism by standardizing the alphabet and grammar of the Albanian language, but saw their hopes dashed. Few Albanians were interested.

The first significant patriotic Albanian organization to form within Albania proper comprised staunch supporters of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. The *Albanian League*, a group of notables and *beys*, denounced the cession of Albanian towns and territories to its Slavic neighbours by the Treaty of Berlin and pressed for the Albanian *vilayets* to remain under the authority of the Sultan.<sup>16</sup> They loathed both foreign interference in Ottoman

affairs and Christian proselytising on the Sultan's territories.<sup>17</sup>

Since a majority of Albanians were Muslim, they had long served as soldiers in the Ottoman army and figured prominently among the Sultan's entourage. Albanians had profited more than other subject Balkan peoples from their association with the Ottoman regime in other ways as well, including exemptions from various taxes. In 1899, notables from several clans met in Ipek, (now Pec, in Montenegro) and joined to form another Albanian League, dedicated to the preservation and consolidation of the Sultan's power.<sup>18</sup>

Albania's nationalists tended to preach autonomy rather than independence, and for a good reason: the dismemberment of the Empire might threaten the distinctiveness and liberties of Albanians. Greece in the south, Montenegro and Serbia in the north, Bulgaria via Macedonia - all wanted to expand into Albanian-populated territories. By 1900 Albania had also become a point of interest to the Great Powers, especially Austria and Italy.<sup>19</sup> Austria saw Albania as a potential bulwark against any enlargement of the Serb territory: Italians coveted it as an area for expansion.<sup>20</sup> "Three foreign consulates, Austrian, Italian and Greek are 'watching Albanian interests'." wrote Durham in 1905. "The fourth, Russia, of course, is watching the other three."<sup>21</sup> This was the situation when she made her first appearance in the Balkans.

She landed in Trieste in August of 1900. Three weeks later, she arrived at Cattaro, "the natural port for Montenegro but the property of Austria"<sup>22</sup> and rented a donkey and a guide for the ride to Cetijne, the Montenegrin capital. "Everyone, Baedaker included, said it was correct to drive up to [Cetinje]..."<sup>23</sup> She was captivated by Cetijne,<sup>24</sup> commenting in an amused vein which set the tone for her future writings:

Saw my first Montenegrin...The first view of Montenegro is quite astonishing. It appears one vast desolation of impassable rock, crag over crag, an endless series of base mountains tops, utterly arid and utterly lonesome. The baldest, barest most ridiculous toy capital conceivable.<sup>25</sup>

Two days later (September 10), she wrote to her mother:

The drive up here [to Cetinje] is a tremendous affair (16 miles)...  
...The modern man never goes walking without a colt revolver in front and most frequently a modern rifle on his back, but the men are purely ornamental nowadays and seem to have nothing to do except to carry firearms and wear embroidery. The work, enormously hard, is all done by the women...The fellows who amuse me most are the Albanians.<sup>26</sup>

Durham jotted down only scant details of her trip but was interested enough in Balkan life to immerse herself in the study of Serbo-Croat upon her return to England.<sup>27</sup> And her journal entries of 1901-1903 are a chock-full of notes on the history of the medieval Balkans and the Old Slavonic language. She crammed the inside covers of her journals with extensive comments on such diverse matters as Serbian military service, churches and towns, the impact of the Turkish conquest in the Balkans, and Montenegrin relations with the Ottoman government.<sup>28</sup>

Durham returned to Montenegro in 1901, and then went down to Lake Scutari and Scutari, the northern Albanian capital, for the

first time. The town impressed her.<sup>29</sup> However, the rest of the two-month trip continued fairly uneventfully. In 1902, deciding that her 'holiday was due' she planned to tour the Serb-speaking lands, that is the Kingdom of Serbia, Montenegro and "Old Serbia" in Ottoman territory.<sup>30</sup> Transportation was rudimentary and uncomfortable and Durham rode horseback finding accommodations where she could. From this trip, she gathered material for eventual publication.

In March 1903, she published an article entitled 'From An Albanian Point of View' in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. For the first time Durham sympathized openly with Shklyptiar (Albanian) aspirations. It was an attempt to legitimise the right of the Albanians to 'nationhood' and statehood, recognizing their distinct culture and civilization.

You may catch an Albanian and tame him, and dress him in the garments of Western civilization, and teach him a trade or handicraft, and he will excel in it, for your Albanian is no fool, but he remains always an Albanian. He is tame in the sense that the domestic cat is tame. No self-respecting cat ever forgets that it used to be a wild beast, nor does the Albanian. This is however, only my narrow Western view of the matter. The tame Albanian differs with me entirely. According to him, it is we who are uncivilized.<sup>31</sup>

This was not the general view in England, where the mostly Muslim Albanian were not distinguished from the Turks. Those few who did recognize an ethnic distinction were not always kind towards the Albanians. For example, Sir Charles Eliot, in his scholarly and widely-read *Turkey in Europe*, took an unfavourable view of the Gheg (Northern) Albanians and of their feudatory social relations:

Two states of social relations are recognised, the one called Bessa, meaning peace, or rather truce, and the other Gyak, or blood feud. The sanctity attaching to the former has gained the Albanian a reputation for trustworthiness which they do not deserve, for they are a treacherous people.<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, it was easier for other nationalities, which had states of their own, such as the Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbs to obtain a voice in the Western press. This enabled them to establish contacts with Balkan friendship societies in England such as Noel Buxton's Balkan Committee, and with individuals like Arthur Evans, the explorer of Bosnia, and of the ruins of Knossos in Crete.<sup>33</sup>

Durham was in London in the summer 1903 when news arrived of an uprising in Macedonia. The *Illenden* (St Elia's Day) Uprising was organized by the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) in order to attract European attention to Macedonia. The ensuing Turkish repression was harsh. Christian peasants were deliberately chased out of their houses and entire villages were burnt and razed to the ground. The Powers responded by formulating the Murzteg Agreement which pressed for the formation of a European gendarmerie to control future Ottoman excesses within the Christian *vilayets*.<sup>34</sup>

The Macedonian uprising also prompted the formation of relief committees, including the Macedonian Relief Fund which was founded by Bertram Christian, a journalist who had covered the Greco-Turkish War of 1897 and was a member of the Balkan Committee. Volunteers for the Fund departed for the different

regions, among them the liberal journalist H.N. Brailsford,<sup>35</sup> his wife Jane Mallock-Brailsford, and Durham, who made arrangements for her mother's care and quickly embarked for Macedonia.<sup>36</sup> Sailing from London to Vienna, she arrived at Semlin in Serbia by train on December 23 and at Salonika on Christmas Day 1903.<sup>37</sup> She wrote to her mother immediately:

Dear Mater,

I am established here as a head of a depot with two men under me, a responsible position. Mr. Brailsford stayed two days to start me and has left for Ochrida today.<sup>38</sup>

In Ochrid, Durham met another liberal journalist and friend of the Brailsfords, H.W. Nevinson, who, like Bertram Christian had been a correspondent during the Greco-Turkish War.<sup>39</sup> He and Durham became friends after this first encounter.<sup>40</sup> However, he was taken aback by her language and in his memoirs spoke of Durham not as a soft-hearted sentimental nurse or philanthropist but rather,

Her manner towards strangers and people whom she distrusted was abrupt to [the point of] rudeness, and she would contradict her best friends with a sharpness that silenced dispute if not opinion. Her language in conversation was even more racy than the style of her books, and she had a way of hitting off affectation or absurdity with a slashing phrase that was not exactly coarse, but made the cultured jump....I have never known a woman to express facts or opinion with such startling vigour, especially in disagreement.<sup>41</sup>

She made a strong impression on others too, though for different reasons. Henry Brailsford criticized Durham for showing little compassion towards the needy Macedonian peasants. To him, Durham was an "artist who went to Turkey in search of the picturesque.

She found the Bulgarian peasants [sic.]...anything but an attractive spectacle"<sup>42</sup>.

For her own part Durham showed distaste for relief work, and claimed to be attracted to it mostly because of the "unrivalled opportunities it offered for exploring little known districts, watching the working of Balkan events from within and coming into contact with the people themselves."<sup>43</sup> Even her diaries reveal little interest in her work or the people she was helping. In March 1904, she wrote to her mother again:

I am learning the Albanian national instrument, a kind of baby mandolin. I have chuck[ed] Bulgar, it is a kind of bad Servian.<sup>44</sup>

Shortly afterwards, Durham received news that *Through the Land of the Serb*, her first book, had been published, but was disappointed to see that in the *Daily Chronicle* review she was mis-described as "Mary E. Durham"<sup>45</sup> She was pleased with the illustrations, however: "[T]hey are I think more interesting than the ordinary snapshots."<sup>46</sup>

The book is an exploration of the "stranger's" relation to the East and to the "Eastern Question."<sup>47</sup> It is at times a frank admission of her own ignorance of the region and her growing awareness of Balkan political dynamics. She oscillated between the two poles of British opinion: the anti-Turkish rhetoric of Gladstone and the traditionally sympathetic attitude towards the Turks of the British government. Now leaning towards the former, Durham attacked the Turkish administration of the Christian population in the Balkan.

I was brought up to consider the Turk a virtuous individual. Now I never cross his frontier without hoping soon to be able to witness his departure from Europe.<sup>48</sup>

Durham paid close attention to the multifarious ethnic and religious groups in the Balkans and how they vied for international recognition in a period of rising national sentiment. She urged Westerners to distinguish between ethnic Muslim Albanians and their Turkish co-religionists, sketching a picturesque and sympathetic portrait of the substantial Christian Albanian community living in Ottoman territory.

*Through the Lands of the Serb* provides an account of the nascent Albanian independence movement. But there is little in this early material to indicate that she was inclined to prefer the cause of one particular Balkan nationality over another. In fact *Through the Lands of the Serb* is distinctly sympathetic to Balkan Slavs. Her account of the assassination in 1903 of King Alexander Obrenovic of Serbia and his wife Draga, among one of the most memorable passages of the book, attests to this. True she was repelled by the killing, but she knew that it accorded with the sentiments of most Serbs, who despised the corrupt royal family, and she said so.<sup>49</sup>

On the question of Scutari, disputed between Great Serb nationalists (including Montenegrins), and Albanians, Durham supported the former even though ethnically it was almost entirely Albanian. In fact, she thought the Serbs were entitled to the north Albanian capital on historical grounds:

Skodra [Scutari] is not merely an interesting spot to visit from Cetinje; it also belongs rightly and properly to

Servian history. From a very early period (it is said the seventh century) it formed part of the Servian territories, and it remained unconquered after the fatal battle of Kosovo...[I]t was not taken by the Turks until 1479...Now the Turk holds Skodra, the Albanian calls it his, and the Montenegrin has never forgotten that it once formed part of the great Servian Empire.<sup>50</sup>

Ten years later, she was to protest to the world against the Serb and Montenegrin attack on Scutari, considering the entire Scutari vilayet to be Albanian.

The originality of her presentation and the vivid description of her adventures earned Durham excellent press reviews. *The Times Literary Supplement* saw in Durham "the type of enterprising and unconventional woman which seems to be almost a monopoly of Anglo-Saxon countries."<sup>51</sup> *The Athenaeum* recommended it as "about the best book of travels ever written."<sup>52</sup> This could have only encouraged Durham, who was now increasingly steeped in Balkan affairs.

In the Spring 1904 Durham ventured into Albanian territory again, this time on behalf of the Balkan Committee, in order "to acquire first-hand information as to the aspirations and ideas of the Albanians."<sup>53</sup> With her was Konstantin Sinas, an Albanian representative for the British and Foreign Bible Society. In April 1904, she wrote to Nellie that Sinas was willing to assist her, though Bible Society officials in London did not approve her presence with the *colporteur*. Together, they crossed the border in Albanian Tepelen and arrived shortly after in Valona, a small town lying on swampy ground, but destined to become an important centre of nationalist activity during the Balkan Wars.<sup>54</sup> She

identified herself to the Turkish authorities "not as a journalist nor a missionary. Je suis Anglaise."<sup>55</sup> What struck her most was the strict control over publishing by the Ottoman government:

Every book has to be stamped and approved by the Minister of Education. Every book of the Bible Society is thus marked in purple ink on the first page but in spite of this the local authorities try to prevent their sale. We have with us New Testament (Greek, Turkish, and Albanian) and Psalms in all 3 tongues and the book of Genesis in Albanian.<sup>56</sup>

At Berat, they were finally dispossessed of their entire stock of Albanian books, but not the Turkish or Greek ones. Durham disliked the formalities and every step along the way was marred by interrogations and bureaucratic obstructions. She likened these Ottoman idiosyncrasies to "a Gilbert and Sullivan opera written in blood". Her impressions of the Greek government was no better, because of its attempts to Hellenize the south's Orthodox population.<sup>57</sup>

Durham continued her way through the Albanian countryside, from Berat to Elbasan and then to Durazzo (Durrës) on April 27. For the first time she reached Scutari from Alessio rather than from Montenegro. In Scutari, "a number of unknown persons hailed me as an old friend."<sup>58</sup> Her presence had made a strong impression on the local Albanians because of the rarity of foreign travellers. In Scutari, she was introduced to the mother of the hereditary Prince of the Mirdite tribe, Prenk bib Doda.<sup>59</sup> A few days later in Oroshi, capital of the Mirdite tribe, she met with their Catholic Abbot Premi Doci, a stalwart of the patriotic movement.<sup>60</sup> She therefore had the opportunity

to discuss the aspirations of the Albanian nationalists with a number of local notables.

Since her arrival in December 1903, Durham had managed to criss-cross the terrain from Monastir to Tepelen, passing by Elbasan and Tirana, surprising the local population with her unconventional adventurousness. Travelling in a region notorious for its dangers gave her a high profile,<sup>61</sup> and the fact that she did it without a *dragoman* (official interpreter) but rather with a Bible salesman increased her fame even more.

Upon her return to England in May she busied herself on her next book, *The Burden of the Balkans*, a travel account of this latest adventure. In it she explicitly discussed her attempts to reach the general reader:

The diplomat, the geographer, the archaeologist, I do not pretend to be able to teach. My aim is a far humbler one...I wish to give the general reader a somewhat truer idea of the position of affairs in the Balkan Peninsula than he usually possesses."<sup>62</sup>

It was this attempt to dissect 'Balkan Affairs' which explains the more explicit 'political' overtones of *The Burden of the Balkans* as compared to *Through the Lands of the Serb*. *Through the Lands of the Serb* had concluded that, "the Balkan Slavs are not as black as they have often been painted."<sup>63</sup> In the preface of the *Burden of the Balkans*, however, Durham scoffed at the Westerner who believes that Turkey in Europe is a "spot....inhabited by Turks (all Moslem and bad)" and "Macedonians (all Christians and virtuous)."<sup>64</sup> Her impressions

of Balkan Slavs (especially Bulgarians) and of Greeks were harsh and coloured by the several encounters she had with nationalists of every side. She concluded that the Illenden uprising was a well-orchestrated Bulgarian conspiracy which sought to attract Western sympathies, apparently in the knowledge that lives would be lost.<sup>65</sup>

In Albania, all she saw was the desire for independence although independence itself remained undefined. She pleaded with the British public to recognize this "least known" of the Balkan people.<sup>66</sup> Durham then ventured to explain the source of tensions in the Balkans and developed a twofold argument. Firstly, Western ideas, implemented by, or forced upon, the 'small Balkan states' would prove to be incompatible with their culture.<sup>67</sup> Secondly she concluded, under the veneer of religion, nationalism was the driving force behind real and potential conflicts in the region.<sup>68</sup> Her perception was accurate. Religion had come to be organized along lines of nationality and was reinforcing national sentiments.<sup>69</sup>

She knew that when the Turks arrived in the Peninsula, it was already "divided by four race hatreds, three churches, and a powerful heresy..."<sup>70</sup> But she did not see the Ottoman government as capable of imposing peace; nor did she exonerate it from responsibility for the region's difficulties.

In 1905 she spent the larger part of her two months' holiday in Montenegro, and was greeted by Prince Nikola whom she had met

briefly the year before. This time, she had the chance to discuss his main political preoccupations, especially Montenegro's territorial ambitions eastward, in some depth. But this tour was also the occasion to "walk" across the principality, and her activities varied from visiting gun factories to collecting ethnographic material.<sup>71</sup>

In retrospect, Durham was to remark that in 1905 she became conscious of Russia's role in the Balkans - that Russia, seeking to demonstrate its influence after having been humiliated by Japan, prodded the Balkan Slavs into rebellion against the Turks and the Western powers.<sup>72</sup> Nikola, obviously, was one of the more important Slav leaders in the Balkans and she saw him as central to Slav intrigues. With this second encounter, Durham later asserted, began a long and turbulent relationship. However, neither her papers nor her contemporary publications support such affirmation and in all probability, she remained quite friendly with Nikola, making Cetinje a regular spot on her future stops, turning against him only after the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913.

After her mother's death in 1906 Durham returned to the Balkans for the fifth time. The loss of her mother meant that she was no longer restricted to two months' travel a year but was now "free to go where I please for as long as I like."<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, although Durham didn't refer to it, she must have had the means to do so.<sup>74</sup>

She had already gathered a mass of notes and observations on the Balkans, as well as artifacts relating to the customs of its

different ethnic groups. But she was as interested in politics as in anthropology. As a consequence of her many encounters during her travels, she had come to realize that "the vexed question of Balkan politics might be solved by studying the manners and customs of each district and so learning to whom each place belonged."<sup>75</sup> For this Durham planned to carry out a comparative ethnographic study of the 'races' of the Balkans starting in Bosnia, criss-crossing Montenegro, Bosnia and Albania periodically over three summers.<sup>76</sup> The result was a number of essays which remained unpublished for several years.<sup>77</sup>

Arriving in Bosnia in September 1906, she wrote from Sarajevo that "lots of Albanians hailed me with great joy and asked when I was coming back to Albania! Also Montenegrins."<sup>78</sup> And a few days later she was in Ragusa (Dubrovnik):

I found Ragusa swarming with acquaintances (the Bishop of Kalmeti is lodging in the same house). Premi Dochi the Mirdite. Also the Ramadanovs and Dushan Gregorovich who was secretary for Foreign Affairs. He is new consul at Scutari.<sup>79</sup>

Bosnia's mix of different religious and ethnic groups impressed her. But she also thought Bosnia showed that the Treaty of Berlin (1878) had been wrong to place the territory under Austrian administration. The result was to frustrate Serbian ambitions to expand into territory previously held by the Ottomans (even though Muslim Bosnians did not wish to be severed from their Ottoman connection). Tensions flared between the Austrian occupiers and the Bosnian Serb population who received

the Archduke Francis Ferdinand coolly when he made an official visit in Sarajevo in 1906.<sup>80</sup>

On September 26 she left Ragusa for a major tour of Bosnia. Soon after she wrote to her uncle Ashley:

So far I have got on very well. Here the people are the same race exactly as in Montenegro and were only divided by the Treaty of Berlin. It is surprising what a lot of trouble that Treaty made (because of the borders). Austrian occupation a mess. I hope our occupation of Egypt is better managed.<sup>81</sup>

In November of 1906 she was again in Sarajevo where she continued to take Serbian lessons from an out-of-work schoolmistress.<sup>82</sup> She decided to spend the winter in the Bosnian capital, befriending Muslims and Christians (Orthodox and Catholic) alike. Getting to know the locals gave her a better understanding of the political aims and aspirations of the different groups. Naturally, each looked towards their respective protectors: the Muslims to Turkey; the Orthodox to Serbia; and the Catholics to Austria, which was thus not as unpopular as she had thought earlier.<sup>83</sup>

In the winter 1907, Durham was back in Cetinje. She had not only toured Bosnia but Montenegro too, collecting artefacts and showing a great interest for its culture. Hearing of Durham's increasing interest for his principality, Prince Nikola asked her if she could organize the Montenegrin display for the Balkan Exhibition in London scheduled for the spring 1907. She therefore planned to return there early in March 1907.<sup>84</sup>

That spring, Nikola had also awarded her the gold medal of merit for her sympathetic portrayals study of Montenegrin life

and culture. Her desire to wear the decoration later in London prompted her to request Whitehall's official permission. This is the first public record of Durham we have in the Foreign Office files. Charles des Graz, then British minister at Cetinje, described her to Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary, as "a well-known writer who takes great interest in the Montenegrins and their country where she has stayed and travelled for several years."<sup>85</sup> A week later des Graz reported again to Grey: "Miss Durham has spent part of several years travelling and living in Montenegro and I can testify, from what the Prince has told me, to the esteem in which she is held in the country."<sup>86</sup> She was granted permission.

The Balkan Exhibit itself appears to have been a success but did not happen without mishap for Durham. In the middle of the event, word came from Montenegro that there had been a conspiracy against Nikola. The Montenegrin representatives hurried back home, leaving Durham in charge of their stand. But she was unhappy with this and soon wrote to the Montenegrin government demanding that it appoint a representative in London to replace her. She refused to continue being its spokesperson without authority and pay.<sup>87</sup>

Nonetheless her role as Commissioner for the Montenegrin exhibit of 1907 was rich in consequences for her 'career' as a respected ethnographer. For several years she had collected notes and folkloric objects from the Balkans. A fellow-student of Durham's, Hannah Myers, with whom she shared a studio in London,

had earlier put her in touch with British anthropologists who were struck by the originality of her research and requested of her to present a paper at the Royal Anthropological Institute.

In autobiographical notes she made later in life, she commented::

I had to arrange the whole Montenegrin exhibit and contrary to the advice of the directors [of the exhibit], who thought it poor stuff, I staged a lot of wooden models of ploughs, etc, and a case of amulets and ornaments. The glad news spread among anthropologists that a woman was selling interesting specimens at - of all places - Earls Court. Harrison came and bought all the models for the Horniman. Westermarck came. Sir W. Ridgeway came - and asked me to lecture at the Fitzwilliam. He took me in hand and commissioned me to buy amulets for him and used to send me questions to find the answers to, re tribes, marriage, funerals, etc. I used to tell him I would hunt the hares if he would cook them.<sup>88</sup>

The following year she was made fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute and remained closely connected to it all her life, becoming a frequent contributor to its publication, MAN.

In April 1908 Durham returned to Cetinje. The Montenegrin capital was rife with rumour and intrigue. Soon she found herself drilled by Montenegrin officials eager to hear about press reports in England regarding Montenegro, especially the plot against Nikola which had been uncovered at the time of the Exhibition.<sup>89</sup> As far as she could tell, little beyond unrest in Montenegro had been reported. She soon became annoyed, however, at the prospect of remaining in Cetinje with the sole purpose of discussing politics, a task sure to keep her from her more immediate interests - an anthropological study of Albania.

Consequently, in May 1908, Durham left Cetinje "to stew in its own juices" and set out to fulfil her long-held dream, riding out of Scutari early in the morning for an extended tour of northern Albania, home to Albania's Catholics. She describes her experiences in *High Albania* which was published the following year.

In July 1908, Durham was on her way back to Scutari when she heard of the Young Turk Revolution.<sup>90</sup> The Young Turks had opted not to dispose of Abdul Hamid but promised important reforms, including a liberal government and the retrieval (and implementation) of the 1876 Constitution.<sup>91</sup> At first, Durham was pleased. In *High Albania* she describes the joy with which the 'Constituzi' was received in Scutari.<sup>92</sup>

To the Christians, especially, the moment was supreme. "We are free! We are free!" cried an old man. "All my life I have waited for this moment. Now, thank God, I shall die happy!"<sup>93</sup>

But within weeks, she recognised that the Albanians expected too much of the Constitution

"We were told that we would get the road [built]..." I urged in vain that no government could establish order in six weeks...They expected the constitution to keep order but said they wanted no Turkish zaptiehs [gendarmes]... The constitution is a sort of "magic dicky". They expect to receive all and give nothing.<sup>94</sup>

The Albanians themselves were divided about the revolution and support for it was fragile. Some supported the Young Turks, seeing in the promise of the constitution an opportunity to increase their own autonomy within the greater Ottoman family.<sup>95</sup> On the other hand in July 1908 Albanian battalions

loyally responded to Abdul Hamid when he called for the crushing of the Young Turk mutiny in Monastir.<sup>96</sup>

Then there were the Mirdites, the only entirely Catholic tribe of northern Albania, who, she noted, cared little, if at all about the constitution. They were more preoccupied with the return from exile of their hereditary Prince, Prenk bib Doda.<sup>97</sup> As for the Muslim Kossovars, they feared the loss of tax exemption guaranteed under the Sultan. Durham even heard of a Muslim Albanian schoolmaster from Seraglio who was expelled from town for opposing the constitution.<sup>98</sup>

On August 23, on her third journey, Durham mounted a packhorse and with her 'faithful' guide Marko Shantoya and a *kindje* rode out of Scutari towards the River Drin which she crossed at Trappa on the borders of Mirdita.<sup>99</sup> Her journals for the period reflect a familiarity with the land and its people which was exceptional for travellers in the Balkans at that time. Everywhere she went, there was someone to greet her, or another to argue with. Upon her first entrance in Mirdita, she was recognized by a long time acquaintance, a local *zaptieh* (gendarme). On August 23, she stayed with a Muslim friend of the Hasi tribe. The following day in Djakova, she argued with the head of a Muslim tribe who disapproved of her presence. On August 26, she participated in the feast of Assumption at the Devish monastery. Durham also established contacts with European diplomats in the area. In Prisren, in September of 1908, she met the Austrian consul Prochaska, and the Italian Vice Consul with

whom she discussed how 'to maintain the balance of power' in Europe.<sup>100</sup>

From about this time Durham also had more frequent contacts with British consular services in the region and with the Foreign Office. Early in October N. Summa, acting British vice-consul in Scutari, received a letter from Durham in which she sketched a portrait of tension and apprehension between Turks and Albanians, citing the numerous cases of looted Catholic Albanian villages. She also attacked the Balkan Committee, of which she had been a member in 1907, since "I suppose [it] only helps Bulgars". Summa noted that "She is a remarkable woman with a great command of strong language." Sir Edward Grey added "This shows a hopelessly confused situation in Albania."<sup>101</sup>

The Young Turk revolt had certainly shaken the Balkan political chessboard and provoked events contrary to its original intent: in October, Austria annexed Bosnia, and Bulgaria unilaterally declared independence. In Constantinople, during the elections of fall 1908, a struggle emerged between the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), until then the dominant force in the Young Turk movement, and the more decentralist Ottoman Liberal Union.<sup>102</sup>

More trouble lay ahead. In November 1908, Durham told of a prophecy recounted by Albanian shamans of "war clouds" and "blood on all the bones, 'perhaps before Christmas, certainly by Easter.'<sup>103</sup> In late April 1909 a failed counter-coup by forces loyal to Abdul Hamid, mostly by members of an extremist religious

organization, resulted in his abdication and he was replaced by his half brother Mehmed V.<sup>104</sup> Durham was apparently informed beforehand of the counter-revolution and had hoped for its success, not wanting the return of the Sultan, but the occupation of Ottoman Turkish territory by the Great Powers.<sup>105</sup> However, she was unable to witness "the last act of the tragedy of the Near East," the deposition of Abdul Hamid.<sup>106</sup> She had contracted malaria and was suffering from sciatica. Therefore, in December 1908 she left the Balkans for England.<sup>107</sup>

Her diary shows no entries between the end of September 1908 and April 1910, the date of her return to Scutari. It appears that aside being bedridden, bored and longing to return to the Balkans, she continued writing about the Balkans.

