

ANGLO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS AND THE DOGGER BANK INCIDENT
1902-1905

by
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Index of Persons

Showing Writers of Despatches, Statesmen, Members of Parliament, &., and Official Positions of the Principal Persons Mentioned in the Text

Balfour, Mr. A.J. (since 1922, 1st Earl of), British First Lord of the Treasury, 1895-1905; Prime Minister, July 12, 1902--December 1905.

Benckendorff, Alexander, Count, Russian Ambassador at London, 1903-17.

Bertie, Sir F. (since 1915, 1st Baron; 1918, 1st Viscount), British Ambassador at Rome, 1903-4; at Paris, 1905-18.

Bulow, Bernhard Count von (since 1905, Prince), German Imperial Chancellor, 1900-9.

Cambon, M. Paul, French Ambassador at London, 1898-1920.

Campbell-Bannermann, Sir Henry, British Prime Minister, December 11, 1905-April 4, 1908.

Chaudordy, Comte de, French plenipotentiary to the Constantinople conference, 1876-7.

Churchill, Randolph, Lord, Chancellor of the exchequer in Lord Salisbury's Cabinet 1886-7.

Cranbrook, Lord, President of the Council of Lord Salisbury's Cabinet 1885-6.

Curzon of Kedleston, 1st Baron (since 1921, 1st Marquess), British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1895-8; Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1898-1905.

Decazes, Duc de, French Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Derby, Earl, Foreign Secretary in Disraeli's Second Cabinet, 1874.

Delcassé, M., French Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1898-1905.

H.M. King Edward VII, 1901-10.

Gambetta, Leon, French Republican leader, President of
Le Grand Ministère, 1881-2.

Giers, M., Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1882-94.

Gortchakov, Prince Alexander M., Russian Minister of
Foreign Affairs, 1856-82.

Hardinge, Sir Charles (since 1910, 1st Baron Hardinge of
Penshurst), British Assistant Under-Secretary of
State for Foreign Affairs, 1903-4; Ambassador at St.
Petersburgh, 1904-6; Permanent Under-Secretary of
State for Foreign Affairs, 1906-10.

Hayashi, Baron (since 1902, Viscount), Japanese Minister
at London, 1900-5; Ambassador, 1905-6; Minister for
Foreign Affairs, 1906-8.

Isvolski, M. Alexander, Russian Minister for Foreign
Affairs, 1906-10.

Lamsdorff, Count, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs,
1901-6.

Lansdowne, The 5th Marquess of, British Secretary of
State for Foreign Affairs, November 12, 1900-December
11, 1905.

Lyons, Lord, British Ambassador to Paris, 1867-87.

Marschall von Bieberstein, Adolf Baron, German Ambassa-
dor at Constantinople, 1897-1912.

Monson, Sir E.J., British Ambassador at Paris, 1896-1905.

H.I.M. Nicholas II, Emperor of Russia, 1894-1917.

Nicolson, Sir Arthur (since 1916, 1st Baron Carnock),
British Ambassador at Madrid, 1905-6; at St. Pe-
tersburgh, 1906-10; British Representative at Con-
ference at Algeiras, 1906.

O'Connor, Sir N.R., British Ambassador at St. Petersburg,
1895-8; at Constantinople, 1898-1908.

Ranc, M., French politician and anti-imperialist.

Rosebery, Lord, British Prime Minister, 1894.

Rojestvenski, Admiral, Commanding the Russian Baltic
Fleet, 1904.

Salisbury, The 3rd Marquess of, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, June 29, 1895-November 12, 1900; Prime Minister, June 29, 1895-July 12, 1902.

Spring-Rice, Mr. (since 1908, Sir) C.A., Secretary (later Councillor) of British Embassy at St. Petersburg, 1903-6 (sometimes Charge d'Affaires); Minister at Tehran, 1906-8.

H.I.M. William II, German Emperor, 1888-1918.

Witte, M. (since 1905, Count), Russian Finance Minister, 1892-1903; Plenipotentiary for the Peace Negotiations at Portsmouth, 1905; Prime Minister, 1905-6.

ABBREVIATIONS

- B.D.. British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914. Edited by G.P. Gooch and Harold Temperley. London, 1926-1930.
- D.D.F. Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres, Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1871-1914. Paris, 1929 ff.
- G.P. Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914. Edited by Johannes Lepsius, Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy, and Friedrich Thimme. Berlin, 1922-7.

. . . The Dogger Bank affair marked, indeed, the end of an epoch in European history--the epoch in which an Anglo-Russian conflict seemed the most likely outcome of international relations.