In her political memoirs, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, Durham stated that her interests in 1908 continued to be primarily 'ethnographic', but between September 1908 and February 1909 she published several articles in *The Fortnightly Review* and other magazines,<sup>108</sup> in which she discussed the implications of the Young Turk Revolution for the Balkans and Albania. In this context,

the so-called Near Eastern Question depends on the Albanian Question, and...no scheme of 'reform' in the Balkans that does not recognise the Albanian nationality can hope to succeed.<sup>109</sup>

But the Young Turks thought that to recognise an Albanian nationality might undermine their own plans at nation building. And they found many friends in London, where the Revolution had been greeted with relief. Even the Foreign Office, which had long

supported Abdul Hamid II, hoped that the new 'liberals' in Constantinople would realign themselves closer to London and away from the German/Austrian sphere of influence favoured by the Sultan.<sup>110</sup>

The Balkan Committee too suggested that they be viewed as potential allies, as a Liberal Party in Constantinople. Others, such as Edwin Pears of the *Daily News*, and Philip Graves of the *London Times*, both correspondents in Constantinople, endorsed the new regime.<sup>111</sup> A letter sent from Egypt by C.R. Buxton to his brother Noel describes this compassion felt for the Constantinople revolutionaries:

I am sceptical about the Turks from a liberal point of view and am sure they don't care whether the Bulgars are persecuted or not but as men and revolutionists I admire them enormously and fully realize that they can have nothing in common with those mangy curs with whom the soil of Egypt is cursed.<sup>112</sup>

And Durham too was enthusiastic at first about the Young Turks' potential, though sceptical about their capacity to deliver reforms. To be sure, any reasonable alternative to Abdul Hamid's despotism would benefit the Empire and therefore,

The sympathy of Englishmen of all parties must be with the Young Turks in their attempt to weld all the races and creeds of the Ottoman Empire into a unity resembling that of the Habsburg dominions.<sup>113</sup>

However, she warned,

The authors of the new revolution are no cosmopolitan pacifists, but are animated by a national spirit as intense as any passion of patriotism ever known in the West.<sup>114</sup>

What, therefore, was the solution for Albanian nationalists? They were left with little choice, she explained in the spring 1909,

"compelled to support it [the Ottoman Empire] in self-defense," against the potential threat of dismemberment by Albania's Balkan neighbours.<sup>115</sup>

Advocating the Austro-Hungarian model as the surest one to secure stability in Ottoman Turkey, she nonetheless harshly criticized the former for its intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In "The Truth About Bosnia and the Herzegovina" she sided with the "Servians" of the region, stating the Austrians were making all too obvious their steps "*nach Salonika*." which had been first taken in 1878 at the Berlin Congress. Despite Austria's withdrawal from the Sancak of Novipazar,

Austria [has] broken faith and will deceive again. The scheme for advance - at the expense not only of the South Slavs but of Turkey - has not been abandoned....Does it mean improvement in the lot of the people? No.<sup>116</sup>

But, she believed, little could be done for Bosnia, for the Concert of Europe was "too cowardly - or too heavily bribed". With regard to Albania, Europe was ignorant about its aspirations and blind about the Young Turks (the "sons of the old ones").<sup>117</sup>

One of the reasons for Durham's growing distrust of the Young Turks was their publicly announced intent to establish a unitary Ottoman state which would preclude recognition of the national minorities in the Empire. The earlier enthusiasm therefore gave way to caution. The Young Turks seemed to be more imperialistic than either liberal or constitutional.

Durham finally published *High Albania* later in 1909. It is both an account of her exhilarating adventures and a detailed ethnographic report. Reviewers again recognized her as a formidable traveller: "Miss Durham loitered in the very worst parts of North-Western Albania - in Shala, Shoshi, Dushmani, Berisha and Nikaj - and passed through two closed Moslem territories, Ljuma and Luria.". Her travels had increased her sympathy for the Albanians and that these sentiments had political implications was clear to her readers. "[Miss Durham] makes no secret of preferring an Albania run by Albanians to an Albania run by anyone else, whether it be Austria or a *Jimiet* (committee) of Young Turks."<sup>118</sup> She confirmed this herself later: "The more I saw of Albanians and of the Slav intrigues for their destruction, the more I thought Albania worthy of help."<sup>119</sup>

Most critics praised *High Albania*, though some thought Durham had idealised the blood and violence typical of northern Albania. Perhaps Durham was coming to identify herself too much with clan life. At any rate one reviewer commented that:

It is perhaps not too much to say that she has even acquired some of the savagery which is to her the most attractive quality of the Albanians. The blood feud seems to make an especial appeal to her. The book literally reeks of blood.<sup>120</sup>

Perhaps overly dramatic, this reviewer pointed to something which Durham had herself frequently alluded to: her feeling that life in the West was staid. The Balkans, on the other hand offered

the traveller raw, primitive ideas, which date from the world's well-springs, its passionate strivings, its

disastrous failures [which] grip the mind. The Balkan nations were engaged in a struggle that never ceases, though it is only now and then that it reaches...a bloody climax....No Roman Emperor ever planned a spectacle on half such a scale.<sup>121</sup>

By 1909, Durham had accumulated an extensive knowledge of the Balkans, of the Balkan peoples, and Balkan politics. Her numerous encounters had acquainted her with some of its leading figures including King Nikola of Montenegro, Yanko Vukotic (general of the Montenegrin army and cousin to the queen), Issa Boletin, future leader of the Albanian Kossovar insurgents, and the Abbot of the Mirdites, Premi Dochi. Furthermore her exploits as a woman travelling alone had made her a legend for the local population; and she returned the compliment with her unbounded admiration for the Albanian population:

The fact that the whole population can be under arms and ready in some ten minutes makes one realise the possibilities of the place. It is like a [...] tiger; bizarre, beautiful and brilliant - but ready to spring. But unlike the tiger it is very industrious.<sup>122</sup>

On New Years Day 1910, Durham was still in London trying to keep abreast of the situation in the Balkans. The region was soon to experience one of the most turbulent period in its history and sensing the tension, she yearned to return there quickly.

## ENDNOTE

## CHAPTER 1

1. Hodgson, "Edith Durham, Traveller and Publicist", 9; Hodgkinson, s.v. "Durham (Mary) Edith."

2. *Who Was Who*, Vol. IV, 1941-1950: Mary Edith Durham, b.1863; Frances Hermia Durham (1873-1948); Lt.-Col. Frank Rogers Durham (...-1947); Herbert Edward Durham (1866-1914?). (London, Adam & Charles Black, 1953).

3. Her family background was to a great degree typical of the upper middle-class which was given to travel and activism for various causes. See Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 116. See also F.K Prochaska, "Philanthropy", in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950, Vol.3*, ed. F.M.L. Thomson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

4. Mary Edith Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1920), 9.

5. The name of the friend is not mentioned.

6. Cited in B. Blackwood, "Mary Edith Durham: 8 Dec. - 15 Nov. 1944," *Man*, 45, no.14, 23.

7. Edward Lear, *Journals of a Landscape Artist in Albania*, (London: 1851). Lear was familiar not only with Albania, but with Montenegro, Greece, and Sicily as well.

8. Literature on the Berlin Congress is vast. A copy of the text can be found in F. Martens, *Recueils des traités et conventions conclus par la Russie avec les puissances étrangères, Tome VIII, Traité avec l'Allemagne*, (St. Petersburg, 1888). The Eastern Crisis is covered in *Insurrections, Wars, and the Eastern Crisis in the 1870's*, ed. B. Kiraly and G. Stokes (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). The consequences of the Berlin Congress are analyzed in the same collection as well as Georges Castellan's *History of the Balkans from Mohammed the Conqueror to Stalin*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992) and L. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, (New York, 1958).

9. For the English Liberals' view about the Congress, which was critical of Disraeli's policy at Berlin, see R.W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question*, (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., 1935). Durham shared this view.

10. The Balkan Committee, was formed under the leadership of the brothers Noel and Charles Roden Buxton in 1902. In 1907, the Committee's roster read like a compendium of Progressive and Liberal supporters: H.N. Brailsford, Arthur Evans, L.T. Hobhouse, C.F.G. Masterman, H.W. Nevinson and several other prominent members. For the spiritual ancestor of the group, see the penetrating study by Richard Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation, 1876*, (London, 1963). For an exposition of the group's orientation, see Noel Buxton, *Europe and the Turks*, (London: John Murray, 1907). For a list of members, see *ibid.*, 134-135. See also T.P. Conwell-Evans, *Foreign Policy From a Back Bench 1904-1908: A Study based on the Papers of Lord Noel-Buxton*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 4; Robert Vogel, "Noel Buxton: the 'Trouble-Maker' and his Papers". *Fontanus III*, 1990, 139-150; and L.S. Stavrianos, "The Balkan Committee", *The Queen's Quarterly*, xlviii (1941), 258-267.

11. Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, chapters 1&2; Great Britain, Foreign Office Handbook, vol.3, no.17, *Albania*, (London, 1920), 38-40.

12. Foreign Office Handbook, *Albania*, 1. In fact only the *Sancaks* (territorial subdivision of *vilayet*) of Ipec, Prisren and Prishtina of the Kossovo *vilayet* and those of Dibra and Monastir were Albanian.

13. Carleton S. Coon, *The Mountain of Giants*, (Massachussetts: Peabody Museum, 1950), looks strictly at social organization of the northern Ghegs; Mary Edith Durham, *Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs of the Balkans*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1928). Tribe by tribe, she notes differences and similarities. For an excellent, brief account of Montenegro's economy and history, see Treadway, *The Falcon & the Eagle*, 1-21. See also, Great Britain, Foreign Office Handbook, *Montenegro*, (London, 1920), 39-71; T.Zavalani, "Albanian Nationalism," in *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, ed. Peter F. Sugar and Ivo J. Lederer, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1969), 55, stresses differences in language, customs, social organization and traditions between Albanians and Slav and Greek neighbours.

14. Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 12-18.

15. Pericles J. Polyvios, *L'Albanie et la réunion d'ambassadeur à Londres*, (Paris:Arthur Rousseau, 1914), 61; Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening*, 152.

16. The classic account of the Albanian League is found in Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening*, Part I. See also T. Zavalani, "Albanian Nationalism," 62-69.

17. Alan Palmer, *The Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire*, (London: John Murray, 1992), 187. However, they were eventually repressed by Abdul Hamid after he agreed to the terms imposed by the Congress.

18. Ibid.

19. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 216. Durham notes that by 1911 Italy's legation in Cetinje was larger than Austria's.

20. Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle*, 66-74.

21. Mary Edith Durham, *Burden of the Balkans*, (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1905), 302-03.

22. Mary Edith Durham, *Through the Lands of the Serb*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1904), 3.

23. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 10.

24. Durham, *Through the Lands of the Serb*, 11.

25. Journal, 8 September 1900, MS 42:1, RAI.

26. Durham to Mother, 10 September 1900, MS 43, RAI.

27. In which she became fluent. She studied with a Polish teacher.

28. Journal, MS 42:2, RAI.

29. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 38. Hindsight perhaps distorted her view. She probably came to this conclusion only after turning against Montenegro in the latter part of her travels. "In 1901 I visited Montenegro and went down the lake to Scutari. Scutari captured me at once. It had colour, life, art. Its people were friendly and industrious and did not spend all their time drinking rakia and swaggering up and down the street as at Cetinje."

30. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 41.

31. Mary Edith Durham, "From an Albanian's Point of View," *Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 March 1903.

32. Sir Charles Eliot, *Turkey in Europe*, (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd. 1965. First published, 1900), 357.

33. John Wilkes, *The Illyrians*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 6-8.

34. E.E. Ramsaur, *The Young Turks: Prelude to the Revolution of 1908*, (New York: Russell and Russell, 1957), 117-118. This initiated contact between 'Young Turk' officers of the Third Ottoman army stationed in Macedonia, with French, English, Italian, German Austrian and Russian officers. Many of them loathed the European officers as interfering foreigners, though they admired and envied them for their lifestyles and education.

35. See Brailsford's splendid study which resulted from his own travels: H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia, Its Races and Their Future*, (1906; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1971).

36. For a group portrait of British activists and relief workers in the decade preceding WWI, see Harry Hanak, *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary During the First World War*, (London, 1962). See also F.M. Leventhal, *The Last Dissenter: H.N. Brailsford and His World*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 49; and Hugh & Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe: R.W. Seton-Watson and the Last Years of Austria-Hungary*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), 106.

37. Durham, *Burden of the Balkans*, 110.

38. Durham to Mother, 25 December 1903, MS 43, RAI.

39. Durham's papers contain little on the impression Brailsford or Nevinson made on her.

40. Henry W. Nevinson, *Fire of Life*, (London: John Nisbet & Co. Ltd, 1935), especially 143-153 and 276.

41. *Ibid.*, 277.

42. Cited in Hodgson, "Edith Durham as Traveller and Publicist," 15. This criticism apparently did not damage their lifelong friendship.

43. Durham, *Burden of the Balkans*, 118.

44. Durham to Mother, 1 March 1904, MS 43, RAI.

45. Durham to Mother from Ochrid, 7 March 1904, MS 43, RAI.

46. Durham to unknown from Ochrid, 14 March 1904, MS 43, RAI.

47. She explores similar ideas in, Edith Durham, "Balkan Sketches," *Pall Mall Gazette*, 8 August 1904.

48. Durham, *Through the Lands of the Serb*, 93.

49. Durham, *Through the Lands of the Serb*, 143, 256-259, 315, 321; Compare these impressions with Durham later anti-Serbian work, *The Serajevo Crime*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd, 1925), 22-28. See also Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 77. Her involvement in this affair went deeper as she was later to reveal. In 1902, as guest of the Karageorgevic clan (successor to Alexander Obrenovic), she was warned of the plot to assassinate the royal Obrenovic couple and asked if she could 'work a propaganda' in England for the Karageorgevic. Serbian authorities even suspected her of plotting to put Prince Mirko (Nikola's son) on the Serbian throne. But as she later revealed, the "Serb police were fools enough to imagine that I was in the plot -- and so gave it away to me!" See letter from Durham to Noel Buxton, 17 November 1917. Box 1-2, BP. She also implicated Prince Nikola of Montenegro as he "gave himself away to me badly [concerning the murder of Alexander] in a private interview."

50. Durham, *Through the Lands of the Serb*, 96.

51. Review of *Through the Lands of the Serb*, anonymous, *Time Literary Supplement*, (8 April 1904).

52. Review of *Through the Lands of the Serbs*, anonymous, *Athenaeum*, (19 March 1904).

53. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 100.

54. In fact, it was in Valona that Ismail Kemal declared Albanian independence in the fall 1912. See Chapter IV; also Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening*, 462-463.

55. Durham, *Burden of the Balkans*, 304.

56. Durham to Nellie, 5 April 1904, MS 43, RAI. In fact a ban on all material printed in Albanian was in effect and the Bible Society was granted permission to distribute books as it was not thought of being able to produce a Bible in the still unstandardised Albanian tongue. When the latter was translated, it was condemned vehemently both by the Sultan's censors and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate who threatened to excommunicate any Albanian Orthodox who used Albanian in school or church. See Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 373; Swire, *Albania, the Rise of a Kingdom*, 68.

57. Swire, *Albania, The Rise of a Kingdom*, 68. The Greek government was actively preparing the southern Albanian population, mostly Greek Orthodox, for incorporation in Greece at any given moment. In Constantinople, the Patriarch's threats to excommunicate any Greek Orthodox who used the Albanian language in church services or in nationalist journals reached far. In Boston, the Albanian patriot Fan Noli had to be ordained by the Russian

Metropolitan in New York, since the Greek higher clergy objected to him for political reasons. See also Durham, *Burden of the Balkans*, 307.

58. Durham, *Burden of the Balkans*, 366.

59. *Ibid.*, 368-369.

60. *Ibid.*, 376-377. "Abbot" is the traditional title for the head of the church in Mirdita. The Benedictine abbey of Oroshi had been destroyed some time before.

61. David Turnock, *Eastern Europe: An Historical Geography 1815-1945*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 153. An earlier traveller described the dangers and discomforts of Balkan travels. "For weeks the clothing cannot be changed and the traveller is obliged to spend the nights without a bed and exposed to the torture of innumerable insects" Fear of bandits was prevalent as they "frequently lie in ambush and treacherously shoot down their victims."

62. Durham, *Burden of the Balkans*, vii.

63. Durham, *Through the Lands of the Serb*, 345.

64. Durham, *Burden of the Balkans*, vii.

65. Durham, *Burden of the Balkans*, 140-143, 199-200. This lack of sympathy resulted in mixed reviews for the book. A reviewer of the *Burden of the Balkans* described Durham as unfair "to the Bulgarians of Macedonia, and has never a good word to say for them"; but, "for the Albanians on the other hand, Miss Durham has the most unbounded admiration." He also suggested that although a pleasant [!] travel account, the book failed to provide a comprehensive view of Balkan politics and history. See Anonymous, *Times' Literary Supplement*, 'The Burden of the Balkans,' (31 March, 1905), p.108. This accusation would be hurled at her frequently later on, especially after the WWI. See letter from Arthur Evans to R.W. Seton-Watson 28 December, 1916, *SWP*. However, there were more generous reviews such as *Athenaeum*, 11 March, 1905. It was an "armoury of facts for the use of all the races against one another," though, it was noted, her preference still fell for the Christian Montenegrins and Muslim Albanians.

66. Durham, *Burden of the Balkans*, 229.

67. *Ibid.*, 26, 335.

68. This is the running commentary throughout. See examples in *ibid.*, 15, 243, 331, 342-343.

69. See Georges Castellan, "Facteurs religieux et identite nationale dans les Balkans aux XIXe-XXe siecles," *Revue Historique*, 1989, 271(1): 135-151.

70. Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans*, 30.

71. Durham to her Uncle Ashley from Sarajevo, 24 November 1906, MS 43, RAI. She was describing the trip of the previous year.

72. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 116-134.

73. *Ibid*, 135.

74. *Ibid*, 119. She states that Nikola was quite curious about her financial situation, especially her earnings as a writer. She remained evasive, however.

75. Blackwood, "Mary Edith Durham."

76. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 135.

77. Published as a collection of essays in 1928 as *Some Tribal Origins, Laws & Customs of the Balkans*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1928).

78. Durham to Elsa from Sarajevo, 18 September 1906, MS 43, RAI.

79. Durham to Nellie from Ragusa, 16 September, 1906, MS 43, RAI.

80. Durham to Nellie from Ragusa, 16 September 1906, MS 43, RAI. Durham pointed out that his visit, instead of the Emperor's [or Kaiser as she called him], "has disgusted everyone." There was also the Austrian meat embargo on Serbia which earned the Serbs the sympathy from the other South Slavs. Durham described this episode in *Viator* (Durham), "The Truth About Bosnia and the Herzegovina." *Fortnightly Review*, December 1908, 1010.

81. Durham to her Uncle Ashley from Sarajevo, 31 October 1906, MS 43, RAI. She further related that she had 'rather fun' with the Austrian officials since none of them had travelled in the Balkans and expected her to 'marvel' at progress in Bosnian Herzegovina. They were stunned to hear from her that Serbia was 'better off.'

82. Durham to Uncle Ashley from Sarajevo, 24 November 1906, MS 43, RAI.

83. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 164-165.

84. Durham to Nellie from Cetinje, 12 March 1907, MS 43, RAI. With a touch of humour, she noted that six Montenegrins were to accompany her and that it would be "rather fun to show them London when off duty."

85. Des Graz to Grey, March 28 1907, Public Record Office: FO 372 63 (cited hereafter as FO). Des Graz noted a week later, April 8, that she was to send the request herself. She emphasized that her full name is Mary Edith Durham but signs usually M.Edith Durham.

86. Des Graz to Grey, April 5 1907, FO 372/63/11177.

87. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 171-172.

88. Cited in Blackwood, "Mary Edith Durham", No.14-15.

89. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 175. In fact, the day after her arrival in Cetinje, she was summoned by Tomanovich, the Montenegrin Prime Minister.

90. The Young Turks were a loose and diverse organization whose members, mostly disaffected nationalist soldiers and intellectuals, were dispersed through Europe and the Middle East. They vowed to topple Abdul Hamid in order to restore the constitution of 1876 and came to power through a military coup d'etat in 1908. See Ramsaur, *The Young Turks*.

91. Known as the Midhat Constitution, named after its author Midhat Pasha.

92. Ramsaur, *The Young Turks*, 137. Other ethnic group under Ottoman domination reacted similarly to the Albanians. Ramsaur cites the often quoted words of the historian William Miller: "For some days Macedonia seemed to have become Utopia. Enver Bey exclaimed that 'arbitrary government' has disappeared." 'Henceforth,' cried this enthusiastic leader of the revolution, 'we are all brothers. There are no longer Bulgars, Greeks, Roumans, Jews, Mussulmans; under the same blue sky we are all equal, we glory in being Ottomans.' At Serres the president of the Bulgarian Committee embraced the Greek Archbishop; at Drama, the revolutionary officers imprisoned a Turk for insulting a Christian; in an Armenian cemetery a procession of Turks and Armenians listened to prayers, offered up by their respective priests, for the victims of the Armenian massacres; at Samsun the Turks saluted the beard of a Greek prelate; at Tripoli Turks and Arabs joined in thanksgiving at services. The Bulgarian bands surrendered, and the brigand Sandanski was received like the prodigal son."

93. Mary Edith Durham, *High Albania*, (1909; reprint, Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 223.

94. Journal, September 1908 (undated), MS 42:3, RAI.
95. Treadway, *Falcon and the Eagle*, 69. The Albanians wanted to run their own schools, to legalize the spoken and written Albanian, and to administer territories with an Albanian majority.
96. Consul Heathcote to Mr. G. Barclay, Doc.97, 493 *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, Part I, Series B, Volume 19, eds. K. Bourne and D. Cameron Watt, (Frederick Maryland: University Publications of America, 1990). This resulted in one of the few casualties of the rebellion, the assassination of the Sultan's envoy Shemsi Pasha.
97. Durham, *High Albania*, 319. Also 342. Prenk's first act was to have the tribes declare a general besa (peace) to stop the raging blood feuds.
98. Journal, 2 September 1908, MS 42:3, RAI.
99. Journal, 21 August 1908, MS 42:3, RAI.
100. Journal, 1 September 1908, MS 42:3, RAI.
101. Summa to Grey, 5 October 1908, FO 371/560. In fact Durham had sent it to another traveller, Mr. McGregor who submitted it to Summa without explanation.
102. Palmer, *Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire*, 205.
103. Durham, *High Albania*, 106.
104. Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 364. The rising lasted from April 13 to April 27, 1909, when Abdul Hamid resigned.
105. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 202.
106. Mary Edith Durham, *Struggle for Scutari, (Turk, Slav and Albanian)*, (London: Edward Arnold), 9.
107. *Ibid.*, 9.
108. Often under the pseudonym *Viator* - *The Voyager*.
109. *Viator* (Durham), "Scutari, Albania, and the Constitution," *Fortnightly Review*, vol. 85, Jan-Jun 1909, 295. See also Mary Edith Durham, "'Constitution' in North Albania," *Contemporary Review*, November, 1908, no.515.
110. Feroz Ahmad, "Great Britain's Relation with the Young Turks, 1908-1914", *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.2, no.4, 1966, 1302-329. See also Harold Temperley, "British Policy Towards

Parliamentary Rule and Constitutionalism in Turkey (1830-1914), *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 1933, 186-191.

111. The Balkan Committee maintained sympathies with the Young Turks well into 1912. See *The London Times* (Hereafter cited as *Times*), 25 February 1912. For criticism of Young Turks by Balkan Committee, see Edwin Pears, *Forty Years in Constantinople*, (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1915), 308.

112. Charles Roden Buxton to Noel Buxton from Egypt, 8 December 1908, BP, box 25, doc.3.

113. Viator (Durham), "The Problems of the Near East", *The Fortnightly Review*, 1 September 1908, 368.

114. Ibid, 357.

115. Viator, "Scutari, Albania and the Constitution ", 295. Emil Niederhauser, *The Rise of Nationality in Eastern Europe*, (Budapest: Corvina Kiado, 1981), 307-308.

116. Viator (Durham), "The Truth About Bosnia and the Herzegovina", *Fortnightly Review*, December 1908, 1016.

117. Viator, "Scutari, Albania and the Constitution", 295.

118. Review of *High Albania* By Mary Edith Durham, anonymous, *The Times Literary Supplement*, 16 February 1909, 499.

119. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 188.

120. Hodgson, "Introduction to *High Albania*", xiii.

121. Durham, *Burden of the Balkans*, 115.

122. Journal, 3 September 1908, MS 42:3, RAI.

CHAPTER 3  
THE MALISSORI CRISIS

Between 1910-1914, the Young Turks attempted to save the Ottoman Empire from collapse. The Empire had long been in economic and military decline, and now nationalism threatened to tear the Empire apart. But nationalism had two forms in this context: movements of liberation among the minorities; and the Young Turks' own militant nationalism which alienated the potentially friendly minorities including the Albanians.<sup>1</sup> The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP - the dominant party in the Young Turk movement) passed a harsh anti "guerilla" law, imposed new and arbitrary taxes, and obligatory service for Albanians in the Turkish army.<sup>2</sup>

But CUP membership thought social reform to be necessary and therefore introduced liberal measures to improve living standards, modernise the municipal administration, reform education, and to abolish the hated tax-farm (*ilitzam*) system. They also employed French and British experts to reorganize more efficiently a variety of central government departments.<sup>3</sup> This was insufficient. Within two years, a series of provincial revolts undermined their programme.

Confrontations between Turks and Albanians startled the CUP who had counted on Albanian regulars to buttress the new regime.

In 1910, violence erupted in the Albanian vilayets. In February of 1910, Albanians in the southern town of Kortcha (Korce) rose up against the government because of its decision to require that the literary Albanian use Arabic rather than Latin characters. Then in March 1910, the Muslim Kossovars, under Issa Boletin, rebelled for the second time since 1909, following the introduction of a new tax in their vilayet.<sup>4</sup> In response, General Shevket Turgut was sent to quell the rebellion with 16,000 infantry as well as cavalry and artillery.<sup>5</sup>

In April 1910, Durham, who had been ill with malaria, was at last fit enough and decided to return to Scutari from London, "[B]etter but far from well," she noted.<sup>6</sup> She would not return to London for three and a half years.

The first entry in her diary of that year noted:

Arrived here April 16 over Trieste and Medua. Road to Medua not finished yet - begun twenty years ago. No signs of improvement.<sup>7</sup>

The Young Turks' had failed, she surmised, and their liberal promises were a smoke-screen for increased repression. Convinced that they were incapable of further reforms, she prophesied worse things to come:

The X[Chris]tians are not represented in Parliament at all ....Moslems are as disaffected as X[Chris]tians. Have not risen, it is said, because they fear that Austrian intervention - annexation - would ensue ... Government relapsing in megalomania to reconquer the Balkans and Egypt.<sup>8</sup>

Durham's arrival in Scutari coincided with the Kossovo uprising. Although Scutari was not touched by Shevket Turgut's

regulars, the once bustling town appeared lifeless as the population suffered from a food embargo. Durham's notebook paints images of desolation. "Marko's niece has died. Tuberculosis - very rapid. Bright child of 9." or "Went to try and photograph corpse of a girl. Very painful scene." <sup>9</sup>

In contrast to her colourful notes taken in High Albania in 1908 Durham's Scutari journals of 1910 are disjointed daily reports of 'scraps' with Turks on the Montenegrin frontier. In early May 1910 the Turkish authorities arrested five Montenegrins as a result of such an altercation.<sup>10</sup> Durham wrote to *The New York Times* pleading for their release and they were indeed freed shortly afterwards. It turned out that the squabble was of a personal nature. Nonetheless, it reflected a graver problem: the endemic tension caused by the "still vague" frontier between the Ottoman Empire and Montenegro.<sup>11</sup> She blamed this on the granting of long-held Albanian territories to Montenegro at the Treaty of Berlin (1878).<sup>12</sup> In *Struggle for Scutari*, Durham describes the theft of cattle and the skirmishes associated with the frontier situation, recognizing that:

The frontiers drawn by the Treaty of Berlin were so impossible that in many places they could not be defined, much less enforced. As the borderers themselves described it, "The frontier floated in blood."... Solid Albanian districts, which hated all things Slav, were handed over to Montenegro, and solid Slav districts, which asked nothing better than to be Montenegrin or Serb, were handed over to the Turkish Empire'. Worse, if possible, tribes and groups of tribes were divided and this, in a tribal land, should be avoided at almost any price. Debatable tracts were strewn all along the Montenegrin frontier.<sup>13</sup>

On May 7, 1910, reports of a great battle in Kossovo between Albanians and Turks reached Scutari. Many Albanians were taken prisoner.<sup>14</sup> Durham thought that, "it would be a good thing if the Greeks and the Bulgars rose" to put an end to Turkish presence in Europe. But, she continued, this would be only the beginning as:

[I] am told that in the case peace would be made the Albanians would in all probability assist in driving the Bulgars back 'because if they won, Europe might give them some of our land.'<sup>15</sup>

In June of 1910 Durham fell ill and was admitted to the Austrian hospital at Scutari. There, Albanians visited her and requested her help because the Kossovar insurrection had been put down and Turkish troops were now approaching their town with superior military force. Believing that a foreigner like Durham, because of her previous voyages and numerous Albanian friends, could be of some help to them, several Scutarenes approached her:

The mere fact that I could read and write, and so communicate with the world, was a marvel [to them]: I protested vainly that I had no political influence; that a little help for their wives and children was all I could promise. They treated me with extraordinary respect and regard, and gave me the title "Kralitza Maltsovret" (Queen of the mountain men)...<sup>16</sup>

She was touched. She managed to write two letters then "fainted with the pain." These were addressed to the major Western papers and to the Foreign Office but no records of them can be traced. In these letters, Durham tells us, she accused the Western press of muffling her attempts to protest against the Turkish aggressions in northern Albania.<sup>17</sup> Her comments may appear excessive but she knew the mood in London was hostile to

her views. Both the Foreign Office and Fleet Street had openly sympathized with the Young Turks and continued to do so.<sup>18</sup>

Encouraged by his successful campaign in Kossovo, Shevket Turgut reached Scutari July 24, 1910 and laid siege to it for four days. When the city surrendered, he carried out exemplary punishments on the Catholic population in order to discourage any future upheaval. But, as Durham noted, the floggings and hangings only aggravated the tensions between the Albanians and the Turks.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, Shevket Turgut imposed a retroactive tax to pay for the Macedonian insurrection of 1903 and, in an attempt to divided the Scutarene population, set about disarming the Catholics, an act of grave consequence since the ownership of a gun was essential to their economy and culture.<sup>20</sup> Muslims, however, were entitled to keep their guns. The press was also suppressed with only a few exceptions. Durham commented sarcastically that:

The Scutari paper existed only because it dealt with nothing more recent than the Franco-Prussian War.<sup>21</sup>

More coercive measures were enforced throughout Albania, intensifying tensions between nationalist Albanians and the increasingly maladroit Young Turk administration; clubs were banned as hotbeds of subversion;<sup>22</sup> and the recently legalized Albanian school system was replaced with a Turkish one. The *ecole normale* of Elbasan was shut down; and then so were all the other Albanian schools.<sup>23</sup> In Kossovo, the tribes were taxed and subjected to military conscription for the first time. All the while, the Young Turks denied the existence of an Albanian

nationality.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the demise of the ultra-conservative Abdul Hamid coincided with the intensification of repression and Ottomanization, and the CUP who had recently promised a more 'liberal state,' were uncomfortably mimicking him.

Meanwhile, in June 1910, Prince Nikola of Montenegro had been encouraging Albanians from Kossovo to cross over into Montenegro and used it as a base from which to launch plunder expeditions into Turkish territory. Later that summer Nikola proclaimed himself champion of the Malissori, the mostly Catholic tribes of Hoti, Gruda, Kastrati, Skreli and Kilmeni. They were the inhabitants of Maltsia e Madhe, or the Great Mountain Land, just north of Scutari.<sup>25</sup> Soon, they too established bases in Montenegro, and began to mount sporadic raids into Ottoman territory.<sup>26</sup>

Then in August 1910, Nikola adopted the title king of Montenegro, encouraging the view that he was intent on territorial expansion. "A king," Durham remarked wryly, "needed a kingdom."<sup>27</sup> She began to worry at Nikola's intention to expand his power base into Albania at the first opportunity.

Russia and Austria-Hungary persuaded King Nikola to act as mediator between the Malissori and the Porte and, early in the fall, the belligerents convened to conclude an uneasy truce.<sup>28</sup> In October and November 1910, the still dissatisfied northern Albanian insurgents, numbering perhaps 2500, again fled to the Montenegrin hills. Once more, they presented a list of demands to Nikola, urging him to act as mediator for them. Sadreddin Bey,

the Turkish representative, seemed amenable to these requests, which included restrictions on military service, the legalization of the Albanian language, and the declaration of a general amnesty. By mid November, Nikola notified the Malissori that the Turks had accepted most of their requests, and urged them to return home. The bulk of them did so peacefully, though another rebellion erupted in Dibra in December.<sup>29</sup>

Tired, and fearing an escalation of violence, Durham had already sailed for Egypt toward the end of September.<sup>30</sup> She was to stay there until April 1911.

During her sojourn in Sarajevo in 1906, Durham had teased the local Austrian minister about Austria's administration of Bosnia. She hoped that the occupation of Egypt was better managed.<sup>31</sup> But British rule in the Khedivate disappointed her.

I wouldn't be a native under British rule at any price. They may 'do a lot of good to you' but dear God! they do let you know their contempt for you, and drive your inferiority into you. Anyone with any spunk would rather go to hell his own way than be chivied to heaven by such odiously superior beasts....The Moslems are not grateful for 'benefits' they do not want, and the Christians are discontented and annoyed, as in Bosnia." <sup>32</sup>

She remained in touch with developments among the Albanians. In Egypt, she received news that "tribesmen from Maltsia e madhe [Malissori] were shifting wholesale into Montenegro, and that neither Turk nor Austrian knew what to make of the situation."<sup>33</sup> Establishing themselves across the Montenegrin border in Podgoritsa, they proclaimed an insurrection. In January 1911 an Albanian friend in Cetinje informed her that the

Montenegrin government was providing them with financial support and promising to arm them. She responded unequivocally: it was madness to go to war against the Turks unless all Albanians were united. She despaired at the reply: all the tribes from Scutari vilayet, the Maltsia e madhe, the Dukagini, the Pulati, and the Mirditi swore *besa* and were therefore one.<sup>34</sup> This, she knew, represented only a fraction of the Albanian population and not a pan-Albanian consensus. However, on February 19, her Albanian friend Beppi Shantoya, wrote to her from Montenegro:

"Selya is heavily armed...There are perhaps 15 000 Albanians in Montenegro....I hear all is prepared in Montenegro for a great war. A great many weapons have come in....In Mirdita is no rest. They plunder and shoot soldiers here and there. In short all is upside down." <sup>35</sup>

Skirmishes between insurgents and local Turkish authorities continued in the spring. In March 1911 Durham heard that war between the Northern Albanian tribes and the Porte was likely. Leaving immediately from Alexandria, she arrived first in Constantinople.<sup>36</sup> There she met Ismail Kemal Bey, a prominent deputy (member of the Ottoman parliament), and the future leader of independent Albania.<sup>37</sup> Durham disliked him, judging him to be self-serving and too much aligned with the Greek interest in southern Albania.<sup>38</sup> In fact, her assessment was unfair. Shortly after the Revolution of 1908, when a member of the Liberal Union (which opposed the CUP in parliament), Ismail Kemal was to champion the rights of nationalities of the Empire, asserting that the regime's only possible salvation lay in recognizing non-

Turkish nationalities and the promotion of their equality with Turks.<sup>39</sup>

In Constantinople, Durham also met with Dervish Bey Elbasani, a tried patriot who presided the Elbasan Congress on education in September of 1909.<sup>40</sup> Both he and Ismail Kemal urged Durham to go to Elbasan (central Albania), but she felt that such a trip would keep her too far from the action. Shortly afterwards, she decided to head for Podgoritsa instead. According to the Montenegrin minister in Constantinople, Popovic, it was the "true centre of affairs."<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, Durham did not explain her intentions for this expedition in her journals, letters or books. Presumably she sensed that affairs in Albania had reached a turning point and wanted to witness it.

She sailed for Podgoritsa in late April, but bad weather diverted her to Cattaro and Cetinje.<sup>42</sup> She found the Montenegrin capital in a warlike mood, humming with activity, rumour and intrigue. King Nikola publicly repudiated responsibility for the rebels' actions and gave assurances to both St Petersburg and Belgrade that the rebels were only receiving humanitarian aid, though, of course, this was not quite true.<sup>43</sup> Summoned to the palace Durham met with members of the royal family and high officials to discuss the unstable situation in the Albanian highlands. She was then asked to travel to Podgoritsa and see if she could use her influence to reduce the tensions.

The situation was certainly volatile. On April 27, an Albanian nationalist from Calabria, Dr. Toci, urged the chieftains of Mirdita to unite, and they raised the Albanian flag in rebellion in Mirdita the same day.<sup>44</sup> On May 11 General Shevket Turgut marched into Scutari. He proclaimed martial law but also sought to appease the population by granting a pardon to all rebels, inviting them to return to the city. Only the chiefs were given no assurances. He gave them five days to accept his terms but on the third day launched an offensive against them from the Decic heights.<sup>45</sup> On May 15, the Central Revolutionary Committee in Valona (southern Albanian) called on all Albanians to support the northern Albanian and prepare for a general insurrection. Three days later the Malissori chiefs unilaterally refused Turgut's terms and the warriors of Mirdite territory rose in rebellion.<sup>46</sup>

Arriving in Podgoritsa May 15, Durham found war raging on the border. On May 17th, she set out on a tour of the district with a captain of the Montenegrin army.<sup>47</sup> She realized that the rebels were in fact a mixed bag: there were of course warriors, but also desperate refugees who had been forced to leave because of the fighting. It is unclear, however, how many men were actually involved in the fighting and Beppi Shantoya's estimate of 15 000 may have been excessive. At any rate Durham herself counted over four thousand refugees and fighters,<sup>48</sup> and it was Nikola who provided them with their basic needs:

Great mass of young children' who were healthy and well-cared for....Large flocks with them [the refugees]. Those who fled brought most of their worldly goods"<sup>49</sup>

The skirmishes had turned into an open insurrection and the Turks were determined to turn the screws on the highlanders. Thus they overran northern Albania, and proceeded to burn down villages. Consequently, the rebels had little choice but to flee in even greater numbers across the border into Montenegro.<sup>50</sup> The refugees who accompanied them swelled the camps now established around Podgoritsa. Having earlier guaranteed their well-being, Nikola could not refuse them now, however costly it might be. Two weeks into her journey Durham wrote:

Great anxiety reigns in Montenegro as besides heavy expenses the land is not being worked owing to the number of men used as frontier guards as well as general unrest....[The] Population here expects war.<sup>51</sup>

She formed a one-woman welcoming committee for foreign journalists and dignitaries in the area who profited from her knowledge of the military movements taking place.<sup>52</sup> On the night of May 26 she greeted *The Times'* correspondent J.D. Bouchier, and a certain Douglas and drove with them to the Albanian frontier.<sup>53</sup> Bouchier was an outstanding member of the Balkan Committee in London and closely connected with the political elite in Sofia. This did not prevent him lobbying in favour of the Albanians, however. He had come to Podgoritsa to report on the uprising sensing that British journalists in the Balkans covered up Turkish excesses. In April 1911, he had written to Noel Buxton from Athens:

I think the time has come to draw the attention of the Balkan Committee to what is taking place in Albania. I trust the Committee has not abandoned its old standpoint and that it will raise its voice once more on behalf of the suffering population. The silence maintained in England last year was to a large extent the cause of the present trouble.<sup>54</sup>

Durham, earlier antagonized by the exclusively pro-Bulgarian stand of the Balkan Committee, was pleased with Bouchier's attitude.

Early in June the situation deteriorated. There were rumours that the Kossovars and the Mirdites had risen, and refugees from the Scutari vilayet continued to pour into Montenegro, bringing their number to 20 000.<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, Durham continued with her self-appointed task of briefing a growing number of Western visitors in Podgoritsa, greeting a deputation of the Foreign Press Association led by its president, Baron de Kruff on June 5.<sup>56</sup>

On June 9, she left Podgoritsa for Latrijebac (Montenegro). The following day, she went to Triepshi (Montenegro) to see "how things really are."<sup>57</sup> On June 11, she was entertained at a "barbaric dinner" by the Montenegrin frontier commander at his headquarters. That day, the Albanian chiefs in Montenegro met in a schoolroom of Latribejac. Sokol Batzi head of one of the insurgent factions and friend of Durham's, chaired the meeting. Durham, who was present, described it:

He said that they were not without friends and pointed at me and said I had come though ill as soon as I heard they were in trouble - that I was telling Europe about them and that I was worth more than a battalion of Nizams.<sup>58</sup>

In the middle of the night, Sokol burst in her room with news that reinforcements would soon arrive, but did not say from where or what type of support it was.<sup>59</sup> Durham was sceptical. The meagre reinforcements which had indeed arrived were nothing more than a few teenage boys claiming to be soldiers of the Garibaldi regiment, a unit formed by an Italian of Albanian descent.<sup>60</sup>

On the June 12, the Porte announced that hostilities had ended. But the promise of peace was premature.<sup>61</sup> At the time, Durham was in Latrijebac drafting a letter to the Balkan Committee in which she described the desolation, chaos and misery of the countryside:

Great terror and dread reigns, for the Turkish army has - after two months hard fighting - cut its way through the mountains and the tribes of Shala Shoshi, Dukagini and Pulati are thus cut off from all help before their women had time to escape. Their relatives here all believe they will be violated for this has been the fate of the very few young women who so far have fallen in the hands of the troops.<sup>62</sup>

Durham subsequently claimed that from the beginning, the northern Albanians had been duped into rebelling by Nikola, and that their uprising never had a chance to succeed. At the time however, she refused to blame Montenegro for the situation and further remonstrated against the Turks:

If the civilized world could but see the way in which the Turks are introducing "reform" into their Empire it would stand aghast. It is the reform of Attila and his Huns - a disgrace to Europe - a disgrace to the world.<sup>63</sup>

The miserable conditions of the refugees, who were desperately short of food and poorly dressed, had inspired Durham

to create a relief fund for the victims of the rebellion, and the first donations reached in the first week of June. Now, she begged the Balkan Committee to contribute to her fund. Money could be sent to the Bank of Montenegro through the Credit Lyonnais.

That night she returned to Podgoritsa from Latrijebac, to report on 'the state of things' and found a wire from the *Morning Reader* asking for an article.<sup>64</sup> Early the following morning, she wrote the article and sent a letter reporting the latest developments of the insurrection to Akers-Douglas, the British *Charge d'Affaires* at Cetinje. More contributions to her fund arrived. So far it was a success. During June, she listed the substantial amounts of money donated by sympathetic individuals or western visitors to the region.<sup>65</sup> There was Charles Crane, an American who turned up from Scutari to report on atrocities. His financial contributions totalled over 10 000 corone by mid-June.<sup>66</sup> Others helped with relief work. An Italian called Cattapani, an energetic and very 'practical chap' wrote to the press and carted bread and other goods to the refugees camps.<sup>67</sup>

The next days were gruelling for Durham. The relief work kept her busy over 12 hours a day. Durham travelled from Podgoritsa to Triepshi buying bread and horses to carry it:

Rec[eive]d early urgent message from Cattapani from Triepshi to bring help. Bought 200 kilos [of] bread for 52 crowns. Took it upon 2 horses (20 corone) and took 952 coronas in small change. Arrived [in] Triepshi at 6:30 p.m. Put up at school...<sup>68</sup>

On Saturday June 17, she distributed corn bread in Triepshi from the school house. On Sunday, Bourchier, concerned that the Turks' denial of village-burning was believed in London, summoned her to go to Podgoritsa. The next morning, she and Bourchier went round Podgoritsa again to report on the ravages, and to parcel out goods purchased through her fund. Later that week Durham showed the American minister in Athens the conditions of the refugees and conferred with other Westerners in Podgoritsa about what could be done to denounce what they saw as Turkish aggression. These included Baron Nopsca, a member of the Austrian legation in Cetinje,<sup>69</sup> and a reporter from the Italian paper *Il Secolo*, called Zoli.<sup>70</sup> She also wrote to *The Times* and the *Morning Post* on June 22 to contest statements made by the Ottoman Embassy in London regarding a proposed amnesty.<sup>71</sup>

Austria and Russia, both anxious to contain the uprising, now pressed the insurgents to conclude the fighting. Thus on June 18, the insurgent Albanian chiefs received a note (sent June 14) from the ambassador to England, Tewfik Pasha: it required the return of all the insurgents and promised a ~~1~~10 000 payment for damages, as well as other substantial compensation.<sup>72</sup> But on June 23, Ismail Kemal Bey reached Podgoritsa and called the Albanian chiefs together for a meeting at Gerce in Montenegro.<sup>73</sup> There, they rejected the latest Turkish offers on grounds that they provided no international guarantee. The Gerce Memorandum, or Red Book, reiterated local Malissori demands but insisted with greater vigour on "national concerns," not least

the unification of the four Albanian vilayets.<sup>74</sup> The document was copied to Sir Edward Grey in London.

The following day the Turkish delegate, Saddredin Bey arrived in Cetinje and conferred with the chiefs and Albanian spokesmen Sokol Baci, Guracira, Ded Gjo Luli, and Dod Prechi Kastrati. Durham was with them.<sup>75</sup> The insurgents were divided but manifested little interest in the Turkish terms, insisting again on an international guarantee of the terms. A stalemate ensued.<sup>76</sup> The Turkish offer of amnesty, it was recognized even by the Foreign Office, was not reassuring enough.<sup>77</sup>

The so-called "Albanian Committee" of Albanian leaders in Podgoritsa was almost equally concerned about Montenegro's designs on them as it was about the Turks. They were afraid that Nikola would give in to Turkish and international pressure and stop providing for the insurgents who were becoming such an economic burden. They also knew his fear that he might become an international pariah. Expecting to be sent sent back across the border soon, they asked Durham to draft a letter explaining their plight to the major European papers. Both she and *Il Secolo's* reporter, Zoli, took to the task and the letter appeared in a number of leading European papers.<sup>78</sup>

By the end of June Durham had received substantial contributions from Italians and English sources. But she did not want the fund to be used to arm the insurgents,<sup>79</sup> regarding the Albanians' chances as negligible given the overwhelming Turkish firepower. However, the Turks themselves seemed unable to put an

end to the insurgency, and a way out of the impasse seemed remote as discussion between Turkish envoys and the rebels got bogged down. On July 7, Monsignor Serregi, Archbishop of Scutari, was asked by Shevket Turgut to negotiate an armistice. This mission aborted, however.<sup>80</sup>

Nevertheless, the Mirdite rebellion eventually showed signs of dying down, and, as it did, so the Malissori position appeared more acute.<sup>81</sup> Durham remembered this crucial month of uncertainty "as a nightmare in an inferno". The following excerpts from her journal help to explain her remark:

Monday	10 July	- distributed maize
Tues	11 July	- waiting for war
Wed	12 July	- Everyone pretty sick....outraged women reported by Nopcsa
Frid	14 July	- [list of outrages. Dozens of women]
Tues	18 July	- Buying and preparing quantities of cotton for shirts. Reports of young girls burnt!
Wed	19 July	- Last night insurgents cut wate. supply at Tuzi....
Thur	20 July	- distribution of shirts and making them as well.
Frid	21 July	- worked hard at giving out shirts.
Sun	23 July	- visited caves [sheltering refugees] with Mr. [Ralph] Butler of <i>Times</i>
Mon	24 July	- Relief work all day, no time to write; desperate work. <sup>82</sup>

However, the situation changed quickly from the beginning of August after an official Turkish delegation arrived in Podgoritsa. On August 2, Durham confronted the head of the delegation, Saddredin Bey, who demanded her friendship since he also was Albanian. She retorted, "You! You are a Turk! All the world knows it!."

Saddredin replied furiously: "I am Greek, I am Armenian, I am Bulgar, I am Albanian. I am all things to my compatriots, - Mlle."