A.J.P. Taylor, "The
Struggle for Mastery
in Europe 1848-1918"

The following is a list of the members of the British Cabinet who were in office when the Dogger Bank Incident occurred. (Taken from Mr. R.C.K. Ensor's, "England 1870 - 1914")

BALFOUR'S CABINET

(formed July 1902)

First lord of the treasury: A.J. Balfour
Lord chancellor: Earl of Halsbury
Lord president: Duke of Devonshire
Lord privy seal:) Marquess of Londonderry
President of the board of education)
Chancellor of the exchequer: C.T. Ritchie
Home secretary: A. Akers-Douglas
Foreign secretary: Marquess of Lansdowne
Colonial secretary: Joseph Chamberlain
Secretary for war: Hon. St. John Brodrick
Secretary for India: Lord George Hamilton
Secretary for Scotland: Lord Balfour of Burleigh
Chief secretary for Ireland: George Wyndham
First lord of the admiralty: Earl of Selborne
Chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster: Lord James of Hereford
President of the board of trade: G.W. Balfour
President of the local government board: Walter Long
President of the board of agriculture: R.W. Hanbury
Lord chancellor of Ireland: Lord Ashbourne
First commissioner of works: Lord Windsor (cr. Earl of Plymouth, 1905)
Postmaster-general: Austen Chamberlain.

Changes

August 1902: Lord James of Hereford retired from the cabinet, and was succeeded as chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster by Sir William Walrond (cr. Lord Waleran 1905). May 1903: the Earl of Onslow succeeded R.W. Hanbury (deceased) as president of the board of agriculture. September 1903: Chamberlain resigned and was replaced as colonial secretary by the Hon. Alfred Lyttelton. Ritchie resigned, and was replaced as chancellor of the exchequer by Austen Chamberlain. Lord George Hamilton resigned,

and was replaced as secretary for India by St. John Brodrick, whose post as secretary for war went to H.O. Arnold-Forster. Lord Balfour of Burleigh resigned, and was replaced as secretary for Scotland by Graham Murray. The Duke of Devonshire resigned, and was replaced as lord president of the council by Lord Londonderry, who retained the presidency of the board of education, but was followed as lord privy seal by the (lately succeeded) Marquess of Salisbury. March 1905: Lord Selborne left the cabinet to become governor-general of South Africa, and his place as first lord of the admiralty was taken by Earl Cawdor. George Wyndham resigned, and his place as chief secretary for Ireland was taken by Walter Long. Long was succeeded at the local government board by G.W. Balfour, who himself was succeeded at the board of trade by Lord Salisbury. Lord Onslow resigned, and was succeeded as president of the board of agriculture by the Hon. Ailwyn Fellowes (cr. Lord Ailwyn, 1921).

INTRODUCTION

British suspicion and hostility toward Russia developed early in the nineteenth century. It rapidly assumed the magnitude of a fixed characteristic of the national outlook. That prevailing friction and mutual anxiety should have existed between the two wing-States of Europe was perhaps inevitable. Both had acquired and developed great colonial areas and a subsequent "world policy" to answer the needs of empire. Inauspiciously the needs of empire intersected sharply or ran headlong into conflict in three main regions; the Near East (particularly the Turkish Straits), the Middle East (Persia, Afghanistan and to some extent Tibet), and the Far East (mainly Northern and Central China).

Great Britain, the supreme maritime power during the nineteenth century, had developed extensive interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. Her lucrative Levantine trade and the strategic route to India loomed large in considerations of foreign policy.¹ It was also beginning to be felt that increased Russian activity in the Near East would not only effect commercial and financial

¹ Puryear, England Russia and the Straits Question, 1844 - 1856, pp. 106-129.

ventures, but the balance of power in Europe as a whole.²

Historically, Russian foreign policy had been focused on Constantinople and the Straits for an even longer period.³ The Muscovite urge to "warm water" was an openly declared aim from the time of Peter the Great. Alexander II merely continued this course when he insisted on his right to obtain the keys of his house--the control of the Straits.

Thus, the perceptible disintegration of the Ottoman Empire filled the British Government with keen apprehension lest the Czar emerge the heir of the "sick man of Europe." On May 6, 1877, Lord Derby, in a communique to Prince Gortchakov explained British interests in Constantinople and the Straits as follows:

The vast importance of Constantinople, whether in a military, a political or a commercial point of view, is too well understood to require explanation. It is therefore, scarcely necessary to point out that Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to witness with indifference the passing into other hands than those of its present possessors, of a capital holding so peculiar a position. The existing arrangements made under European sanction which regulate the navigation of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles appear to them wise and salutary, and there would be, in their judgement, serious objections to their alteration in any material particular.⁴

The tense situation in the Near East was compounded

² Temperley, England and the Near East--the Crimea, chaps. 2-5.