She cut him short. "Then you are nothing at all".

He continued. "See how we have been to the poor Malessors; we have merely convinced them when we might simply have killed them all - see what concession we give - how good we are."

"They've given you a jolly good beating (*joliment fouétté*) she quipped. "I hope it will do you good."<sup>83</sup>

Yanko Vukotic, standing beside her, revelled at the exchange. However, another Montenegrin official expressed shock at the manner she adopted with a minister plenipotentiary. Durham retorted: "I told him the truth. Do him good to hear once in his life. I don't care what he thinks. He shouldn't come lying to me."<sup>84</sup>

That same day, the Turks renewed offers to reinstate most of the lost privileges and provide monetary compensation.<sup>85</sup> However, there was still no mention of a European guarantee. The Young Turks regarded this as unacceptable since it would challenge their sovereignty in an internal dispute.<sup>86</sup> Some Albanian chieftains hesitated before declining the Ottoman offer. But by prolonging the stalemate, they were to lose the support of Montenegro which was being subjected to intense Great Power pressure.<sup>87</sup>

The Malissori recognized that the insurrection could not continue much longer but still hoped for a turn of events. They

implored Durham to try and obtain Britain's support for their cause, but she confessed that this would be futile. On August 3, an American correspondent suggested to Durham that she persuade the insurgents to return to their villages. Then, the Montenegrin's Gregorovic and Yanko Vukotic called on her to do this and so avert the catastrophe. It was Vukotic who finally convinced her that this option was the only one.<sup>88</sup> She felt "sick with responsibility:"

I wondered how often in history a foreign female had been asked by a Commander-in-Chief, who was also a Queen's cousin, in the name of God and his government to make terms for him with insurgents he had himself incited. Yanko [Vukotic], Martinaj, and I argued up and down for two hours.<sup>89</sup>

Durham realized that Nikola, like the Malissori, had his back to the wall.<sup>90</sup> No longer subsidized by Nikola, they had to agree to "peace terms" with the Turks. Durham promised Vukotic to dissuade the chiefs to continue the insurgency. For two days, she walked around Podgoritsa convincing the different chiefs of the necessity to return home, and promising to go with them to ensure their safety. Many refused at first. Others cursed their way back home:

The Klimenti men sent me a message that they went back entirely on my responsibility, and that if aught happened to them, their blood was on my soul.<sup>91</sup>

Within two weeks, all insurgents had returned to their homes. Durham recorded how in a matter of days, Podgoritsa was transformed:

Soldiers, officers, insurgents, correspondents - all had disappeared like a dream; or was the present calm but a dream -the hush before the storm?<sup>92</sup>

Durham had promised to accompany the insurgents back to their homes, but the extreme heat and bouts of rheumatism and lumbago kept her in Podgoritsa. From her bed, she distributed money to refugees, enabling them to rent carts or horses to carry their meagre goods.<sup>93</sup>

On August 19, Saddredin Bey called on Count de Salis, British minister at Cetinje, to

complain of the proceedings of Miss Durham, who was living at Podgoritsa and who was carrying on among the Albanians a violent political propaganda directed against the Turkish Government in favour of Montenegro.<sup>94</sup>

De Salis replied that any complaints would have to be made through the Turkish embassy in London. He then reported to Sir Edward Grey that the Turkish authorities were threatening to take measures against Durham "in self-defence." De Salis, who knew Durham by reputation only, mentioned that since she had constituted herself champion of the rights and interests of the Albanian and "had written a valuable work on the subject" she was bound to clash with the interests of the Turkish minister. But such political reasons, he declared, should not be used as pretexts to hamper her humanitarian efforts.<sup>95</sup> Grey concurred.<sup>96</sup>

Durham was apparently unaware of the diplomatic complaint and continued her work unhindered. Her health, however, was deteriorating. The day following Saddredin's complaint (August 19), she managed to get to Scutari, accompanied by Leland Buxton

and Ralph Butler of *The Times*, both of whom had met up with her two days earlier:

Arrived in Scutari August 19 with Butler and Leland Buxton. Pretty jacked up and lot to do. Had bad treatment at [Podgoritsa] hospital. Got boils all over back. Temperature and rheumatic fever. Not fit for work.<sup>97</sup>

Much relief work was needed as the Malissori returned to their burned-out villages. For the moment, Durham was not physically up to the task. However, at the end of August, she communicated a plea through the *Times*, asking for money and tools to help rebuild the devastated area.<sup>98</sup> Fortunately, Henry Nevinson, whom she had known since the Macedonian insurrection of 1903, soon arrived in Scutari to help her and to act as envoy of the Macedonian Relief Fund.<sup>99</sup>

Nevinson had arranged in Trieste for the purchase of maize, blankets and tarred felt for roofing. In Scutari, he put himself under Durham's orders for the distribution operations. He had admired her previously and now saw her as an indefatigable worker labouring day and night 'to relieve sickness or disease.' Nevinson was also struck by the legend surrounding Durham, the *Kralitza* or Queen, as she was known among the mountain tribes, and since she was *Kralitza*, he became a *Kral*. They set up headquarters in the Paget house, a large stone building erected by a Mr. George Paget.<sup>100</sup>

On September 11, Durham, Nevinson and Marko Shantoya, drove through the mountains by carriage, visiting Baitza and Lower Kastrati. But she went no further. Rather, she continued treatment at the hospital until her pains disappeared.<sup>101</sup> After

a week, Nevinson returned to Scutari to report the number of burnt houses and on the 23rd, they all rode to Summa to distribute maize and to arrange for the purchase of more food. The arduous trip began with a ride up a wild gorge east of Scutari towards Shala. In Summa, they encountered a starving people, reduced to eating grass. There, they arranged for the purchase of maize for the tribe provided they collected it themselves from Scutari. Later, they distributed quinine to the malaria-stricken peasants in the marshland of the Mati River. By the 30th, they reached Alessio where they heard rumours (subsequently confirmed) that the Italians had attacked Ottoman Tripolitania in North Africa.<sup>102</sup>

On their way back to Scutari from Alessio, Nevinson and Durham were arrested by the Turkish authorities and thrown into the town jail. In a comical scene, Durham entertained her gaolers by creating with her hands shadows of men and animals on the wall. A French-speaking officer arrived, and within minutes they were released and were soon eating eggs and drinking wine in her room.

Then cholera broke out in Scutari and both Nevinson and Durham had to increase their efforts to get goods through a *cordon sanitaire* around the town to the areas in need. On October 10, an exhausted Nevinson stole away at dawn to catch the last Austrian boat. Durham would dedicate the next several months entirely to relief work and raising money for her fund.<sup>103</sup>

## ENDNOTES

## CHAPTER 2

1. R.J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*, (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), x, 22-23.
2. Stefanag Pollo and Arben Puto, (with the collaboration of Kristo Frasheri and Skender Anamali), *The History of Albania: From its Origins to the Present Day*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, Boston and Henley), 140.
3. Palmer, *Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire*, 211.
4. Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*, 45. The most powerful Kossovar chieftain, Issa Boletin mutinied against the Young Turks who deprived him of the quarry which produced most of the mill stones used in Albania, and the fifty pound a month subsidy granted to him under the old regime; also Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 405. In mid-March, 1910, the vali (governor) of Kossovo imposed dues on goods imported to the town of Prishtina provoking an insurrection
5. Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*, 403-410; Swire, *Albania, the Rise of a Kingdom*, 94.
6. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 11.
7. Journal, 29 April 1910, MS 42:4, RAI.
8. Journal, 29 April 1910, MS 42:4, RAI.
9. Journal, 8 May 1910, MS 42:4, RAI.
10. Journal, 4 May 1910, MS 42:4, RAI.
11. Journal, 5 May 1910, MS 42:4, RAI.
12. She had already stated in 1909: "I can only say that the whole arrangement of land distribution [concerning Serb and Albanian lands, at the Treaty of Berlin] seems to have been planned with the intention of so weakening each race that it might speedily fall into Austrian power." See Mary Edith Durham, "The Serb and Albanian Frontier," *Contemporary Review*, Vol.XCV, January-June, 1909, 15.

13. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 159-160. In fact cattle rustling and piracy was a long-standing problem in the area. See Philip Longworth, *The Making of Eastern Europe*, (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1992), 195-197.

14. Journal, 7 May 1910, MS 42:4, RAI. Durham received this news through a Muslim *kinje* who had fled Kossovo. She also frequently obtained news about the insurrection through itinerant foreigners.

15. Journal, 7 May 1910, MS 42:4, RAI.

16. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 37.

17. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 211.

18. Zara Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1969), 192.

19. Journal, July (undated), 1910, MS 42:4, RAI.

20. Swire, *Albania, the Rise of a Kingdom*, 94-97. Many concealed their best weapons, surrendering only the most obsolete ones. The Klimenti men were even allowed to keep theirs in order to work as frontier guards on the Turco-Montenegro border.

21. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 16.

22. Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 407.

23. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 16. For the significance of schools in the formation of an Albanian consciousness, see Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, Chapter XV.

24. Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 363. The year before, when Mufid Libohova, an Albanian deputy referred to 'Albanians' during a speech in the assembly, the speaker, Ahmed Riza interrupted him by claiming that there were no Albanians, just Ottomans. But Libova insisted: "Yes sir, there are Albanians".

25. Durham, *High Albania*, 19. Also see Durham's ethnographic masterpiece, *Some Tribals Origins, Laws and Customs of the Balkans*, 24; and C. Coon's, *The Mountains of Giants*, 31-35. Coon includes other tribes in the Maltsia e Madhe group.

26. Treadway, *Falcon and the Eagle*, 72-73.

27. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 22.

28. Treadway, *Falcon and the Eagle*, 73-74. Arseniev, the Russian minister in Cetinje was displeased and warned Nikola that

if his plotting against the Porte continued he would lose Russian support. These pressures forced him to restrain the insurgents.

29. Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 408-410; Treadway, *Falcon and the Eagle*, 74.

30. Journal, 23 January 1911, MS 42:4, RAI. This is the first journal entry after September 27, 1910. She writes: "Went to Egypt for winter and rec[eived]'d letter at Cairo on Jan. 23, 1911 from Cettinje from Beppi [Shantoya]." Her departure date for Egypt is not mentioned anywhere.

31. See supra, n.8, 26, Durham to her Uncle Ashley, 31 October 1906, MS 43:2, RAI.

32. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 214.

33. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 18.

34. Ibid., 18.

35. Beppi Shantoya to Durham, February 1911 (undated), MS 42:4, RAI.

36. Her date of her arrival is not mentioned.

37. Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, (Oxford: University of Oxford, 1969), 173. A scion of an Albanian family from Valona, he had been a high-ranking Ottoman official but his liberal views had forced him into exile. He returned for the restitution of the Constitution in 1908, but opposed the CUP on a number of issues, even participating in the insurrection of 1909; for a self-serving but often fascinating portrait, see Ismail Kemal, *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey*, edited by Somerville Story, (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1921).

38. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 218.

39. Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 362.

40. Ibid., 381.

41. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 20.

42. The date of arrival is not mentioned but it must have been in the first two weeks of May.

43. See supra, 54, Beppi Shantoya to Durham, February 19, 1911. Also see F. Cartwright to Sir A. Nicholson no.469, and Barclay to Grey, March 30, 1911, no.471, *British Documents on the Origins of the War*, (hereafter *BD*), Volume XI, pt.1, eds. G.P. Gooch

and Harold Temperley, (London, 1932). For details of Montenegro's involvement, see Treadway, *Falcon and the Eagle*, 75.

44. Swire, *Albania, the Rise of a Kingdom*, 105.

45. For earlier attempts to come to terms with the insurgents, see editor's note, *BD*, Vol. XI, no.471. For declaration of May 11, see Swire, *Albania*, 104; and Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 24.

46. Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle*, 77. Treadway's account of the rebellion, which makes use of Durham's writings, is extremely valuable; see also Swire, *Albania, the Rise of a Kingdom*, 105-111.

47. Journal, 15 May 1911, MS 42:4, RAI.

48. Journal, 16 May 1911, MS 42:4, RAI.

49. Journal, 17 May 1911, MS 42:4, RAI.

50. Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle*, 77. In fact, the Turkish pincer movement squeezed the insurgents out of Albanian territory.

51. Journal, 28 May 1911, MS 42:4, RAI.

52. Journal, 23-27 May 1911, MS 42:4, RAI. Durham registered military actions carefully in her journals. Her Montenegrin and Albanian interlocutors must have trusted her since they discussed military affairs with her freely. See above journal entries for discussions between Durham and Montenegrin General Boscovic, and Simon Popovic.

53. Journal, 27 May 1911, MS 42:4, RAI.

54. Cited from Lady Elinore Grogan, *The Life of James Burchier*, (London, undated), 101. Buxton's private papers are surprisingly silent about the rebellion.

55. Durham to the Balkan Committee, 11 June 1911, Box 1-2, *BP*.

56. Journal, 5 June 1911, MS 42:4, RAI. The sight of the wounded at the Podgoritsa hospital prompted the group to send letters of protests to *The Morning Post* and *The Westminster Gazette*, denouncing Turkish manoeuvres .

57. Journal, 9-10 June, 1911, MS 42:5, RAI.

58. Journal, 11 June 1911, MS 42:5, RAI.

59. Journal, 11 June 1911, MS 42:5, RAI.

60. Journal, 10 June 1911, MS 42:5, RAI. Durham's references to Riciotti Garibaldi, leader of the Garibaldi Regiment are cryptic and not elucidated elsewhere in her writings. See Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 18-19, and also, Journal, 5 June 1911, MS 42:5, RAI. She then noted, "Riciotti Garibaldi, it appears, is guilty of the premature outbreak." A letter from Barclay to Grey of 30 March 1911, BD Vol.IX, no.469, refers to rumours that an Italian Garibaldi Association was providing arms to the insurgents. Treadway, in *Falcon and the Eagle*, 239, ft.47, cites a reporter of *The London Times* (hereafter *Times*) who "concluded that Riciotti Garibaldi's promises were 'voluble but unfulfilled'". Already on June 7, 1911, *The Times* stated that "Much bitterness prevails among the Albanians at their abandonment by Riciotti Garibaldi and his promised regiment of Volunteers." See also *Times* May 11, 13, 15, June 7, 20.

61. *Times*, 14 June 1911. The same day Ismail Kemal met with King Nikola and declared his intention to counter the Young Turk's policy of arming the Muslim Albanians against the Catholics by appealing to the sense of nationhood of both groups.

62. Durham to Balkan Committee, 11 June 1911, Box 1-2, BP.

63. Ibid.

64. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 52. She complained in retrospect: "Looking back, my life then seems like one fatigue, spurred up and hunted about by telegrams and journalists."

65. Journal, 14 June 1911, MS 42:5, RAI. "Crane leaves £74 in Napoleons."

66. Journal, 7 June 1911, MS 42:5, RAI. That day she also noted: "Paid in Relief Committee £4 from Sir Roger Parkington, £10 of the 23 sent [to] me by Miss Cory."

67. Journal, 12-16 June 1911, MS 42:5, RAI.

68. Journal, 16 June 1911, MS 42:5, RAI.

69. And a renowned expert on Albanian politics and culture.

70. Journal, 19-21 June 1911, MS 42:5, RAI.

71. Journal, 22 June 1911, MS 42:5, RAI.

72. *Times*, 19 June 1911. The terms of the armistice were similar to those of 1910: a general amnesty; only Albanians to be appointed local *kaimmakams* (heads of villages); compensation for confiscated arms; reduction of the sheep tax to one piastre per

animal; exemption of men over 23 from military service (and no service outside of the Scutari vilayet); rebuilding of burnt houses at the expense of the Ottoman government. See also *BD*, Vol. IX, 14 June 1911, enclosure in no.480.

73. Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 416. Also 368. Skendi raises the important question regarding Ismail Kemal's motive to meet the chiefs. In Kemal's own *Memoirs*, Skendi points out, he is evasive, stating that it was strictly to help the refugees against Shevket Turgut's threats. But he may have been linked either to Russian or Austrian interests. In *Struggle for Scutari*, 68, Durham claimed that the chiefs didn't even know him when he arrived.

74. For the original demands (in French) see editor's note in *BD*, Vol. IX, no.502. Also see *Times*, 26 June 1911. The document indicts the Ottoman regime for deceiving the Albanians in failing to live up to the promises of the Constitution. It claimed that the government had been "usurped by a secret and irresponsible clique [Young Turks] which under the mask of patriotism had established an odious tyranny."

75. Journal, 24 June 1911, MS 42:5, RAI.

76. Journal, 28 June 1911, MS 42:5, RAI. On June 28 an emissary from Baron Nopsca urged tribesmen to accept the Turkish terms, but Sokol Baci's radical "Falcon" group stood out against the idea.

77. Memorandum from Arthur Nicholson to Edward Grey 15 June, 1911 (received), *BD*, Vol. IX, communiqué 480.

78. King Nikola was furious that the chiefs had acted without his consent and feared that events were slipping out of his control. On hearing about the letter, he sent a messenger to obtain a copy from Durham, but she did not allow it. For Grey's favourable reaction to the letter, see Grey to de Salis, 12 June (received 24 June), 1911, *BD*, Vol. IX. doc. no.498.

79. Journal, 5 July 1911, MS 42:5, RAI. She rejected Ismail's request to that effect during a trip to Triepshi on July 5.

80. *Times*, 25 July 1911.

81. The extent of the Mirdite uprising seems to have been exaggerated by Durham. The Foreign Office had expected it to collapse shortly by mid-June. See memo from Lowther to Grey, 14 June 1911, *BD*, Vol. IX, doc. no.479.

82. Journal, MS 42:5, RAI.

83. As Durham's frustration with the Turkish envoys at Podgoritsa grew, she demonized them: 'Hakki Bey is bad with tawny skin and the a hooking beak and looks at you with dirty eyes and the soul of a snake.' See Journal, July 1911 (undated) 42:5, RAI.

84. Journal, 2 August 1911, MS 42:5, RAI.

85. Swire, *Albania, the Rise of a Kingdom*, 109. Briefly, the terms of the armistice were: 1) a general amnesty; 2) native officials to administer the district; 3) the opening of Albanian schools funded by the government; 4) construction of roads in mountain areas; 5) funds to be provided to rebuild the destroyed houses; 6) provision of maize to tie the population over until the next harvest; 7) every male to receive £1 upon returning home; 8) the right to carry arms be respected except in towns and markets; 9) Malissori to be exempt from military service outside Albania, but not in Rumelia and Constantinople; 10) the Malissori are to be exempt of taxation for two years; and to pay at a reduced rate thereafter.

86. The idea of an international guarantee was a sticking point for the Great Powers too. They were reluctant to infringe Ottoman sovereignty. See *BD*, Vol. IX, docs. 485, 486, 488, 489, 502, and 506, dating from 19 June to 8 July, 1911.

87. *Times*, 25 July 1911. Russia's threat to end subsidies to Montenegro - subsidies which allowed Nikola to feed the insurgents - had much to do with this. It explains Yanko Vukotic's furious outbursts against the Albanian leaders who had just refused the Turkish offers. Regarding the Powers' earlier attitude towards Montenegro role in the rebellion, see Akers-Douglas to Grey, 19 June 1911, *BD*, Vol. IX, no. 485. Concerning the dangers of Great Power intervention, see *Times*, 18 July 1911.

88. Journal, 3 August 1911, MS 42:5, RAI.

89. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 77.

90. Nikola was as desperate as Durham. He asked the Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek attaches in Cetinje to urge their governments to participate in a joint action against Turkey, but all categorically refused. See Sir Edward Paget to Grey, 2 August 1911, *BD*, Vol. IX, no. 514.

91. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 80.

92. *Ibid.*, 82.

93. *Ibid.* As well, she distributed sandals for the trek across the mountain.

94. De Salis to Grey, 19 August 1911, FO 371 1261 (44 32673 11).

95. Ibid. De Salis had recently been informed by Ralph Butler, Bourchier's replacement in Cetinje, that, "Ms Durham is disposed to be very outspoken in her views on the subject of the Turks."

96. Ibid., Grey's response in the minute, dated 31 August 1911.

97. Journal, 19 August 1911, MS 42:6, RAI.

98. *Times*, 29 August 1911.

99. Bertram Christian to Henry Norman, 17 August 1911, FO 371/1261. Nevinson travelled to Scutari on Christian's request. In his note, Christian asked Norman to facilitate Nevinson's trip as member of the Macedonian Relief Fund, "even if we don't like incurring the expenses." He also insisted that the non-political character of the mission be stressed to the Turkish authorities

100. Nevinson, *Fire for Life*, 275-277.

101. Journal, 11 September 1911, MS 42:5, RAI.

102. Journal, 23-25, 30 September 1911, MS 42:6, RAI; see also Nevinson, *Fire for Life*, 278.

103. Journal, 10 October 1911, MS 42:6, RAI.

CHAPTER 4  
"WAR CLOUDS"

After the Malissori Crisis, Durham made Scutari her home. Now living among the Albanian refugees, she became convinced that it was in the interest of the Albanians to strike out for independence of the Ottoman Empire. She was not altogether clear, however, how this could be done. In the fall of 1911, she imagined an apocalyptic scenario:

It flashed on me that this perhaps was the meaning of the mysterious thing which I was pledged not to reveal - that Montenegro would move in the winter if circumstances allowed....Italy would extend her influence in North Albania - the Catholics would hail any aid that would save them from the Young Turks - the Montenegrins would go into the Serb territories of Berani and Kossovo vilayet. If the constant rumours of Bulgar mobilization were true, we might have the long expected break-up of the Near East upon us in a month; and Austria would not fight, but would demand, and later obtain, "compensation". It all seemed clear as daylight. I was highly pleased, for I thought Albania's chance had come.<sup>1</sup>

Although the collapse of the Ottoman Empire did not appear so likely to occur that fall, the Sublime Porte still had to contend with internal unrest.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, in the summer of 1911, several regions of the Empire rose in rebellion. Comitadji bands in Macedonia reacted violently against plans to resettle Muslims in Christian Macedonia;<sup>3</sup> *Dashnacks* (Armenian revolutionaries) in the Armenian vilayet created disturbances and in the Arabian

peninsula local insurrections required the government to send troops to repress them.<sup>4</sup>

In southern Albania, the various uncoordinated nationalist groups were responsible for sporadic uprisings. Early in May a "Central Revolutionary Committee" called for a general insurrection and the "Committee of Kortcha" committed acts of terrorism against the Turks causing the authorities to react violently. In the town of Kortcha itself, thirty members of the Committee were imprisoned.<sup>5</sup>

Italian interventions added to Ottoman troubles.<sup>6</sup> The Tripolitanian War encouraged the Balkan states to take a more belligerent stance towards the Ottoman Empire.<sup>7</sup> These threats prompted the Young Turks to conciliate elements among their subject populations. They first approached the Albanian *vilayets*. Financial support for Albanian schools was announced and some Albanian political prisoners were set free, but there was no general amnesty and the Albanian revolts which had begun in 1910 were therefore to continue sporadically until 1912.<sup>8</sup>

As we saw in the last chapter, Durham, now forty nine years old, would not allow her fragile health to prevent her from continuing her relief work. "There is but one thing more terrible than war," she wrote,

and that is the time that follows immediately afterwards; it is then that the war's innocent victims - those who have escaped sudden and merciful death by shot and shell - crawl back to the blackened ruins of their homes to face a slow and cruel death from cold and starvation.<sup>9</sup>

She responded by systematically organizing relief on a daily basis and barely had time to note anything else in her journal:

Oct 10-11: giving clothes and opanke [sandals]  
 Oct 12: went to bazaar and bought a lot of foodstuff  
 Oct 13: dealt out lot of wood to Skreli  
 (so it goes 14 and 15)<sup>10</sup>

Despite the hardship of daily grind, she was encouraged by the contributions to her fund (in cash and kind) which poured in steadily.<sup>11</sup> On October 17, she noted appreciatively: "Donations of ~~TE~~<sup>TE</sup>20 keep coming and work appreciated." Cotton and other goods were also received.<sup>12</sup> In November 1911, while distributing food and clothing around Scutari, she received a note from Bertram Christian, chairman of the Macedonia Relief Fund, asking her to represent the organisation in Albania.<sup>13</sup> Durham had herself been a signatory of the Balkan Committee in 1907 and had worked with the Macedonian Relief Fund in 1903-1904.<sup>14</sup> She agreed to his suggestion though it is not clear what the job implied. However, it did guarantee her additional material support and she received a number of goods through the Fund.

Durham also became increasingly concerned to make the grievances of the northern Albanians well-known to the British government. She therefore began to actively lobby the Foreign Office, addressing most letters to Henry Nevinson and to G. Browning Spence, Consul General for the provinces of Carniola and Kustenland (Dalmatia), who then sent them off to Whitehall.

Early in January, Durham communicated with the Foreign Office with a show of perhaps excessive bravado, calling herself

'spokesperson of the highlanders' to the King of England.<sup>15</sup> She requested 10,000 rifles, the recognition of Albanian independence and the inclusion of Dulcigno in the new Albanian state.<sup>16</sup> She described the arrival of Austrian agents in December as advisors to the various Catholic factions and their cautious reception; how they had been pressuring them from rebelling for at least two years.<sup>17</sup> The Malissori, who seemed to be permanently on the verge of rebellion, thoroughly disliked this pressure to delay any anti-Turkish operations. Two days later, Spence sent another letter he had received from Durham to Whitehall. Grey agreed that Durham was accurately portraying "the plight of the Albanians," and "how military discontent is increasing, and how things seem to be approaching a climax."<sup>18</sup>

Durham supported the idea of an independent Albania, but considered a rising to be rash if not backed by Great Power guarantee, since it risked brutal repression by the Ottoman authorities, and would invite Serbia, Greece and Montenegro to overrun the Albanian provinces. She did not herself believe in the possibility of Great Power intervention and wrote to Bertram Christian:

I fear that another ill organised revolution will take place and if so one cannot expect the [Ottoman] government to do otherwise than suppress it with severity....I do my best to persuade the people that such an action would be suicidal but they seem bent on it. Tales of the usual Eastern wilderness spread through the land and nothing is too wild for people to believe. They are quite certain that it is a preliminary to their rescue also, by one or all of the Powers. It is useless to tell them that the Powers do not approve of Italy's conduct. They reply "that is ashes in eyes." A few days ago was a tale that England and Austria had arranged a joint occupation of Albania!<sup>19</sup>

There was another twist to Durham's interpretation of the events. Though she inveighed against the Young Turk regime in public, in private she was at least prepared to admit that, despite its previous failings, the Turkish government was fulfilling its obligations regarding compensation of the victims of the summer rebellion. As of October 13 the tribes of Hoti and Grudi (Malissori) received payments. And as she was to write in January 1912:

To give the Devil his due - the [Ottoman] Government has kept the promises to the revolted tribes. Has paid more compensation than one would have expected, and has given the maize - (rather irregularly - but one can hardly expect exactness of the Turks). Also begun road making.<sup>20</sup>

Nonetheless, she thought that the Turks' attempts to mollify the Albanians were piecemeal and insufficient. The Turkish government had bought off the Mirdites with heavy payments but other clans were pressing for a similar treatment including the right to bear arms, and other demands which the government found impossible to meet.<sup>21</sup>

Trouble first arose among the Skreli tribe. On January 30, a deputation of headmen approached Durham. They told her they intended to ask for a reevaluation of the compensation due to them under the terms of the August armistice.<sup>22</sup> The controversy revolved around the French word *immeubles* used in the terms.<sup>23</sup> *Immeubles*, according to French judicial terminology, could refer either to buildings destroyed, or to buildings and other property, including livestock and grain, surrounding a dwelling. Two officers of the Montenegrin army, Yanko Vukotic and

Blazho Boshkovic, had encouraged the highlanders to request compensation for more than the standing buildings. Peter Plamenac, Montenegrin Consul in Scutari, went so far as to produce another version of the terms which differed from the one distributed to Western consulates and which he claimed to be original.

From Scutari, Durham advised the Malissori to drop their demands.<sup>24</sup> But she changed her mind a week later. On February 9, she wrote to Nevinson that Malissori demands might provoke the highlanders (Malissori and others) into rebelling once more and requested the Foreign Office's opinion on this matter. In Whitehall, R.P. Maxwell, senior clerk in the Eastern Department, concluded that the Turks had reneged on their promise and, "It thus appears that the Malissori are justified."<sup>25</sup> On February 12, Durham once again attacked "the Turkish methods of carrying out [the] agreements of last year," in a letter to Spence.<sup>26</sup>

By mid-February it was obvious that the northern Albanians would not get their way over the *immeubles* issue. But their state of unrest, partly a result of rumours of Italian victories in Tripoli,<sup>27</sup> was sufficient to attract the attention of the Powers and of the Balkan states.<sup>28</sup> Between February 20 and March 1, a French *chargé d'affaire*, and Serbian, British and Greek ministers arrived in Scutari in an attempt to calm the tribes. Gavrilovic, the Serbian minister asked Durham if he could count on her pacific intentions as "your influence is of very great importance."<sup>29</sup> This was flattering, but Durham felt she

was in personal danger from some of the locals themselves. To Spence she admitted that,

I've been warned not to drink anything offered by town Moslems - (I never do so the warning is useless). Heard wild tales about being shot at. But I'm so hardened to threats of being scragged and they never come off!<sup>30</sup>

Shrugging off these warnings, she expressed concern about the overall situation:

I can only say, "Temperature feverish - pulse irregular", what it will develop into time will show. The Turk may decide to operate - amputate? But there is Macedonia sickening up too - and the disease is infectious.<sup>31</sup>

She once again wrote to Spence about the precarious situation. Spence in turn warned Maxwell that, according to Durham, "Things appear unsettled at Scutari, and in Albania generally. If one is to believe all that one hears, an uprising down south during the coming Spring is a dead certainty."<sup>32</sup>

On March 1, however, Durham herself contradicted some of her earlier reports regarding future insurrections and asked Nevinson to disregard "the yarn about Malissori uprising," insisting that "such rumour [of an uprising] to that effect were rubbish emanating from the pages of the *Daily News* [for which she had written] and the *Daily Express*...."<sup>33</sup> The same week, Sir G. Lowther, Britain's Ambassador in Constantinople, remarked to Grey that the Turkish government "HAS fulfilled its promises [with regards to the *immeubles*]."<sup>34</sup> Grey complained that given the divergent opinions, it was impossible to decide who was right but unlike "Miss Durham, both Lowther and Mr Lamb [Britain's consul-general at Salonika] considered the Albanians to be

unreasonable".<sup>35</sup> For the British government, the *immeubles* issue was settled.

In Constantinople a 'Liberal' opposition had been threatening the stability of the Committee of Union and Progress since the fall 1911.<sup>36</sup> Events reached a climax on January 18, 1912 when Sultan Mehmed dissolved the assembly at the government's request, sending many prominent opponents of the regime in hiding, including Ismail Kemal.<sup>37</sup> An election was then called for the spring.

During the campaign, the CUP announced that it was setting up an itinerant commission in Macedonia and Albania in order to appease the most dissatisfied groups of the Empire, and promised concessions for their support.<sup>38</sup> The creation of the commission did not impress Durham. She considered that the dispute over the *immeubles* clause was still unresolved and could scarcely imagine the Young Turks suddenly capable of finding the magic touch in dealing with the Albanians. Again she transmitted her concerns to the Foreign Office which commented on March 7, a few days before the mission arrived to Scutari, that, "Miss Durham does not expect much from the Turkish commission which is going in Albania."<sup>39</sup> On March 14, she insisted to Nevinson:

The old, old complaint has begun again of unfair taxation...  
...Now we are expecting the so-called Reform Commission. We are told it has been chased away from Djakova and Prishtina, but I don't know if it is true. The rumour, however, inspires....[Many] Christians take it means that Kosovo vilayet is against the government.<sup>40</sup>

The commission arrived in Scutari on March 19, headed by Hadji Adil Bey, Turkish Minister of the Interior, who was advised by R.W. Graves, previously British consul in Salonika, and the French Lieutenant-Colonel Foulon, both seconded to the Ottoman service.<sup>41</sup> The journey had been long, arduous and dangerous, for they had been ambushed by Albanians between Pec and Djakova on March 16.<sup>42</sup>

Durham met the commission and for two days she explained the mountaineers' grievances to Hadji Adil Bey. But the encounter between the parties did not go well. She complained that the Turkish minister showed little tact with the highlanders. His arrogance, she stated, blocked any chance for both parties to reach an agreement. For their part the chiefs of the Scutari *vilayet* boycotted the Commission, fearing that it was a plot to trap them.<sup>43</sup> Graves, she wrote to Nevinson, had "arrived optimistic and left depressed regretting the commission would not stay longer."<sup>44</sup> The commission, however, recommended that both the Albanian and Macedonian *vilayets* needed better security, improved communications, and education.<sup>45</sup> It remained to be seen if these proposals would be translated into practise.

On May 14, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs complained to Lowther about alleged relations between Durham and an Albanian Revolutionary Committee, and told him that she would be invited to leave Ottoman territory.<sup>46</sup> Lowther remarked to Maxwell, "I can well imagine the Turks wanting to get rid of Miss Durham:"

but, he continued, it would be better to leave her alone as Durham possessed "many friends like Nevinson who will make a tremendous fuss in the press and will probably give rise to a good deal of inconvenient criticism of Turkish methods."<sup>47</sup>

Maxwell replied: "She is of course very anti-Turk but I think her work is chiefly distribution of food and clothing."<sup>48</sup> A request was sent to de Salis in Cetinje to inquire into the foundations of the allegations against her.<sup>49</sup>

The Turkish government may have been irritated by Durham's political involvement with the Albanians, but she herself lamented her own waning influence over the local tribes and was afraid of being held accountable for a disaster that she was sure would ensue from a premature rebellion.

Meanwhile, two factors were inclining the Albanians to turn to violence once again. In the first place, the concessions recommended by the Reform Commission had not yet been carried into effect. Secondly, reports that an aggressive anti-Turkish alliance of Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro was being formed, persuaded nationalist Albanians that their country would be divided between these powers should the Turks be defeated, and that independence for Albania was the only answer to that threat.<sup>50</sup> Sporadic skirmishes erupted between the Albanian highlanders and Turkish troops, and Durham lamented: "I do all I can to keep the people quiet - for with no food or ammunition reserve in most places and much anywhere, revolt must spell disaster."<sup>51</sup>

At the end of May, in need of a vacation, new clothes, and joking that she had been 'advised' to leave for a while, Durham departed for Rome. She sailed from Scutari to Corfu where she embarked for Brindisi.<sup>52</sup> In Rome, she met with the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marchese San Giuliano, and they discussed Nikola's failure to obtain financial support in St Petersburg.<sup>53</sup> San Giuliano also sounded her out on the possibility of a future Malissori rebellion prompted by Montenegro. Durham suspected that Italy was behind Nikola's support of the Albanian agitations since it deflected the Turk's attention from Tripoli, but he convinced her otherwise:

'"Well," he asked, "in your opinion will the Maltsors of Scutari mountains rise this year or not?"

"It depends," said I, "on Montenegro." He looked so genuinely surprised that I said to myself at once "No; Italy is not engineering this affair."<sup>54</sup>

Later in Rome, she talked to the Montenegrin Minister, Popovic, who made it clear that the recent re-constitution of the Montenegrin cabinet and the nomination of the new 'hawkish' Minister of War, Martinovic, was paving the way to war in the Balkans.<sup>55</sup> Durham concluded: "Neither Italy nor Austria was behind the agitation - it must be the other Balkan states!"<sup>56</sup>

In Italy, Durham received a note from de Salis, British minister in Cetinje, asking her to contact the British ambassador in Rome, Sir Renell Rodd, about the Turkish allegations against her. On May 28, De Salis had written to Grey reporting Durham's

authorization "to give a flat denial....that she is inscribed as a member of Albanian Revolutionary Committee,"<sup>57</sup> and from Rome, Durham had written to de Salis confirming this:

I do not belong to any Albanian Committee of any sort...Nor do I know of whom any such committee - if there be one - consists. [Regarding Ismail's Kemal request to use her fund for revolutionary purposes] I replied that if he and others were not satisfied I could send all the money back to the donors but that I would never give it over to be administered by unknown people.<sup>58</sup>

While the statement was true in its strict sense, earlier that year Durham had claimed to be 'spokesperson' for the Highlanders. She was politically involved. Even her 'aid' was ethnically selective and therefore political. Until now, to be sure, she had helped the Albanian Catholic highlanders only, not the Muslim Kossovars who had been in revolt since 1910. Even so, the Turks had reason to view her activities with suspicion as interference in their affairs.

Fortunately for Durham, the matter was put to rest early in June. R.W. Graves, employed by the Ottoman government on the Reform Commission, denied Durham's "mysterious" connections and reported rather favourably on her work to Lowther in Constantinople. He also explained the background to the allegation. Although he himself could not trace the origins of such gossip, he suspected it was a Turkish invention. Hadji Adil Bey had first approached him asking if the government should expel Durham but Graves thought this inadvisable. Then the Grand Vizier was informed but nothing came of it.<sup>59</sup> Graves thought that the Turks' resentment of her "occasionally indiscreet"

language encouraged them to believe the worst of her. Furthermore, the Malissori openly spoke of Durham as the *Kralitza* (queen), thereby offending the Turks.<sup>60</sup>

During Durham's absence from Albania that spring, first Kossovo, and then the four Albanian vilayets broke out in open rebellion. The Albanian rebels received an unexpected fillip in the form a diversion: Turkish officers in the Skopje, Salonika and Constantinople garrisons supported the Albanians' demands for the dissolution of Parliament as well as the holding of free elections. By mid-July they had forced the resignation first of the Grand Vizier and then of the whole CUP cabinet.<sup>61</sup>

In early July 1912 Durham decided to return to Scutari via Montenegro. Podgoritsa, her first stop, was in a war-like mood. Already in March, Nikola had posted the 'hawkish' Petar Plamenac in Constantinople<sup>62</sup>. Then, the Montenegrin government recalled its consul from Scutari, leading the Turks to take "the blackest possible view of the state of things".<sup>63</sup> Thus, war between Turkey and Montenegro appeared imminent - and so did a new Albanian rising.

From Podgoritsa Durham travelled to Scutari. Fearing war would interrupt communication between Turkish territory and the West, Durham left Scutari once again for Montenegro on July 17. The following day Turkish regulars and Montenegrin militias clashed on the border at Matagushi near Podgoritsa.<sup>64</sup> Passing through Tuzi, the border town en route to Montenegro, she called on the *Kaimmakan* [deputy Grand Vizier] for an assessment of the

skirmish. He assured her that the confrontation was 'personal' but she was dubious.<sup>65</sup> Sympathetic to Montenegrin aims, she wrote that "Montenegro must fight - or starve."<sup>66</sup> On July 20 she was back in Podgoritsa but the stifling heat forced her out and barely a week later she returned to Cetijne.<sup>67</sup>

In the Montenegrin capital, Durham met the Royal Family whom she found enthusiastic for war. However, Nikola asked her to "tell your Maltsors [Malissori] that they must not rise now", meaning that they should synchronise their plans with his.<sup>68</sup> For the moment, the border remained fairly porous and some Malissori entered Montenegro to confer with Montenegrin officials. That week an 'Albanian insurgent'<sup>69</sup> contacted Durham to ask for a secret meeting with her. She wrote to Nevinson:

I am earnestly begged by one of the Maltsor leaders of the Albanian movement (no longer an inchoate movement) to forward the following particular to the right quarter. "We believe that in five years time by constant struggles we should be able to fight free and make our own terms with the Turks. But Austria has had her plans"<sup>70</sup>

She sympathized with his cause: "From this moment [after her encounter with the insurgent]," she claimed, "I considered myself definitely pledged to stand by the Maltsors in the coming struggle as I had done in the past."<sup>71</sup> For her, if war were to break out, the Malissori would have to be supported against both the Turks and the neighbouring states. However, she did not oppose Montenegro since she still held that the Turkish presence in the Balkans prevented the making of a durable peace there.

Since the Bosnian Crisis in 1908, Russia had made its Balkan policy a priority and was hoping to renew its own influence over the Balkan Slavs. By appointing the pan-Slavist Nicholas Hartwig as minister in Belgrade in 1909, it wished to create a Balkan Alliance as a check on Austria's influence in the Balkans.<sup>72</sup> Until 1912, nothing materialized, however, mostly due to the mutual jealousies and competing objectives of the potential Balkan allies, as well as from the unclear policies from St Petersburg itself.<sup>73</sup>

Durham had sensed that a Balkan Alliance under Russia's guidance might be formed as early as the fall 1911, when Bulgaria and Montenegro attempted a rapprochement.<sup>74</sup> But she also knew that as well as having a common interest in the destruction of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, the independent Balkan states were divided among themselves on a number of issues, the most significant being the future of Macedonia.<sup>75</sup> In the spring 1912, however, propitious circumstances carried them closer to war against Turkey. The ongoing Italo-Turkish War had now spread beyond the confines of Tripoli;<sup>76</sup> and in the Albanian and Macedonian provinces the disturbances were now on a scale that approached open rebellion. These encouraged the first of a series of agreements between the Balkan states who were now acting independently of Russia.

On March 13, 1912, the Serbs and Bulgarians signed treaties of defensive alliance in case of Austrian or Turkish aggression.<sup>77</sup> A secret protocol, however, provided for the

carving out of Macedonia into three segments; one for Serbia, another for Bulgaria, with the third to be disposed of by subsequent negotiations and the mediation of Russia.<sup>78</sup> On May 16th, Greece and Bulgaria signed an offensive alliance which stated that maltreatment of Macedonian Christians by the Porte would be considered by both states as a *casus belli*.<sup>79</sup>

During the summer 1912, the Balkan states talked peace while they prepared for war.<sup>80</sup> Meanwhile the situation in Ottoman Macedonia deteriorated. On August 1, bombs exploded in Kocani killing thirty nine and wounding over one hundred.<sup>81</sup> In all probability, Macedonian terrorists were responsible for the explosions, but the furore over the ensuing Turkish massacre, which claimed over one hundred twenty lives, provoked a political crisis in Bulgaria.<sup>82</sup>

Later that month, tensions flared up with a renewal of violent border clashes between Turkey and Montenegro.<sup>83</sup> The new Turkish administration, led by Ghazi Moukhtar, was expected to be more conciliatory to the subject nationalities so as to deal effectively with the looming crisis.<sup>84</sup> Since early August, he had been under pressure from the rebel Albanians who had gained control of the major military and commercial centres of the *vilayets*, occupying Prisren, Novi Pazar and Skopje. Their demands, embodied in the '14 points' had become increasingly radical. The Turkish government, left with little choice, acquiesced, removing its troops from the mountains, agreeing to peace treaties with the various tribes, and promising

constitutional concessions for the unification of the Albanian provinces. This amounted to granting the Albanian nationalists virtual autonomy.<sup>85</sup>

This electrified the neighbouring Balkan states, whose members coveted parts of Albania.<sup>86</sup> In September, a new offensive Greco-Bulgarian military convention was signed, Bulgaria promising to field 300 000 and Greece 120 000 men. Finally, late in September, King Nikola, whose relations had been difficult with Serbia, negotiated a treaty with Belgrade.<sup>87</sup>

Durham's journals of the last month before the hostilities began contain harrowing descriptions of the living conditions along the Turco-Montenegrin border. These also show that before the war began, she supported the cause of the Slav as well as the Albanian minorities under Turkish rule. In one of her last letters before the war, Durham wrote to Nevinson from Andrejevitsa about the treatment of Serbs in Kossovo:

Things here are too cruel for words. If no Power will interest itself in the fate of the 3000 families of Serbs in this unhappy corner of the Turkish Empire they will all be annihilated. (Adana on a small scale) (tried to photo[graph] another wretched castrated child - 12 months)<sup>88</sup>.

Throughout September, Durham wrote almost every day to her sister Nellie. She had made up her mind to serve in the Montenegrin hospital service in the event of war. On September 27, she wrote to Nellie from Andrejevitsa:

I'm still here. The people in authority [in Montenegro] have begged me to stay a bit as things are so uncertain!<sup>89</sup>

In fact, she believed that a general war in the Balkans was probable at this point. Hoping to witness the first salvos, and to provide the first report of war for the West, Durham marched to the Montenegrin/Albanian border with Yanko Vukotic's army. On October 8, 1912 Montenegro was at war with Turkey and, as provided for in their treaties, the other Balkan partners were shortly to follow suit.<sup>90</sup> Durham sent a telegram to an (unnamed) English paper but it was "sabotaged", as she later claimed, by a Montenegrin colleague who received credit for it instead.<sup>91</sup> As war erupted the Albanians split in their allegiances between the Turks and the Montenegrins, but Durham marched on with the Montenegrins.

## ENDNOTE

## CHAPTER 3

1. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 98.
2. Swire, *Albania the Rise of a Kingdom*, 109-111.
3. Delaissi, "Une guerre pour les chemins de fer," *La Grande Revue*, 10 July 1913, 130.
4. Palmer, *The Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire*, 213.
5. Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 420. Southern nationalist claims were typically more 'national' in character than the northern ones. For example, The Central Revolutionary Committee demanded the following: administrative autonomy within the Ottoman Empire; union of the four vilayets; separation of parliament and army; and more government jobs to Albanians.
6. Italy's actions also worried the Western Powers: Britain at once declared neutrality, and Austria-Hungary worried that Italy would take this opportunity to extend its influence along the Albanian seaboard. See Sir F. Cartwright to Grey, 2 October 1911, *BD*, Vol.IX, no.263.
7. Ivan Geshov, then Bulgarian Minister in Berlin admitted to Goschen that the sudden situation with Italy had "placed Turkey, or at all events the Young Turk regime, in a most painful, if not fatal, position." Nonetheless he assured him that there would be "no attempt on the part of Bulgaria to profit by Turkey's misfortune." See Geshov to Goschen, 27 September 1911, *BD*, no.244..
8. Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 426.
9. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 294.
10. Journal, 10-15 October 1911, MS 42:6, RAI.
11. Journal, 17 October 1911, MS 42:6, RAI. However, Durham also took time to enjoy herself. She attended mass from time to time, and socialised with Westerners in the region. She called at the Austrian consulate for the "very pleasant Madame Tannbauer." "Glad to speak to a lady," she commented.
12. Journal, 17 October 1911, MS 42:6, RAI.

13. Journal, 42:6, precise citation lost; Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 111.

14. See chapter 1. Also see Conwell-Evans, *Foreign Policy From a Back Bench*, 4.

15. Durham to Nevinson (transmitted to the FO), 19 December 1911, received 2 January 1912, FO 371 1481.

16. Which had been granted to Montenegro in 1880.

17. For the last point, see FO minutes attached to Durham to Nevinson, 19 December 1911, received 2 January 1912, FO 371 1481. See also Samuel R. Williamson, *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*, (New York: St Martin's Press, 1991) 77-78. Relations between Vienna and the Young Turks, strained during the summer, normalized late in December 1911.

18. Minute by Grey attached to Durham's letter to Spence, 26 December 1911, received 4 January 1912, FO 371 1481 (file 19). He asked for copies of the letter to be sent to Constantinople and Vienna.

19. Durham to Christian, 21 January 1912, Box 1-2, BP.

20. Ibid. See also, Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 400.

21. This view was reflected in, G. Lowther's (Britain's minister in Constantinople) "Annual Report on Turkey", *BD*, Vol. IX, No. 524. See also *Times*, 9 February 1912. The southern Albanians held a 'tax protest,' jealous of the 'preferential' treatment that the highlanders received.

22. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 122.

23. For an account of the entire episode, see Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 122-136.

24. Ibid., 123.

25. Minute by R.P. Maxwell attached to letter from Durham to Spence, 19 February 1912, FO 371 1481 7274. Maxwell wrote: "The first version embodied the proposals of the King of Montenegro while the 2nd (which contains the word immeubles for which the Malissori are now fighting is the counter proposal of the Porte, see 31133/1911)."

26. Durham to Spence, 12 February 1912, received 20 February 1912, FO 371 1481 7444.

27. Durham to Spence, 26 December 1912, received 4 January 1912, FO 371 1481.

28. Durham to Spence, 18 February 1912, received 29 February 1912, FO 371 1481 (8899). In mid February, the Ballhausplatz (Austro-Hungarian foreign ministry) sent two specialists of the region's affairs, to sound out the Catholic highlanders and learn what their intentions were. This raised hopes among some Albanians in Scutari that the Great Powers would intervene on their behalf.

29. Durham to Nevinson from Scutari, 7 March 1912, MS 42:6, RAI. See also Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 129.

30. Durham to Spence, 18 February 1912, received 29 February 1912, FO 371 1481 (8899).

31. Ibid.

32. Spence to Maxwell, 22 February 1912, FO 371 1481 (8130).

33. Durham to Nevinson, 18 March 1912, FO 371 1481 13410.

34. Lowther to Grey, 4 March 1912, FO 371 1481 9323.

35. Minute by Grey, 4 March 1912, FO 371 1481 9323.

36. For details see Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, 96-104. In November 1911, a Turkish opposition party, "Liberty and Entente", met with Albanian nationalists to discuss measures to reverse authoritarian Young Turk policies. By January 1912, the situation for the CUP, the party in power, became untenable.

37. Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 425. The CUP declared an election for April 1912, confident they could win a majority in parliament. Albanian heavyweights like Ismail Kemal, Hasan Prishtina and Bajo Topulli were barred from the elections.

38. Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, 103. See also *Times*, 24 February 1912, for a balanced description of the aims and potential accomplishments of the Commission.

39. Minute by Maxwell attached to a letter Durham wrote to Nevinson from Scutari, 7 March 1912, FO 371 1481 (11293).

40. Durham to Nevinson from Scutari, 14 March 1912, FO 1481 13172. She also feared that her fund would soon run dry. Angry at the prospect of being forced to stop her humanitarian work because of lack of money, she criticized the English Left, believing their priorities were all wrong: "The Labour Party should come out here for a bit and then it would know when it was well off. So should the Suffragettes - the best would be to sell them to harems to pay for the window breaking."

41. *Times*, 12 February 24. Also for a description of Graves during his tenure as Consul General in Monastir in 1903, see Nevinson, *Fire of Life*, 145.

42. *Times*, 16 March 1912.

43. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 140-143. Swire, *Albania the Rise of a Kingdom*, 113. In fact, the chiefs feared (probably mistakenly) that the commission aimed to lure them into town and round them up for execution.

44. Durham to Nevinson from Scutari, 3 April 1912, MS 42:6, RAI.

45. *Times*, 5 July 1912.

46. Lowther to Maxwell, 14 May 1912, FO 371 1481 (20624).

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*, minute by Maxwell notes "private and secret."

49. *Ibid.*, copy of a note attached to memorandum from Maxwell to de Salis: "Can you get in touch with Miss Durham and ascertain whether she is a member of the Committee."

50. Swire, *Albania the Rise of a Kingdom*, 119. This was the Albanian nationalists' long standing concern since the foundation of the Prizren League in 1878. Now, Ismail Kemal feared that unless the Western Powers recognise the principle of Albanian autonomy, the Albanian vilayets would be divided following an aggression of Turkey by the Balkan states.

51. Durham to Nevinson, 8 May 1912, received 17 May 1912, FO 371 1481 20995. Maxwell noted in the minute: "Most of this is less definite than Miss Durham's communications usually are....copy Constantinople."

52. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 149. The detour was necessitated by the tensions between Montenegro and Turkey over navigational rights on Lake Scutari.

53. She had already written to the Foreign Office about Nikola's trip to St Petersburg. See Durham to Spence, 14 March 1912, FO 371 1481 13172. She noted: "It looks as if Montenegrin Policy is changed and that he [Nikola] has received orders [from Russia] not to give the luckless Malissori any help this year." For a description of Nikola's trip, see Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle*, 95-97. Treadway is more reasonable than Durham about Nikola's supposed failures: "The day after his return to Cetinje, the King appeared amenable....All the while [he] was walking a tightrope. He wanted it known that he was complying with Russian

"orders," yet he clearly did not want to alienate his own Malissori clients."

54. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 150.

55. Ibid., 150. See also Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle*, 101. The more aggressive Montenegrin policy did not alter the Foreign Office's attitude. For the different changes in the Montenegrin cabinet see *Times*, 20 June 1912.

56. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 150.

57. De Salis to Grey, 28 May 1912, FO 371 1481 22796. Grey responded to Lowther on 29 May 1912, "repeat this to M[inister of] F[oreign] A[ffairs]."

58. Durham to de Salis, 28 May 1912, FO 371 1481 (24485).

59. I have found no record of the Grand Vizier's comments.

60. Graves to Lowther, 10 June 1912, FO 371 1481 24544.

61. See R.J. Crampton, "The Balkans, 1909-1914", in *British Foreign Policy Under Sir Edward Grey*, ed. F.H. Hinsley, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 259. See also Andrew Rossos, *Russia and the Balkans: Inter-Balkan Rivalries and Russian Foreign Policy, 1908-1914*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1981) 53.

62. Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle*, 99, 101-103.

63. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 151.

64. Skirmishes had recurred since June, 1912. A Turco-Montenegrin Border Commission was set up to resolve both parties' differences, but negotiations ultimately failed. The Turks even attempted to bribe the usually provocative Montenegrins into accepting a truce along the Turco-Montenegrin border. See Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle*, 101-105.

65. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 154

66. Durham to Nevinson, 19 July 1912, MS 42:6 RAI.

67. Durham to Nevinson, 20 July 1912, MS 42:6, RAI.

68. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 154.

69. She does not name him.

70. Durham to Nevinson, 27 July 1912, MS 42:6, RAI. This letter is re-transcribed in *The Struggle for Scutari*, 154-155.

71. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 156.

72. Several accounts of the history of the Balkan League exist. The most detailed and authoritative is E.C. Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938). *The Other Balkan Wars: A Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect With a New Introduction and Reflections on the Present Conflict* by George Kennan, (Washington: Brookings Institute Publishing, 1993) is a reprint of the 1915 publication to which Durham's friend H.N. Brailsford was a major contributor. Andrew Rossos, *Russia and the Balkans: Inter-Balkan Rivalries and Russian Foreign Policy 1908-1914*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), and Edward C. Thaden, *Russia and the Balkan Alliance of 1912*, (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1965) are also extremely useful, although the former is more detailed and focused than the latter. Others include Reginald Rankin Bt., *The Inner History of the Balkan War*, 2 vols. (London: John Lane, 1914), which, despite its anti-semitic obsessions, is an informative account which looks at the involvement of various negotiators such as J.D. Burchier; and I.E. Geshov, *The Balkan League*, (London: J. Murray, 1915), an interesting though pro-Bulgarian account by a key player.

73. Rossos, *Russia and the Balkans*, 35; Treadway, *Falcon and the Eagle*, 105; Thaden, *Russia and the Balkan Alliance*, 38.

74. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 222. Baron de Kruyff, a Dutch correspondent and head of the Foreign Journalists' Society, told Durham that he had acted as messenger between King Nikola and King Ferdinand in the Fall 1911. It seems that contacts for an alliance between the two kingdoms were made even earlier in 1910 - see Henryk Batowski, "The Failure of the Balkan Alliance of 1912," *Balkan Studies*, 1966, 113. See also *The Other Balkan Wars, Carnegie Endowment*, 43, for contacts between Greek and Bulgarian plenipotentiaries also held in 1910. The Balkan states were anxious to sound out the Albanians' attitude in case of an attack on Turkey. Thus, Prince Mirko, King Nikola's son, even proposed an alliance between Montenegro and the Albanian chieftains to Ismail Kemal in the fall 1911. Kemal declined, however, to participate in a war against the Young Turk regime, believing them capable of reform. See Kemal, *Memoirs*, 369.

75. Rossos, *Russia and the Balkans*, xi; Thaden, *Russia*, 58-62. Barbara and Charles Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States 1804-1920*, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1977), 216-217; L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 533. Serbia hoped to protect itself from Austria in the north, and wished to partition Macedonia; Bulgaria, on the other hand, wanted an anti-Turkish pact and the creation of an autonomous Macedonia

76. Palmer, *Decline and Fall*, 213-215. Despite the broadening of the conflict in April 1912, the Turkish forces resisted and proved to be less inept than expected.

77. Diplomatist (G. Young), *Nationalism and War in the Near East*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1915), appendix, 315. Serbia promised 150 000 men and Bulgaria 200 000 men.

78. Castellán, *History of the Balkans*, 378. Stavrianos, *Balkans Since 1453*, 532-533.

79. Helmreich, *Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*, 69-80.

80. The Balkan states' main preoccupations were to reinforce their armies and raise money for war. Bulgaria, for example, negotiated an important loan with Paris as late as July. Helmreich, *Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*, 103. For the financing of the Balkan states in preparation for war, see the appropriate chapters in Herbert Feis, *Europe, The World's Banker*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930).

81. For a description of the event, see Mr. Barclay to Grey, 10 August 1912, *BD*, Vol.IX, no.607.

82. Rossos, *Russia and the Balkans*, 52.

83. See Milovan Djilas, *Land Without Justice*, (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1958), 37. His own father started skirmishes, including one at Mojkovac on August 4, 1912 described by Durham in *Struggle for Scutari*, 161.

84. Crampton, "The Balkans, 1909-1914", 259; Rossos, *Russia and the Balkans*, 53.

85. Crampton, *The Hollow Detente*, 51; Swire, *Albania the Rise of a Kingdom*, 132. The complicated negotiations which took place between representatives of the Turkish government and Albanian nationalists, and among the nationalists themselves, are brilliantly described in Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 431-437.

86. Thaden, *Russia and the Balkan Alliance*, 105-106.

87. Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle*, 93-95.

88. Durham to Nevinson, 27 August 1912, MS 42:6, RAI.

89. Durham to Nellie, 27 September 1912, MS 42:6, RAI.

90. Helmreich, *Diplomacy*, 125-145, especially 125, 133, 135; Crampton, *The Hollow Detente*, 54. Between September 30 and October 8, members of the Balkan League mobilized and issued ultimatums to

Constantinople, demanding that autonomy for the remaining vilayets in European Turkey be granted according to the principle of nationality. On October 8, a memorandum jointly issued by Vienna and St Petersburg asked for the cessation of hostilities. But before it reached him, Nikola declared war on Turkey. Ten days later, Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece were also on the offensive.

91. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 188.

## CHAPTER 5

### LOBBYING, RELIEF WORK, & THE END OF ALBANIA

The First Balkan War (October-December 1912) was a disaster for the Ottoman Empire as its armies met rapid defeat on every front.<sup>1</sup> On October 15 the Turks agreed to the Treaty of Lausanne and recognized Italian demands in North Africa. This enabled them to pull their troops out of Tripolitania and to reinforce those in the Balkans. However, on October 22-23, the Bulgarians were victorious at Kirk Kilisse (Lozengrad). The following day, at what proved to be the decisive battle of Kumanovo, Serb troops broke through the Ottoman defence lines in Northern Albania.<sup>2</sup> Barely a week later, the Ottoman garrison in Salonika surrendered to the Crown Prince Constantine of Greece.<sup>3</sup> On November 28, Ismail Kemal hoisted the Albanian flag in Valona and declared the creation of a new state.<sup>4</sup> Within a week, the exhausted Turkish troops were forced to conclude an armistice. Only Janina, Adrianople (Edirne) and Scutari remained in Ottoman hands, and they were besieged.

On October 8, *The Manchester Guardian* and *Daily Chronicle*, had organized a special news service for its readers "if war should unfortunately break out." The three reporters chosen for the service were H.W. Nevinson based in Sofia, M.H. Donohoe in Constantinople, and Durham, who was described as "a recognised

authority on the Near East," in Montenegro.<sup>5</sup> Durham accepted the appointment even though, as she stated in *The Struggle for Scutari*, she regarded journalism as a 'mere by-product' of her activities.<sup>6</sup> Her prime concern was to assist a group of sixteen doctors serving the 50,000 strong Montenegrin army.<sup>7</sup> The Montenegrin ranks were soon swelled with Catholic Albanians whose leaders regarded the war as one of liberation from the Turks, Islam, and the Ottoman Empire. Montenegro had not played a small part in ensuring the Catholics' cooperation, by promising, among other things, the establishment of an autonomous Albanian Catholic state in the north. On the other hand, Muslim Albanians were rallying to the banner of the Turks who so recently had been their enemies.<sup>8</sup> The primary targets of the Montenegrin army therefore were Muslim Albanian towns still loyal to the Porte. The first to fall were Tuza and Decic.<sup>9</sup>

In the ensuing operations, the Montenegrins mutilated the fallen enemy, including some who were still breathing.<sup>10</sup> Durham strongly disapproved of this conduct and threatened Jovicevic, Montenegro's former consul in Scutari, to publicize the "disgusting problem of the mutilated men."<sup>11</sup>

Her remonstrations proved to be futile. She was dependent on the Montenegrin command which controlled journalists' access to war zones. Reporters at Podgoritsa received communiques issued by Montenegrin Headquarters but if she got near the front, she had to submit her reports to the Montenegrin censor. Furthermore, the success of her relief operation and medical aid depended on her

exercising a degree of self-censorship about certain aspects of the campaign. Reporting excesses by the Montenegrins was hardly politic in these circumstances.<sup>12</sup>

However, she remained generally sympathetic to the Montenegrin, and even the Serbian, governments. Her reports for the *Manchester Guardian*, not only overlooked the Montenegrin atrocities but emphasized the importance of the war for Montenegro, which she compared to the struggle between David and Goliath. "[A]ll who know Montenegro must wish her well." <sup>13</sup> Like many Westerners, she was convinced that the Ottoman Empire in Europe was at last to be dismantled. Along with many English Liberals<sup>14</sup> and

every friend of the South Slav, I was anxious that the almost totally Slav districts of the Sanjak, of Berani, and the frontier should be freed.

Nonetheless, she did not condone every South Slav act, especially encroachment into territories she saw as Albanian:

...Prizren I regarded (and regard) as an Albanian town and district, and hoped it would so remain. <sup>15</sup>

In fact King Nikola aimed to capture Scutari, not just because of its fertile plains, but because it would give his tiny country an outlet to the Adriatic via the Bojana River Valley.<sup>16</sup>

Durham was with the Montenegrin army when, on October 18, the advance on Scutari began. She was now a legend in the lands of the Malissori. Her tours of the mountains and her work among them in the summer 1911 were vividly remembered and the Catholic crowds greeted her, longing to talk to the 'kralitsa,' inviting her to visit their dwellings.<sup>17</sup> This she was glad to do and

over the next few days renewed many old acquaintanceships. But more pressing issues demanded her attention. A mobile hospital had to be set up to supplement the one in Podgoritsa. It was soon needed. The march towards Scutari in the ensuing days was arduous and the Montenegrin army suffered a higher casualty rate than had been expected, partly as a result of the unusually cold weather.<sup>18</sup>

The Montenegrins began bombarding Scutari on October 28. Durham stayed on for a few days to watch developments but on November 3 returned to Podgoritsa to help the base hospitals already established there by the Italian and Austrian Red Cross.<sup>19</sup> The unexpectedly early onset of winter prevented her from returning to the front, so she decided to stay in Podgoritsa "where the patients are most grateful for anything one can do for them".<sup>20</sup>

Up to mid-November, Durham's reports for the *Manchester Guardian* continued to be sympathetic to Montenegro but in her private correspondence she had already begun to strike another note. The occasion of this change was the imminent prospect of the fall of Scutari.<sup>21</sup> Firstly, she thought that Nikola had avoided a political solution regarding Scutari's status. Secondly, taking the city would be a difficult and messy enterprise. She had already warned the Montenegrin General Staff that the town was fortified, intimating that it would be a mistake to storm it, but her warnings seem to have been disregarded. Therefore "the assault on Scutari - if it does

come off - must be an awful slaughter."<sup>22</sup> she wrote to Nellie on November 25.

Soon after the campaign against Scutari got under way the Malissori had broken their alliance with Montenegro and began returning to their homes.<sup>23</sup> Durham had privately encouraged the Malissori to disassociate themselves from King Nikola who was evidently determined to present the conquest of northern Albania as a *fait accompli* to the Great Powers.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand she tried to dissuade the tribesmen from starting any hostile action against King Nikola, fearing that a Malissori/Montenegrin conflict would provoke Serb retaliations against Catholic Albanians. She was not successful, however, and they turned against the Montenegrins.<sup>25</sup>

On November 28, 1912 in Valona, Ismail Kemal proclaimed the independence of Albania.<sup>26</sup> This triggered immediate protests by the Balkan allies whose troops proceeded to swarm into Albanian lands of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>27</sup> Serb and Montenegrin forces occupied Albanian-populated territories in the north and the Greek army planned to occupy the south. The Albanian state was being dismantled in the moment of its creation.

The storm of Scutari, however, planned for December 4th, was avoided, at least for the moment, when the general armistice was signed on December 3. The Balkan Allies agreed to convene with Ottoman representatives on December 16 in St James Hall, London, for peace talks. At the same time, a "Conference of the Ambassadors", representing the Great Powers would try to define a

common position with regards to the Balkans and to "render assistance to the peace plenipotentiaries" in case they found difficulties reaching an agreement."<sup>28</sup>

Durham wrote a critical assessment of the northern Albanians' role in the war which appeared in *The Times* two days before the Conference was due to open. The article in question, "The Albanian Tribesmen: a Story of Aims and Failures," began by analyzing the Malissori's attitude to the Turks on the eve of the war. All northern Albanian tribes, except for the Mirdites, had rejected Turkish rule. They had become allies of Montenegro to avenge themselves not only against the Turks but also against the Muslim Albanians whom they considered to be responsible for the failure of the 1911 rebellion. But when the road to Scutari seemed opened for Montenegro and their Albanian allies,

Difficulties....speedily arose. The tribesmen considered that, instead of being treated as allies, they were being treated as conquered. The Montenegrins already, it is complained, regard the territory they have entered as exclusively Montenegrin. Much friction and jealousy have resulted. At the beginning of November the tribesmen returned to their mountains, the Montenegrins having decided that they could take Scutari unaided.<sup>29</sup>

A fundamental obstacle to Albanian unity was that, "neither Moslem nor Orthodox wished the glory of a successful revolution to fall to the Catholics" and this partially explained the shortcomings of the 1911 Malissori Uprising.<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, Durham argued that it was the duty of the Great Powers to support the formation of an Albanian state for the greater good of the region's future, despite the apparent fissures of Albanian society. It would be a pity, she continued,

if Albania were to be turned into a second Poland, and split among three nations, with no guarantee as to her national rights - a pity not only for her, but for the States that divide her, for the fragments of Albania announced by them are almost certain to be sources of disaffection.<sup>31</sup>

This issue was to lie at the heart of the Conference which began two days later.<sup>32</sup> The diplomatic wrangling in London cannot be discussed in detail here, but Russia supported the Serbs, and Austria opposed Montenegro's and Serbia's claims in Albania.<sup>33</sup> Finally, on December 20, the Great Powers agreed to recognize an Albanian state consisting of Albanian-speaking territories lost by the Ottoman Empire, though they were to define its frontiers at a later date.<sup>34</sup>

The Ambassador's Conference's proceedings were interrupted by political and military developments in the Balkans. On January 23, 1913, the pro-war Committee of Union and Progress in Constantinople, regained power through a coup d'etat.<sup>35</sup> Full-scale hostilities between Turkey and the Balkan Alliance erupted within days. Soon afterwards, in February, Montenegro renewed its assault on Scutari.<sup>36</sup>

Durham began to correspond again regularly with the Foreign Office, (often addressing the letters to Nevinson who sent them to Whitehall). In her first letter, dated January 22, 1913, she attacked her *bete noir*, the Treaty of Berlin, warning that the "same errors will not be repeated, for this time it will be far more serious."<sup>37</sup> She stressed that northern Albania had an predominantly Albanian character notwithstanding its religious mix and that, "the mass of Albanians of Scutari vilayet do not

wish to become Montenegrin subjects."<sup>38</sup> The Montenegrins themselves rejected the notion of an Albanian ethnicity. Indeed, at a meeting with her in Podgoritsa, they assured Durham that the Albanians' origins were Slav:

"The Maltsovi burn the yule log. This proves they are pure Serb. It is a Serb custom." Everyone was listening open-mouthed. I said "What, burn the yule log! That's an old English custom. There is no such thing as Serbs or Montenegrins. They are all Slavised English. We will at once prepare to annex Cetinje. And you celebrate Saint George. He is our saint. You are all English. This proves it!" They were stunned.<sup>39</sup>

Durham continued her relief work at the base hospital at Podgoritsa. She appealed to her sister Nellie in London to organize the collection of shoes and shirts for the destitute Albanian Muslim refugees in the countryside between Podgoritsa and Scutari.<sup>40</sup>

Only two months before she had been cheering on the Montenegrins. She was now extremely critical of Montenegro's ambitions in northern Albania. On February 20, she wrote to Nevinson that attempts by the Montenegrins to take Scutari by storm had begun. She then denounced the Montenegrin atrocities and Serb 'race extermination' (as they themselves claimed it was) in Ljuma and protested that the Albanian Muslim refugees and the thousand or so *nizams* (soldiers), nearly all south Albanians were, "held in most pitiable state (forced labour)."<sup>41</sup>

Nevinson sent the letter to the Foreign Office: "This is a very bad account indeed, " noted Maxwell. "The Montenegrins are about the worst of the allies. Could we not say something at Cetinje as we have at Sofia and Belgrade."<sup>42</sup> Grey sympathized

but offered little. He then wrote to de Salis in Cetinje. The reports about maltreatment of Muslims had already been the subject of informal representations by British diplomats in Sofia and Belgrade but little could be done immediately. Grey insisted that should de Salis make an official complaint, he was not to disclose the source of his information (ie. Durham).<sup>43</sup>

Durham took some comfort from the fact that the Foreign Office insisted in diplomatic circles that Scutari should remain Albanian.<sup>44</sup> But she worried, too, that Scutari might not hold out for long against the Montenegrin assault begun in February and reported as much to Nevinson.<sup>45</sup> Grey received the letter on March 10 and noted, "Miss Durham's last few letters have been very interesting (about the imminent fall of Scutari.)" In the meantime, he had changed his mind and asked de Salis to communicate Britain's protest to the Montenegrin government.<sup>46</sup>

The Foreign Office accepted her reports as reliable,<sup>47</sup> and Durham found other influential people in London responsive. One was Aubrey Herbert, Conservative MP and Middle Eastern traveller; another one was Lord Cromer. Cromer had befriended the Young Turks and later supported Albanians as well as Turks, regarding both as victims of war-time atrocities.<sup>48</sup> Durham corresponded regularly with him about the "excesses committed by the Balkan Allies" on Albanian and Macedonian Muslims:<sup>49</sup>

[They are] intending to repay the Turks [ie. Muslim Albanians] atrocity for atrocity."...  
...I would impress on you, my Lord, also the fact that Montenegro protests to Europe that she cannot exist unless she obtains possession of the fertile plains near the lake

[Scutari] and the coast....([therefore] Montenegro wants to exterminate both Catholics and Moslems).<sup>50</sup>

She pointed out, however, that the coastline was ethnically Albanian and of course vital to Albania's economic survival. Furthermore, she considered that the Powers were responsible for the viability of the nascent state, having recently fixed Albania's northern borders (March 13, 1913).<sup>51</sup> Montenegro's assaults on Scutari, she felt, should be countered by international force, and indeed late in March and early in April, the Great Powers threatened Nikola with diplomatic pressures and a naval demonstration along the coast of Montenegro.<sup>52</sup> However, nothing came of it and she was disappointed.

Between the end of March and the last week of April, Durham shuttled between Cetinje and Podgoritsa.<sup>53</sup> On April 2, 1913, she scribbled to Nellie from Cetinje:

Just a line to say that a crisis is imminent and that all means of communication are under surveillance and uncertain.<sup>54</sup>

And two days later:

I come up here (Cetinje) for good....Till peace is made it is inadvisable to give to any body: England is in terrible favour both because of government and Press.<sup>55</sup>

Although the English press in fact supported Grey's effort to uphold the agreement of December 20, 1912 (regarding Albanian independence), some papers, including *The Daily News*, admired the feisty Nikola. Its reporter Harold Spender asserted that Scutari was Montenegrin, both ethnically and historically. Durham, who had written sporadically for the same paper, reacted vigorously:

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 sop [sop] to Russia - an intolerable piece of bullying. Be Liberal, Mr. Spender, by all means, but do not give away Albanian territory.<sup>56</sup>

The letter, written earlier in the month, was published after Essad Bey Toptani, the city's governor, surrendered Scutari to the Montenegrins on April 23, 1913.<sup>57</sup> That same day Durham telegraphed the news to *The Manchester Guardian*. On April 24 Prince Danilo march in the town. The following morning Durham also entered Scutari accompanied by a Mr. Lock of *The Times*.<sup>58</sup> Disorder now reigned in Scutari and the newly appointed Montenegrin governor, Petar Plamenac, who knew Durham well, asked her to use her influence and help restore order in Scutari. The offer shocked her:

A whirl of recollections buzzed by me....Not two years ago, I had been called upon to help Montenegro to drive the betrayed Maltsors back across the frontier.<sup>59</sup>

She accepted on condition that this would not impede her relief operation. But as it turned out, Montenegro's rule over the city was short-lived. By May 3, bribes and the threat of Austrian mobilization persuaded Nikola to evacuate Scutari. On May 14, he had handed the city over to an international landing force under the British Vice Admiral Burney.<sup>60</sup>

By agreement of the Powers, Scutari was placed under Burney's authority and Durham threw herself into the task of relief. She had two British volunteers as helpers, Miss Robertson, a trained nurse, and Teresa Buxton. Both were "first class".<sup>61</sup> Teresa Buxton has left a description of Durham at

this time: 'short hair, no stays, very plain and stout - old filthy tam o'shanter and dirty dark-green flannel blouse.'<sup>62</sup>

But she admired her, none the less.

In mid-June, however, a ship had arrived in Scutari bringing relief from Austria and Italy.<sup>63</sup> It seemed that Durham and her associates were no longer needed so both Buxton and Robertson left. Durham decided to transfer her attentions to remote areas bringing food to their inhabitants and providing medical help. But then she heard that Henry Nevinson was on his way to Albania on behalf of the Macedonian Relief Fund and she decided to wait for him. He caught up with her in a small inn. She was,

[E]qually composed, answering the desperate questions of young British officers as to where they could buy butter, marmalade, and other necessaries of British life which Albania had never known."<sup>64</sup>

He hoped to travel around Albania and report both on the political situation and the condition of refugees. And, as she wrote to Nellie:

It will be very jolly to do a bit of travelling again after being stuck in and around this spot for over a year. I shall be away about three weeks. I expect we are going to Tirana, and Elbasan, and perhaps as far as Koritza and Janina.<sup>65</sup>

They left Scutari a few days later. Conditions were difficult. Some areas were still disorderly and at times Durham was forced to bunk in harems in Muslim villages. At Tirana they were received by Essad Bey Toptani.<sup>66</sup> There is no record of their encounter but, however warm his welcome, his guests could hardly have been seduced. Both Durham and Nevinson believed that Essad had betrayed Nazim Bey, the Turkish commander of the

Scutari fortress, and that this had led to its downfall. When Essad was assassinated years later in Paris, Durham was to comment wryly that he should have been hanged years before.<sup>67</sup>

On June 19, they reached Durazzo, where the "exuberant fertility" of this "unknown land in the heart of Europe" had fallen prey to complete anarchy and Serb destruction.<sup>68</sup> They then headed back to Tirana and proceeded to Elbasan where they met with Afik Bey, the leader of a Bektashi sect. From there they wound their way over the mountains into the Serb-controlled areas of Struga and Ochrid, a Macedonian city with a sizeable Muslim Albanian population. There Serbian officers informed them that war was again imminent.

On June 29, they reached Kortcha where, "ten years ago,....I had first been inspired to help the Albanian people to become a nation."<sup>69</sup> Kortcha was teeming with Greek officers who confirmed that Serbia and Greece were now at war with Bulgaria (Rumania and Turkey were soon to join them). The Second Balkan War had begun. At some distance from the fighting Durham and Nevinson were more immediately concerned with the crude attempts by the occupying Greeks to Hellenize the local southern Albanian Orthodox population. This upset her: "Greeks were worse [than the Serbs]. [They] Organized [a] pro-Greek meeting for our benefit."<sup>70</sup>

In early July, they finally reached Valona, their final destination, by way of Berat. Durham was delighted to arrive in this quintessentially 'Albanian' region. After Kortcha it was

like "a breath of fresh air".<sup>71</sup> Both towns were Albanian strongholds, Valona being the seat of the Albanian provisional government under Ismail Kemal. The seventy-year old self-appointed President and his council of ministers greeted Durham and Nevinson but unfortunately there is no record of the encounter. We know that both Durham and Nevinson profoundly distrusted Kemal whom they associated with Greek interests. But it was his government that tried to establish the new state and provide a 'normal administration' for Albanians, despite a lack of foreign support and continual internal feuding between local Albanian chiefs.<sup>72</sup>

On July 14, 1913, Durham and Nevinson returned by boat to Scutari from Antivari. The tour pleased her: perhaps "one of the most interesting trips I ever made," she told Nellie. She added that Albania was now "a land without recognized form of gov[ernmen]t - newly created and still surprised at itself - and all going quite smoothly."<sup>73</sup> She now turned to relief work: "I'm now going to give out the rest of my money", she told her sister. "Small sums still dribble in. (American missionary involved as well - Dibra, Mati)." So she would stay on in Scutari while Nevinson, joined by the American missionary Erichson, returned to Serb-controlled areas.<sup>74</sup>

At the end of July Durham considered returning to London in time to celebrate her "jubilee," her fiftieth birthday. Despite the gruelling nature of the relief work and lingering health problems, she congratulated herself on her good fortune and felt

much younger since she left England.<sup>75</sup> In the end, however, she decided to stay in Scutari through September in order to help preparations for the winter. By now, her fund was exhausted and she found herself in the uncomfortable position of declining help to people who held her in high esteem and who refused to believe she could do nothing for them.

She was able to take some satisfaction from the fact that at least, Albania's status as a state was being confirmed. On July 29, 1913, the ongoing Ambassadors Conference had recognized Albania as a "principaute autonome souveraine et hereditaire," and undertook to nominate a prince within six months.<sup>76</sup> A small international force under the command of the English Admiral Burney was deputed to keep the peace, pending the arrival of an International Commission to decide about the government which would be formed under the Prince. Meanwhile the powers worked to sustain their conflicting interests: France and Russia sided with the Greeks while Italy, Austria-Hungary and Germany supported the Albanian interests.<sup>77</sup>

Late that summer, Durham met Aubrey Herbert who was to become her close ally.<sup>78</sup> He had come as an observer. Herbert already knew Albania, had heard of Durham's activities, but only now did he realize what a legend she had become among the people of the Albanian mountains. In his memoirs he was to sketch a complimentary portrait of Durham. She gave him her version of the beginning of the First Balkan War - and of how she had been pro-

Serb and pro-Montenegrin at its outset. But their recent conduct had persuaded her to become an enemy of their cause.<sup>79</sup>

This accorded well with Herbert's sympathies. He was a passionate defender of the nationalist Albanians. Now, he and Durham campaigned together to prevent the territories of the Hoti and Gruda tribes from being ceded to Montenegro, delivering "stirring patriotic speeches" at Malissori gatherings.<sup>80</sup> Herbert then left for a tour of the south where he was to plead for the better treatment of Turks held in Albanian jails.

In September, Durham was again immersed in relief work. On the 27th September she received a message from Elbasan where "hundreds of persons are suffering from Servian atrocities, [and] medical necessities [are] lacking."<sup>81</sup> Two weeks later, she returned horrified from Elbasan which had become a scene of squalor and desolation after retreating Serb troops ravaged their way out of conquered Albanian territory. Durham reported twenty eight villages "wiped out of existence." "If it was Armenia or the Kurds" she commented bitterly, "everyone would be enraged."<sup>82</sup> Out of funds and feeling increasingly isolated and helpless, Durham left Albania on October 25 by express boat from Medua to Trieste where she made her way back to London.<sup>83</sup>

During the fall 1913, Durham moved to King Henry's Road, in London's Chalk Farm district, and set about collecting funds for the Albanian victims of the war. She also publicly denounced Montenegro, returned the Gold Medal awarded to her by King Nikola

in 1907,<sup>84</sup> and proceeded to lobby the British government for the protection of Muslims and Albanians now under Serbian, Montenegrin and Greek forces.

Late in January 1914, she urged R.G. Vansittart, then a junior clerk at the Foreign Office, to press the Greek government for religious and educational freedom for Albanians in the territories lately annexed by Greece.<sup>85</sup> Vansittart acknowledged that the problem of minorities' rights had supposedly been dealt with at the Ambassadors' Meeting of July 29, 1913, though he himself remained sceptical about the Powers' will to enforce their own rulings.<sup>86</sup> From all sides, hundreds of thousands had been forced to migrate and their status and future remained precarious.<sup>87</sup> In February he received more letters from Durham in which she despaired that the minorities would not be successfully protect:

What hopeless rubbish Treaties are. These rights guaranteed by the Treaty of Berlin simply do not exist....One of the King's [Nikola] cousin told me the intention was to destroy the Albanian language.<sup>88</sup>

Vansittart agreed and noted:

I have....had this letter entered because it shows that the Balkan states will require some watching if the guarantees we have proposed to ask of them on behalf of minorities are not to be illusory."<sup>89</sup>

Durham also set about raising funds for the Scutari refugees. Late in January, she sent £200 to Colonel Phillips, now head of the relief operation in Scutari.<sup>90</sup> In the first week of February she gave fund-raising lectures on Albania, launched newspaper appeals, and asked the Foreign Office to send

the money to Albania.<sup>91</sup> She also kept a lively correspondence with her Albanian friends, mostly southerners, who complained about the Greek occupation and the burning of several Muslim villages.<sup>92</sup> Most of her energies, however, seem to have been devoted to revising her harrowing account of the past four years in *The Struggle for Scutari*. As soon as she finished the draft in April, she submitted it for immediate publication: "[I]t couldn't wait." she later wrote.<sup>93</sup>

The book included an accurate account of the Balkan Wars from Albania's point of view, and a clear exposition of the political and cultural struggles of Albania in the declining years of the Ottoman Empire. The press enthusiastically reviewed the book.<sup>94</sup> She was pleased. *The Struggle for Scutari* added to her reputation as a Balkan 'expert' and facilitated her efforts to publicize the plight of Albania.

One of the reasons for wanting the book published quickly was the recent accession of Prince William of Weid, a captain on the German General Staff and nephew of Carmen Sylva of Rumania, to the new Albanian throne. His arrival in Durazzo on March 6, 1914, had the immediate effect of encouraging the "supporters" of an independent Albania.<sup>95</sup> But Weid had to contend with Great Power quarrels over Albania, overt military pressure from Albania's neighbours, hostility from the Muslim beys, the unpopular policies by the Kemal government, and other conflicts demonstrating the anarchic character of Albanian politics.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, the delimitation of Albania's borders concluded in

August of 1913 had left some 800 000 Albanians outside the country's borders.<sup>97</sup> His appearance on the Albanian political scene only added to the political confusion and it was widely believed that he would fail to assert his authority in such a strange and hostile environment.

Durham determined to return to Albania and on June 6, 1914, she left London by boat, arriving in Trieste on June 8. There, the English vice-consul, M. Salvari asked her go to Durazzo (Durrës). On board, she met a certain John Corbett from the Oriental Club (London) who confirmed her worst fears: a Greek "Provisional Government for North Epirus", under Christaki Zographos, had taken over the south of the country.<sup>98</sup> On June 23, she communicated her first impressions to Nevinson and the Foreign Office. The situation had degenerated badly, despite the recent arrival of a Dutch gendarmerie and the new head of state. She took a dim view of the new Prince:

Weid is a poor creature - evidently unfitted for the post....I had a talk yesterday with Heaton-Armstrong, the King's right hand man. A feeble stick with no ideas and the last man in the world for the job [...] Even if Weid is kept here, he will never do any good so far as I can see.<sup>99</sup>

Yet, as she added, she had "no solution to offer."

Durham scribbled only brief notes in her diary for the months of July and August. In July, she left Durazzo for Valona. On July 4 she lunched with the royal couple. "[M]ore comic opera than ever", she commented. "I am in despair. I see no hope for future."<sup>100</sup> That day she also met Heaton-Armstrong, the Prince's English *aide-de-camp*, whom she had earlier dismissed as

a rogue, and whose appreciation of the region's problems appeared to be crude. His appointment by the Powers, she had already reflected, illustrated their own misunderstanding of Balkans politics.<sup>101</sup>

Durham fulminated against the "folly, treachery and cowardice of the so-called powers."<sup>102</sup> Indeed, her letters to Nevinson, were becoming long-winded rhetorical tirades, mocking the failures of the new government, the Prince, and his associates.

The King [Prince] has a nervous laugh which he fires off at most things. He asked me about some of my travels but has evidently not the vaguest comprehension of what life up-country means.<sup>103</sup>

"Of minor interest, nothing new I think." were the words jotted down in the minutes of this Foreign Office despatch.<sup>104</sup>

Until recently, Grey, Eyre Crowe, and Arthur Nicholson had all shown interest in Durham's reports.<sup>105</sup> But in the summer of 1914, Whitehall seemed unable, or unwilling, to do any more for Albania. Nonetheless, at the request of Harry Lamb, the Foreign Office's representative in the region, Durham went again to Valona to report on alleged Greek atrocities. Her efforts were rewarded when the Greek ex-minister Christaki Zographos admitted that criminals from Crete had been released on Albanian territory to terrorize the local population.<sup>106</sup>

Towards the end of July the situation took a sharp turn for the worse. The Dutch peace-keeping force could barely control the desperate struggle for power between the different Albanian factions. In fact, armed by the contending groups of Turks, Serbs

or Greeks, rebels set out to attack the Weid government itself in Durrazzo. Though they were unsuccessful they were not altogether crushed since Weid showed a lack of determination which prevented him from destroying his enemies altogether.<sup>107</sup>

However Weid's forces did manage to capture and jail Essad bey Toptani in his (Toptani's) own stronghold.<sup>108</sup> Durham now saw the Prince capable of initiative and in these last days of her trip, her view of the royal couple even softened somewhat. She now distrusted the other families of southern beys since they were, by reputation, pro-Greek. She could not, however, prevent the Princess from meeting them.<sup>109</sup>

Durham postponed her departure in order to continue her relief work in Valona and decided to enlist the royal couple as benefactors. Aid, of course was more desperately needed. Refugees poured into Valona by the thousands (according to her own accounts). She reported:

A little girl - a wretched shrivelled skeleton was almost comatose and could barely swallow the milk we tried to give.<sup>110</sup>

And a few days later:

The row of half comatose little skeletons of children was one of the most ghastly sights I have ever seen in refugee work.<sup>111</sup>

On July 27, after a private interview, Durham obtained money from the Princess. Later that day, Nedjup Bey, the local *Mutaserif* also pledged a sum to build a shelter for sick children. Other committees introduced to the Princess by Durham raised hopes that a hospital might be built for women and children.<sup>112</sup>

But Durham's final weeks in Albania proved to be disappointing. To be sure, Harry Lamb enthusiastically supported Durham's pleas for the Valona refugees and repeatedly sent despatches to Grey and Eyre , complaining that the "...majority of my new colleagues are still without definite instructions on these points, [and] it has not been possible to take any action." <sup>113</sup> Crowe sympathised but his response to Lamb was unequivocal. The fate of the Albanians did not lie with England:

Henry Nevinson has set us a similar letter from Miss Durham, with more details. It is all very sad, but the best hope for these unhappy people now lies in the Italians.<sup>114</sup>

To this, the Permanent Undersecretary Arthur Nicholson added:

Perhaps we could ask the Italian government to consider what they can do, and say that we shall not interfere. (I think we had better leave it alone). I am afraid we can do nothing.<sup>115</sup>

A last petition for the refugees dated July 28 arrived too late at the Foreign Office. On the July 31 Durham failed to secure relief for refugees in Greek-controlled territory. She was on her way back to Valona when she heard of the mobilization of the Austrian and Russian armies. All foreigners were urged to leave. On August 13 she found a place on a boat and headed back to England.

Her unstinting work in the north and then in the rest of the country, had earned her the title of Queen among the Albanians. But despite her political and humanitarian efforts, the country could not endure factional infighting during the brief reign of Prince William, (spring to summer 1914), and finally, to her despair, spiralled into anarchy during the First World War. The

final insult, she thought, was that England had sided with "the Slav," not Austria. "After that," she wrote years later, "I really did not care what happened. The cup of my humiliation was full."<sup>116</sup>

## ENDNOTES

## CHAPTER 4

1. Numerous studies show how the Turks were beaten back on most positions even when the enemy, such as the Montenegrins, was disorganized and without a unified command or overall military strategy. For an analysis of the various armies of the Balkan League and of Turkey, see the corresponding chapters in Bela K. Kiraly and Dimitrije Djordjevic (eds), *East Central European Society and the Balkan Wars*, Vol XVIII in *War and Society in East Central Europe*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987). See also Charles H. Woods, "The Armies of the Balkan League", *The Fortnightly Review*, 1912, 1061-1070.

2. Swire, *Albania, the Rise of a Kingdom*, 143-144.

3. Helmreich, *Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*, 195. A few days later, they were forced to share the occupation of Salonika with Bulgaria, who had lost the race for the main Macedonian city but was "not disposed to surrender her Aegean aspirations so easily."

4. *Manchester Guardian* (hereafter *Guardian*,) 2 December 1912. Ismail Kemal the elected president, stated that Albania now considered itself "neutral" in the conflict, and that the Powers should protect its yet-to-be determined borders on the principle of nationality as applied to the Balkans. (ie. the four Albanian vilayets).

5. *Guardian*, 8 October 1912.

6. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 191.

7. Woods, "The Armies of the Balkan Wars," 1069-1070. Also Novica Rakocevic, "The Organization and Character of the Montenegrin Army in the First Balkan War," in Bela K. Kiraly and Dimitry Djordjevic (eds), *East Central European Society*, 122, who estimates that the Montenegrin troops did not exceed 35,000. International Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations eventually supplied 86 more doctors but the need for medical assistance on all sides was constantly critical.

8. Djordje Mikic, "The Albanians and Serbia During the Balkan Wars," in Bela K. Kirali and Dimitri Djordjevic, *East Central European Society*, 170; Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 449-450.

9. See Durham's reports in *Guardian*, 16,18 October 1912.

10. *Guardian*, 16 October 1912; Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 189-192. For example, they customarily took the noses and upper lips of their victims as war trophies. Durham flinch at this practice, and at the anticipated rapes of "fat bullahs" by Montenegrin militias, and help the maimed Turkish soldiers littering the roadside.

11. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 197.

12. *Ibid.*, 189-190.

13. *Guardian*, 22 October 1912.

14. However, there was no lack of prominent Britons who sympathized with the Turks and were active in organizing relief work for the victims of siege of Constantinople. British relief committees were set up in that city and in the surrounding countryside during both Balkan Wars (1912-1913). Many women volunteered their services. One such committee was formed with Lady Lowther as president, and the *Daily News* correspondent commented how 'Virtually every member of the British community was upon it.' Pears, *Forty Years in Constantinople*, 336.

15. In *The Struggle for Scutari*, 183, Durham bitterly recalled how Nikola composed the celebrated verses *Onward, Onward, Let me See Prizren*, in honour of the seat of Stefan Dushan's Old Serbian Empire, now an Albanian town.

16. Mitar Durisic "Operations of the Montenegrin Army during the First Balkan War." in Kiraly and Djordjevic, *East Central European Society*, 126.

17. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 200-206.

18. See Durham's report in *Guardian*, 11 November 1912.

19. She did not report on it however. For details of the attack on Scutari, see accounts of Rijeka correspondent in *Guardian*, 11 November 1912.

20. See Durham's report in *Guardian*, 11 November 1912. Also Durisic, "The Operations of the Montenegrin Army," 134.

21. The *Guardian*, 11 November 1912 reported that "together with the military, there are nearly 70,000 people in the town, as the whole Mahometan population of the district took refuge there after the Montenegrin investment was completed. In military quarters it is thought that Scutari will not be able to hold out for long." On 19 November, Scutari, overcrowded with Muslims who fled the countryside for the fortified city, was fully besieged.

22. Durham to Nellie 24 November 1912. MS 42:6, RAI. She had seen how the Turks had fortified the city the previous summer against an eventual assault. However, the Montenegrin staff believed that they could easily overcome Scutari's defence. Scutari's governor was the Albanian Essad Bey Toptani. The Turkish Scutari Corps, however, was put under General Hassan Riza Bey who was in charge of defending the Scutari region. It consisted of 13,600 soldiers and 96 cannons. An additional regiment of 3,750 soldiers was positioned on the frontier near Tuza. Two thousand Albanian volunteers (*bashibazuk*) also joined the force. See Durisic, "Operations of the Montenegrin Army," 127.

23. Swire, *Albania the Rise of a Kingdom*, 134-135; Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 451. Albanian nationalists of every creed sat on the horns of a dilemma. Albanian lands were being invaded by the "hereditary foes", Montenegro, Serbia and Greece. At the same time, they no longer had grievances against the other enemy, Turkey. Consequently, there was no reason to continue warring. We can point a simpler reason for their wanting to stop fighting: having settled inter-tribal conflicts dating from the 1911 Rebellion, the different tribes wanted to return home.

24. Durisic, "Operations of the Montenegrin Army," 135. Nikola even claimed that Scutari would fall to Montenegro, "with the stroke of a pen."

25. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 246.

26. The importance of the declaration is a contentious issue. Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening*, concludes that the hoisting of the flag at Valona was a critical moment for the formation of the Albanian state. So does Swire, *Albania, the Rise of Kingdom*, 137. Castellan, *History of the Balkans*, 383, takes the opposite view. Nicholas Pano, "Albania," in *The Columbia History of Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Joseph Held, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 17, sees the event as an important prelude to international recognition, though he admits that Albanian national consciousness was still undeveloped. For the new cabinet under Ismail Kemal, see Karl Kaser, *Handbuch der Reierungen Sudosteuroopa (1833-1980)*, Vol.1 (Graz, 1981), 1. For French copy of the declaration see Arben Puto, *La question albanaise dans les actes internationaux de l'epoque imperialiste*, (Tirana: 8 Nentori, 1985), 385-386.

27. Swire, *Albania*, 145. Pasic, then Serbian Prime Minister remarked that an independent Albania was "neither desirable nor possible," *Times* 15 November 1912. The Greek press also suggested that "to allow the barbarous Albanians an independent existence amid Greek civilization was inconceivable." *Times*, 4 November 1912. See also *Guardian*, 11 November 1912. A full two-weeks before Kemal's declaration, the Allies commonly asserted: "The Albanians do not possess in themselves the necessary conditions for an autonomous government. There is among them no national feeling....They possess no common language and have no common alphabet."

28. News Scan, *The Nation*, January 30, 1913, 95. "As it was, the London Peace conference was virtually a joint session of the official peace plenipotentiaries and of the representatives of the Powers."

29. *Times*, 11 December 1912, (written 24 November 1912).

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*

32. For an elaborate discussion of how the agenda was determined, see Helmreich, *Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*, 223.

33. Crampton, *The Hollow Detente*, 75-76. Austria was genuinely concerned about the Albanian Catholics, and, of course coveted the Adriatic coastline. It sat on the horns of a dilemma, however, since support for the creation of an Albanian state according to the principle of nationality could be construed by its own nationalities as a sign that their own 'liberation' was near. See also Helmreich, *Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*, 209-210. Austria and Italy's official positions favoured an independent Albania to counter Serbian successes in the early period of the war. Austria also recognised Montenegro's and Serbia's partition of the Sancak of Novi Pazar.

34. Pano, "Albania," 18.

35. Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, 121-122.

36. For military details, see Durisic, "Operations of the Montenegrin Army," 135-145.

37. Durham to Nevinson, received 22 January 1913, FO 371 1758 (444417/1 13). This was in line with the Foreign Office's own agents. See minute attached to document: "This is an interesting letter and much to the point. Incidentally echoes de Salis despatch..."

38. Ibid. De Salis agreed, rejecting Montenegro's claims for territories which, according to ethnicity, should remain under Albanian jurisdiction. See also de Salis to Grey, 29 January 1913, FO 371 1758 4391/1.

39. Durham to Nevinson, 26 February 1913, received 10 March 1913, FO 371 1759 (11175/8 13). For claims that northern Albania was 'Serb' see the excellent study by Charles Jelavich, *South Slav Nationalisms - Textbooks and Yugoslav Union before 1914*, (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1990), 205-208.

40. Durham to Nellie, 19 January, 10-15 February, 10 March 1913, MS 42:6 RAI. In this period, she noted an increase from 1080 to 2000 refugees.

41. Durham to Nevinson, received 20 February 1913, FO 371 1782 (44 8222/934 13).

42. Durham to Nevinson, 20 February 1913, (date of reception unknown), FO 371 1782 (44 8222/934 13).

43. Ibid., and note from Grey. In March, Grey himself was much occupied with the negotiations over the proprietorship of the Albanian town of Djakova, which Serbia claimed for itself. See Grey to Sir G. Buchanan, 5 March 1913, *BD*, Vol. IX, part 2, No. 683; Crampton, *The Hollow Detente*, 87-89; and Viscount Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty Five Years 1892-1916*, (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1925), 258.

44. In fact, between December 1912 and January 1913, Grey considered accommodating Montenegro regarding Scutari. See Grey to Buchanan, 3 January 1913, *BD*, Vol. IX, part 2. See also Rossos, *Russia and the Balkans*, 116. Rossos believes that had Montenegro captured Scutari before the armistice of December 3, 1912, they would have probably kept it. The Austrian government was from the start the most significant defender of a Scutari-for-the-Albanians. See Sir F. Cartwright to Grey, 6 March 1913, *BD*, Vol. IX, part 2, No. 684,

45. Durham to Nevinson, 26 February 1913, received 10 March 1913, FO 371 1759 (11175/8 13).

46. Ibid., minute by Grey.

47. S.D. Mackellar to R. Kennedy (previous minister in Cetinje), 6 March 1913, FO 371 1800 (53 12012). Mackellar was a British traveller who supported Montenegro. Kennedy had received a letter from him which praised the work Nikola had done for the Albanians in the past two years and that he should be credited for his own humanitarian actions. When R.P. Maxwell read the note, he quickly retorted that Montenegro deserved little British sympathy and that Durham's accounts were the most reliable reports.

48. Of course massacres occurred everywhere and refugees fled from all sides. See *The Other Balkan Wars, A Carnegie Endowment*, chapter IV, part 1, "The War and the Nationalities: Extermination, Emigration, Assimilation."

49. Cromer to Tyrrell (Grey's private secretary), 10 March 1913, FO 371 1782. Cromer asked Tyrrell to send copies of a letter he had received from Durham, "with whose name you are without doubt familiar."

50. Durham to Cromer from Podgoritsa, 18 March 1913, FO 371 1782 (44 1259/934). She expanded on the practice of nose and lip cutting.

51. For boundaries established in 1913, see Robert Paul Magosci, *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 143 (map 42b); Zavalani, "Albanian Nationalism," 73.

52. Williamson, *Austria-Hungary and the Origins*, 123.

53. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 270. There, she heard the discouraging news of the fall of Adrianople on March 26, 1913.

54. Durham to Nellie, 2 April 1913, MS 42:6, RAI.

55. Durham to Nellie, 4 April 1913, MS 42:6, RAI.

56. *Daily News*, 24 April 1913.

57. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 277; Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*, 314; Essad Bey Toptani surrendered the city to the Montenegrins amid rumours that he had struck a deal with Nikola to become king of Albania. Helmreich raises the problems Essad faced - a shortage of ammunition and a starving population. He had also obtained the consent of the city's notables. For Treadway, however, the capitulation resulted from mutually beneficial negotiations between Nikola and Toptani, possibly arranged secretly by the Russian consul at Scutari. Treadway, *Falcon and the Eagle*, 142, n49, 268. Durham later wrote that Italy was behind the negotiations. Durham, "The Story of Essad Pasha," *Contemporary Review*, CXVIII (August 1920): 212.

58. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 276.

59. *Ibid.*, 284.

60. Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle*, Chapter VIII, especially 139, 150-156; Williamson, *Austria-Hungary and the Origins*, 123; Great Britain, Foreign Office Handbook, "Albania," 50.

61. Journal, 30 May - 13 June 1913, MS 42:14, RAI.
62. Cited in Hodgson, "Introduction," xv.
63. Journal, 13 June 1913, MS 42:14, RAI.
64. Nevinson, *Fire of Life*, 286.
65. Journal, from Scutari, 13 June 1913, MS 42:14, RAI.
66. Essad Toptani was also Minister of the Interior in the Kemal cabinet, a position he kept until November 1913. See Kaser, *Handbuch der Regierungen Sudoseuropas*, 1.
67. Nevinson, *Fire of Life*, 286-287.
68. Journal, 20 June, 1913. MS 42:14, RAI. See description of the massacres of Albanians by the Serbs in Ljuma in *The Other Balkan Wars, A Carnegie Endowment*, 149.
69. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 306-307.
70. Journal, 8 July 1913, MS 42:14, RAI. The Hellenization process in Macedonia was even more ruthless. See the letters written by Greek soldiers from the front in *The Other Balkan Wars, Carnegie*, 308-314.
71. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 309.
72. Ismail Kemal, *Memoirs*, 378. However, according to Pano, "Albania," 20, the "central government" established by Ismail Kemal never really had the opportunity to deal with the problems besetting the country.
73. Durham to Nellie, 12 July 1913, MS 42:14, RAI.
74. Ibid.
75. Durham to Nellie, from Scutari, 24 July 1913, MS 42:14.
76. For text of declaration, see Swire, *Albania, the Rise of a Kingdom*, 173.
77. For the details see Swire, *Albania, the Rise of a Kingdom*, 170; Pano "Albania", 20.
78. Ben Kendim, (Aubrey Herbert), *A Record of Eastern Travel*, Desmond MacCartney (ed), (London, 1925); Margaret Fitzherbert, *The Man who was Greenmantle*, (London: John Murray, 1983).
79. Ben Kendim, *Record of Eastern Travels*, 205-210.

80. Ibid., 230. This occurred on September 5, 1913. They were cheered on by the Malissori, to the great displeasure of Admiral Burney.

81. Durham to Nellie, 27 September 1913, MS 42:14, RAI. Her fund had finally run dry and she envisaged bleakly her options; either she could continue to help and wait for additional sums to be added to her account; or, she would have to return to England.

82. Durham to Nellie, from Scutari, 13 October 1913, MS 42:14, RAI.

83. Durham to Nellie, 18 October 1913, MS 42:14, RAI.

84. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 251-254.

85. Durham to Vansittart, 26 January 1914, FO 371 1892 (53 3931 14).

86. Ibid., response from Vansittart attached to original document. Vansittart cited the text: "On ajoutera comme interpretation que dans le futur traite de paix il sera confirme que les garanties prevues par les articles 27 30 (les deux premiers alinea...) libre usage de la langue albanaise pour l'enseignement scolaire et pour la publication de livres et de periodiques."

87. Dimitrije Djordjevic, "Migrations During the 1912-1913 Balkan Wars and World War One, " in *Migrations in Balkan History*, ed. Radovan Samardzic and Dimitrije Djordjevic, (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1989), 115-127.

88. Durham to Vansittart, 2 February 1914, FO 371 1892 (53 4799 14).

89. Memorandum by Vansittart attached to letter, 7 February 1914, FO 371 1892 (53 4799 14).

90. Durham to Vansittart, 28 January 1914, FO 371 1890 file #990 document 4373. She asked Vansittart to transmit the sum. Vansittart acknowledged and agreed. For response see *ibid.*, #4784, 2 February 1914.

91. Durham to Eyre Crowe, 2 February 1914, FO 371 1890 (53 4784/990).

92. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 315.

93. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 261-262.

94. "There is no mincing of matters..." wrote the *Saturday Review*, June 27, 1914. "[A]nd the author does not seem to be aware that she is a second Florence Nightingale." *The Spectator*, July 11,

1914 acknowledged "Miss Durham['s]...power of presentation..." but also recognized "that when Miss Durham has a "down" on any nation she is scarcely able to exercise lenity."

95. Swire, *Albania the Rise of a Kingdom*, 195-166. His authority, however, depended entirely on the Great Powers.

96. Swire, *Albania the Rise of a Kingdom*, 181-200. The composition of his first cabinet reflects the various forces pulling apart the country. See also Castellan, *History of the Balkans*, 384-385.

97. Zavalani, "Albania," 74. Pano thinks that this was not such a bad deal, considering that it made Albania one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries of Europe, with 95 per cent of its population being Albanian. Pano, "Albania," 18.

98. Journal, 8 June 1914, MS 42:14; Castellan, *History of the Balkans*, 385; Zavalani, "Albanian Nationalism," 74.

99. Durham to Nevinson, 23 June 1914, FO 371/1896 (53 29744 14).

100. Journal, 4 July 1914, MS 42:14, RAI.

101. Durham to Nevinson, 23 June 1914, FO 371/1896 (53 29744 14).

102. Durham to Nevinson, from Durazzo, 16 July 1914, FO 371 1896 32237.

103. Ibid.

104. Minutes attached to letter from Durham to Nevinson, 16 July 1914, FO 371 1896.

105. For example, minutes to FO 371/1889 (53 29744 14) June 23, 1914: "well worth reading", "A graphic letter - I expects sums up well the situation." A[rthur Nicholson]- E[dward] G[rey]. See also memorandum by Eyre Crowe, 11 July 1914, attached to same document: "Miss Durham's letter of June 23 re: Albanian affairs...has been read with much interest."

106. An admission based on a letter that Durham had addressed in the press. See memorandum to Eyre Crowe, (signature of author illegible), 27 July 1914, FO 371 1889 (53 34222). Nonetheless, Zographos wrote to the Anglo-Hellenic League to complain about the "false reports of Epirote atrocities" and demanded an impartial Commission of Enquiry to "redress the damage the done." The protest was then sent to Grey. See Zographos to Grey, 1 August 1914,

received 8 August 1914, FO 371 1895 (53 37014). Also see Crampton, *The Hollow Detente*, 146.

107. Zavalani, "Albania," 75; Durham to Nevinson, 27-28 July 1914, received 17 August 1914, FO 371 1889 (53 40045 14)). She complained that the gendarmerie was under no one's authority. But she also demonstrated her unfailing sense of humour even in these trying times. Half-serious, half jesting, Durham noted to Nevinson the comic interaction between herself, the locals, and the gendarmerie. "First, I've changed hotels...It got to be such a hell - and being built of match boarding was so hot - I couldn't stand it, and it stunk also. After having to do my own room and yell for water and after rows at night, when it appeared that the male population was fighting for the chambermaid, & c & c., I have found peace and cleanliness. Doings were highly picturesque as some of the Dutch officers - notably one Malingroot...who is built like a Greek statue, pervaded the hotel clad only in bathing drawers and rode in and out the hall - in that costume - on a pony."

108. Among those who joined the Prince's forces was Toptani's own nephew, Ahmed Zogolli, future King Zog. See Bernd Jurgen Fischer, *King Zog and the Struggle for Stability in Albania*, East European Monographs, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 8-11.

109. Ibid.

110. Ibid.

111. Durham to Harry Lamb who sent it to Grey, received 17 August 1914, FO 371 1895 (53 39963/2251)14.

112. Durham to Nevinson, 27 July 1914, received 17 August 1914, FO 371 1889 (53 40045); Durham to Lamb, received August 17, FO 371 1895 (53 39 963/2251)14. The deputation received was the Ladies' Charitable Society.

113. Memo by Lamb to Grey, 1 August 1914, attached to letter sent by Durham to Lamb, received 17 August 1914, FO 371 1895 (53 39 963/2251)14.

114. Minute by Crowe, 17 August 1914, FO 371 1895 (53 39963/2251)14.

115. Ibid., minute by Nicholson.

116. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 281.

## CONCLUSION

As stated in the introduction, the purpose of this study has been to reconstruct the activities of Mary Edith Durham in the Balkans (1900-1914) using both published sources, and archival materials previously unused for this purpose. These include journals and correspondence from the Mary Edith Manuscripts (Museum of Man); letters from the Noel-Buxton Papers (McGill Redpath Rare Books Collection); letters from the R.W. Seton-Papers (School of Slavonic and East European Studies); and Foreign Office files at the Public Records Office in London.

Durham was a woman of wide interests and engaged in many kinds of activities. Although well known as an ethnographer, she was also a newspaper correspondent, relief worker, and a political activist. Having widely travelled in the Balkans, she observed and recorded events there for fourteen years. Her activities, however, went beyond recording and reporting: between 1900-1908, she learned a great deal about the peoples, geography and history of the region. She also participated in relief missions for the first time (Chapter I). Then between 1910-1914, she was occupied chiefly with politics and relief work, particularly among the Albanians, even though she spent long periods of time in Montenegro.

As indicated in the introduction, other studies have dealt with Durham's work on ethnography and considered some her

experiences as a traveller. (p.3) However, little has been written on her political activities, humanitarian work, and the formation of her views in the period 1900-1914. These have been the focus of this study.

Durham's political views shifted from detached interest to commitment, often according to historical developments in the region. She became interested in the Albanians on her first trip in 1900 (p.14). In retrospect, she herself wrote that it was in Kortcha in 1904 that she became a committed supporter of the Albanians. But in fact in 1903, she had drafted her first pro-Albanian article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* (p.15), and subsequently wrote about them at length in *Through the Lands of the Serb* (1904) and *The Burden of the Balkans* (1905), though without emotional involvement. However, with *High Albania* (1909), *The Struggle for Scutari* (1914), and various articles for the *Fortnightly Review* and *The Contemporary Review*, she became emotionally committed to their cause.

Durham's attitude toward the Ottoman Empire also changed from censure to recognition of their efforts to solve the problems of the area. At first, she acquired a reputation as an opponent of the Ottoman Empire and a supporter of the Balkan states. She complained about "The Turkish 'Government's' extraordinary inability to maintain law and order in the districts which are painted Turkish on the maps";<sup>1</sup> and in 1912, she wrote to Bertram Christian: "so long as the Turk remains in

Europe there can be no quiet and no solution of the problems here."<sup>2</sup>

However, the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and World War I left the minority-rights problems in the Balkans unsolved. This was especially the case for the 800,000 Albanians who had been left outside the frontiers defined by the Great Powers; and the future of the displaced Albanian refugees within the new territory remained uncertain too. In *The Struggle for Scutari*, she already stated that the political vacuum left by the Turks' retreat from Europe would be difficult to fill.<sup>3</sup> Her thoughts after WWI confirmed her suspicions:

[T]he Turks' departure has not only entailed more misery and ten times greater injustice, I have a letter in my possession written by a X[Chris]tian from Monastir in 1914 saying people would willingly have Abdul back. And things are even worse now.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, her views of the Balkan Slavs and Greeks also shifted between 1900 and 1914. As we saw in Chapter I, *Through the Lands of the Serb* (1904) evokes an idyllic view of the Balkan Slavs. (p.19) By contrast in *The Burden of the Balkans* (1905), written after her relief efforts for the victims of the Illenden Uprising, she takes a stance against the violence of the Bulgarian, Serb, and Greek nationalist movements in Macedonia. That year, she had explained that for her the problem of the "Eastern Question" was not only the 'waning' of the Ottoman state but also the resurgent struggles for supremacy by its present and former subject nations.<sup>5</sup> Thus while she deemed the Ottoman state as 'irremediably decadent,' she also recognized that the present

difficulties echoed the Balkan nations' "pre-Turkish" conflicts in their desire to dominate the Balkans.<sup>6</sup>

Even then, she still hoped in 1905 that they would unite to expel Turkish troops from the Balkans. At this stage, she was still a friend of Montenegro, and an acolyte of Prince Nikola. In *High Albania* she suggested to the Albanians that they could well recognize him as their leader.<sup>7</sup> Yet, in *The Struggle for Scutari* (1914) she turned against Nikola as well as the other Balkan peoples.

*The Struggle for Scutari*, which covers the years 1910-1914, represents for Durham a fundamental change of opinions about Balkan politics; it was also the start of a polemic which she led against the Balkan States. The account opens with anti-Turkish rhetoric. The tone changes, however, and she attacks the Balkan Slavs and Greeks as well. She goes so far as accusing Nikola of having duped the northern Albanians during the Malissori Crisis (1911).<sup>8</sup> She then excoriates the Serbs, Greeks and Montenegrins for wanting to expand at the expense of the Albanians and accuses them of having always nurtured these ambitions.

However, journal entries and letters between 1910-1914 contradict certain affirmations of the *Struggle for Scutari*. We will cite only a few examples here. A letter written to the Balkan Committee in June 1911 praises Nikola for his work among the Malissori during their rebellion.<sup>9</sup> Durham began to have misgivings about him when he first took the title of king in August 1910, and then again in January 1912, though she commented

that "I can't quite make up my mind" about Montenegro. In the same letter she admits that Nikola was immensely popular among the Malissori because of the material support he had given them the previous summer.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, unpublished documents and even the several articles for *The Times* and *Manchester Guardian* show that as late as the fall 1912, Durham continued to champion the Balkan Slavs (even the Macedonians) despite her later interpretation of events, and she looked forward to the end of the Turk's foothold in Europe (p.105). In September 1912, she wrote to Nellie defending the Serbian Kossovars (p.93). Later in the fall, as the war progressed, she became suspicious of Montenegro's aims. Even so, she continued to justify the kingdom's aims in newspaper articles (pp.105-6). It is only after the Serb and Greek invasions late in November 1912, the Montenegrin campaign against Scutari in February 1913, and her experience as relief worker during the same period, that her journal entries reflect more accurately the arguments of the *Struggle for Scutari*.

*The Struggle for Scutari* is undoubtedly an angry, harrowing book. Yet, despite its *parti-pris* and passionate defence of the Albanians, it remains a valuable testimony of the Malissori Uprising and Balkan Wars for the quality of its eye-witness reportage and attention to detail characteristic of Durham's other work. Durham was well versed in the background of the Balkans and prefaced each book with a lengthy history of the region in order to provide her readers with an adequate context.

She was scrupulous about giving sources of her observations and this makes her work still instructive for Balkans specialists (introduction). But Durham also thought it relevant to bring "to life stories that are daily enacted among the bare rocks." In her writings, she argues a point and supports it by citing a local peasant, or shepherd, or priest.

Among her observations of greatest value are those on the subject of the rise of Albanian patriotism. She may have overstated the coherence of the Albanian national movement (p.90). It must be remembered that the loyalty of local chieftains, such as Issa Boletin, was up for grabs well into 1913-1914,<sup>11</sup> and Essad Toptani derived his power by appealing to Islam and clan-loyalty, not nationhood.<sup>12</sup> Yet there existed an emergent Albanian nationalist movement, and Durham took notice of it at a time when few others did, and fewer still sympathised.<sup>13</sup>

Let us now turn to her political activities. Durham's interests in Balkan politics increased at an exponential rate from her arrival in 1900 and by 1908 she had become acquainted with various local and European political figures. Only in 1910, however, did she begin to lobby the British government on the Albanians' behalf. She was also an advisor to the northern Albanian chiefs in 1911 (pp.61-2), and twice acted as mediator on Montenegro's behalf: once to end the Malissori Uprising in 1911; and the second time to ensure the cooperation of the Scutarenes after the capitulation of their city in 1913. Both times she claimed to have played the role reluctantly, driven only by her

sense of humanity.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, her frequent dispatches to several newspapers sought to redress what she considered to be the Western press's inaccurate portrayal of Albanians and Balkan politics.

Her political activities in general between 1910 and the winter 1914 are well described in *The Struggle for Scutari*: her diaries and correspondence also point to the general accuracy of her account of these activities. Her journals for that summer are particularly descriptive of her efforts to act as a guide for reporters around Podgoritsa and as advisor to the Malissori in the Rebellion of 1911 (pp.57-65). However, a perspective different from her own, would be a welcome addition to reconstruct the attitude of the Albanian chiefs towards Durham during the rebellion. The *British Document* series on the origins of the war is very helpful on that count but does not mention Durham's name. Memoirs, such as those of Ismail Kemal, a participant to that event, are also unfortunately silent.

The files at the Public Records Office in London contribute material that helps towards an understanding of her strenuous efforts to influence policy and opinion in Britain, especially with regards to refugees, and for the protection of minorities in the Balkans. In particular, Vansittart showed an interest in her work and elicited her views on the subject of minorities and refugees (p.119).

It is difficult to assess Durham's influence on Britain's Balkan policy. Durham was an outsider with forthright views and

an unpopular cause to defend. Furthermore, she didn't possess the clout of the Balkan Committee, whose founding members sat in Parliament. The Committee was itself more concerned with the fate of the other Balkan nations, especially Bulgaria.

Yet, Durham's indefatigable lobbying yielded results, though there were some difficult times. In 1908, a Foreign Office index card recommended not to correspond with Durham, but documents attached to the card are missing, leaving us in the dark about the relevance of such a comment. At times the Foreign Office did seem concerned about Durham's anti-Turkish views since it desired good relations with the Sublime Porte. Furthermore it recognized that Durham was sufficiently well-connected in England to make a fuss over certain issues and rouse public opinion (p.85).

Nonetheless, experts on foreign affairs and foreign correspondents like Durham cultivated friendships in the diplomatic service and they often secured information which the Foreign Office needed.<sup>15</sup> This made Whitehall itself quite amenable to individuals it recognized as competent in their field of expertise and welcomed intelligence which often could not be procured by its own agents. This was certainly the case for Durham and most evidence points to a good relation between herself and the Foreign Office, especially between 1912-1914.

Evidently, by 1912, the Foreign Office valued her intelligence as we can see by the language of the documents, and its regional agents respected her as an authority on Albanian and Montenegrin affairs.<sup>16</sup> Grey too praised the usefulness of her

reports which enabled his department to monitor developments in the Balkans: "We are familiar with all the facts [regarding Malissori discontent]....from Miss Durham's letters."<sup>17</sup>

R.P.Maxwell also favourably compared Durham's accounts over those of another British sympathizer of Montenegro: "Mr. [S.D.] Mackellar is biassed. The Montenegrins deserve little sympathy. See....Miss Durham's accounts."<sup>18</sup>

Her friendships with Aubrey Herbert and Lord Cromer also ensured that important points about the future of Albanians could be pressed in both houses of Parliament, (Chapter IV). Thus, she may not always have been able to directly influence policy, but she did secure a platform to debate the Albanian cause raising serious issues at home often in the face of opposition and indifference.

Providing relief to the victims of war was something Durham could do with the satisfaction of obtaining more immediate results. In 1903-4 she worked as a volunteer for the Macedonian Relief Fund, and wrote of her first impressions at the sight of casualties in a manner both clinically accurate and ironic:

Suppurating gunshot wounds, which were what we chiefly had in the hospital, were a quite new experience to me, and I found them most fascinating.<sup>19</sup>

Humanitarian aid became a more central activity for Durham in her last four years in the Balkans, and *The Struggle for Scutari* more generously provides details of her relief work than *The Burden of the Balkans*. "To tell the details [of relief work], however, "would be as wearisome as they were in fact."<sup>20</sup> Thus,

Durham's description of fund raising and alleviating the sufferings of war victims, especially during the Malissori Crisis, are minimal. She was rather more explicit concerning her relief work during the Balkan Wars.

Her journals and numerous letters to her sister help, in part, to fill this void. So do letters to Nevinson between 1912-1914 which he later sent to the Whitehall. These include lengthy descriptions of her setting up a fund, collecting money for it, and distributing goods and cash to victims of war.

Frequently, Durham could not keep relief work separate from political lobbying. For example, one of Durham's letter to the Balkan Committee in June 1911, requests both humanitarian aid for the Malissori, and concerted action against the Turkish troops.<sup>21</sup> Does this point to a contradiction in Durham's own humanitarian philosophy?

Durham believed in principle that humanitarian aid had to be applied to all victims of war. However, her emotional attachments to the Albanians made it difficult for her to commit to other groups. In an exchange with R.W. Seton Watson regarding the establishment of the Albanian frontiers and the condition of displaced Albanians after the First World War, she states:

To me the question is very vital. You seem to regard these populations as mere pawns to be shifted on the board according to political needs. To me they are all suffering human beings with whom I have been under fire - for whose sake I have risked enteric, smallpox & have wrestled with poisoned wounds. And with whom I have hungered and been half frozen. I feel it a duty to show the means by which they have been annexed and trampled on.<sup>22</sup>

Durham initially helped the victims of both sides in the First Balkan War. In January 1913, she was still mainly preoccupied with the status and condition of Christian and Muslim Albanian refugees in Albania, and managed her fund for their exclusive benefit as of that spring. This does not necessarily imply that she cared less for others but she could not be everywhere at once. Also, other ethnic groups - such as the Macedonians and the Turks of Constantinople - received much help from various Western relief funds.

Durham's story ended sadly in the summer 1914 as her hopes for a prosperous and independent Albania were dashed. Shortly after her departure from Albania in the summer 1914, invading Greek, Serbian and Montenegrin soldiers had overrun the country, and they were followed by Austrian, French, and Italian troops. Though despaired, she was not surprised by the turn of events and added an angry post scriptum under the final entry of her 1914 journal:

The whole confused events proves that the French-Russian-Serbian combine did not mean....for a united independent Albania to exist.<sup>23</sup>

On the boat back to England, she had fallen hard on her compatriots who cheered about the war. None of them, she thought, had seen starving populations and rotting corpses in battlefields. She mocked their assurance that the war would be quick and decisive; that it "would be nearly over by the time we reached Liverpool." If she had the money to do so, she would have

escaped as far as possible, "to the Pacific," perhaps.<sup>24</sup> But it is difficult to believe that the feisty Durham really meant it.

It is hoped that the present study furthers our understanding of Durham's years in the Balkans. The findings of this essay nonetheless leave a number of unanswered questions. What was Durham's relations with other English sympathizers of the Balkans? What did the leaders of the Albanian national movement think of her? Did they regard her simply as a tool to further their ends or did they recognize her as a genuine representative of their claims?

In the 1920s Durham pursued her ethnographic interests. She wrote regularly for MAN, and her master anthropological study, *Some Tribal Origins, Laws and Customs of the Balkans*, was published in 1928. In fact, most essays for this study had been written in 1906 (pp. 25-6). That year, touring Albania, Bosnia and Montenegro she became convinced that the borders imposed by the Treaty of Berlin (1878) were artificial, and had aggravated ethnic tensions. The need to rectify this situation was the impetus for her systematic study of the peoples of the region. She reiterated this life-long preoccupation a few months before her death in 1944:

It occurred to me that the vexed question of Balkan politics might be solved by studying the manners and customs of each district and so learning to whom each place belongs.<sup>25</sup>

Her studies led her to recognize that no peace in the Balkans could be attained without resolving this critical issue.

Durham continued to engage in Balkan politics as a lobbyist in England, establishing the Anglo-Albanian Society with Aubrey Herbert. She also wrote polemical political works including *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle* (1920), her political memoirs, and *The Serajevo Crime* (1925). Both are highly charged, anti-Serbian essays which condemn the idea of a Greater Serbia and the means, in her view, with which the Serbian government was attempting to achieve that dream. The books were received amidst controversy, especially by the numerous British friends of Serbia. However, the ensuing controversy and the efforts to discredit Durham as a credible Balkan expert, must be the subject of another essay.

## ENDNOTES

## CONCLUSION

1. Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans*, 92.
2. Durham to Christian, 21 January 1912, box 1-2, BP.
3. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 311.
4. Durham, to R.W. Seton-Watson, 25 February 1920, Durham files, SWP.
5. Durham, *Burden of the Balkans*, 15.
6. *Ibid.*, 105.
7. Durham, *High Albania*, 78.
8. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 61, 73.
9. Durham to the Balkan Committee, from Latrijebac, 11 June 1911, Box 1-2, BP.
10. Durham to Bertram Christian, 21 January 1912, box 1-2, BP.
11. Mikic, *The Albanians and Serbia During the Balkan War*, 167, 170.
12. Fischer, *King Zog and the Struggle for Stability*, 10.
13. One can, for example, compare Durham's work to Noel Buxton's *Europe and the Turk*, and Oddyseus (Sir Charles Eliot, *Turkey in Europe*).
14. Journal, from Podgoritsa, 5 August 1911, MS 42:5, RAI; Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 284.
15. See Steiner, *The Foreign Office, 186-192*. The study has listed such individuals, including Henry Wickham-Steed, J.D. Bourchier, R.W. Seton-Watson, Henry Brailsford and Henry Nevinson. See also A.J.P. Taylor, *The Trouble-Makers*, (London, 1957), 96; and H.N. Fieldhouse, "Noel Buxton and A.J.P. Taylor's *The Trouble-Makers*," in *A Century of Conflict, 1850-1950: Essays in Honour of A.J.P. Taylor*, ed. Martin Gilbert (London, 1966).

16. See FO minutes attached to letters from Durham to Nevinson, 19 December 1911, received 2 January 1912, and Durham to Spence, 26 December 1911, received 4 January 1912, FO 371 1481 (file 19).

17. Minute by Grey on despatch sent to him by Sir G. Lowther, Britain's Ambassador in Constantinople, 1 April 1912, FO 371 1481 13613.

18. Minute by Maxwell, 6 March 1913, FO 371 1800 (53 12012).

19. Durham, *Burden of the Balkans*, 180.

20. Durham, *Struggle for Scutari*, 101.

21. Durham to the Balkan Committee, 11 June 1911, box 1-2,  
BP.

22. Durham to Seton-Watson, 14 February 1920, SWP.

23. Journal, 21 August 1914, MS 42:14, RAI.

24. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, 281.

25. Cited in B. Blackwood, "Mary Edith Durham," no.14-15.

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