³ Vasiliev, The Russian Attack on Constantinople in 860.

⁴ Philipson, Buxton, The Question of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, p. 138.

by continuous strife in the Middle East. Here the British acquisition of India introduced the problem of the defense of the northern frontier. For British imperialists, Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet were looked upon as one great strategic zone of defense, protecting British India from her Russian rival.

The defeat of Russia in the Crimea War temporarily terminated her activities in the Turkish Empire and redirected her military and diplomatic aims to Central Asia. Slowly Russian armies moved south from Orenburg and Semipalatinsk, conquering and annexing region after region inhabited by poorly organized nomadic tribes.⁵ By 1884, Russia had annexed the Merv Oasis and in the following year occurred the most severe Anglo-Russian crisis in the Middle East, when Russian troops defeated an Afghan force at Penjdeh on the Afghan border.⁶

The physical obstacles to a Russian invasion of India were overwhelming, but in 1879 the Transcaspian railway was begun, and lent British fears considerable substance.⁷ Very soon, the British found the Russian strategic position considerably strengthened, in what they felt to be a vulnerable area. By 1898, the line was completed from Merv to the small settlement of Kushk on the Afghan border.

⁵ Lobanov-Rostovsky, Russia and Asia, pp. 147-176.

⁶ Curzon, Russia in Central Asia and the Anglo-Russian Question. See also Habberton, Anglo-Russian Relations Concerning Afghanistan 1837-1907.

⁷ Sumner, Tsardom and Imperialism in the Far East 1880-1914.

Lord Curzon, British viceroy of India, who was particularly sensitive to the situation, wrote to London in 1899:

Closely pressing upon Persia and Afghanistan is the evergrowing momentum of a Power whose interests in Asia are not always in accord with our own. The advance of Russia across the deserts that form the natural barrier between West and East Persia could not be regarded without uneasiness by the Government of India...⁸

The constant threat of an invasion of India, remained a valuable asset of Russian policy. British pressure in the Near East could always be balanced by a Russian advance in the Middle East. It is more that coincidental that the three periods of acute tension in Central Asia between England and Russia (1855-7, 1878, 1885) should have coincided with war or tense political relations between the two in Europe. In 1884, Giers wrote:

Our movement in Central Asia has been commanded by our own interests, as well as by the necessity of securing a defensive position against the hostility displayed by the English government toward us since the Crimean War⁹ and more recently during the war with Turkey.

Thus, the Russian advance in the Middle East was meant as a means in itself and as a check to British policy in general. It also meant an additional impetus to the growing antagonism between England and Russia.

Finally, the British onslaught upon China's territorial integrity in 1842 opened the third area of conflict--the Far East. Here the two wing-States touched

⁸ Moon, Imperialism and World Politics, p. 276.

⁹ Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, p. 309.

and recoiled alternately during the latter half of the century. The Korean crisis of 1894 accentuated the differences of the two European rivals. Although England was the first to seize Chinese territory, her later aim was commercial and financial; Russia's on the other hand, was territorial and political. One was the leading commercial power in the Far East, the other the outstanding political and military force. One became anxious to maintain the independence and territorial integrity of both China and Korea; the other wished to obtain a predominance in as much as possible of those two decadent empires.¹⁰

The conflicting imperial interests of the two Empires, gravely impaired normal diplomatic relations. In addition to the problems of an economic nature, that caused endless tension between the two States, there existed a deeper and very articulate sentiment that manifested itself throughout middle-class England. The active, humanitarian, Nonconformist segment of population, were sincerely repelled by the Russian autocratic State, and its frequent brutalities inflicted upon its subjugated minorities. This movement (which was all too frequently misunderstood on the European continent) was a force to be reckoned with by all Governments in England. Lord Salisbury, though not in agreement with the Nonconformist

¹⁰ Swartz, Anglo-Russian Rivalry in the Far East 1895-1905, pp. 2-3.

opinions of Russia realized the potency of the movement when he criticized former Governments who were "guided by common sympathies instead of common interests."¹¹ Thus, naked economic conflict was reinforced by an acute difference in social development; which in turn, made the gap between England and Russia, all the more difficult to close.

In view of the sharp rivalry and ceaseless struggle that marked Anglo-Russian relations for a century, many European states began to accept British antipathy for Russia as axiomatic. The Central Powers, in particular, continued to construct foreign policy with this principle in mind.

During the War Scare of 1875, several European States seriously feared that Germany contemplated the destruction of France through preventive war. When newspaper articles appeared stressing the possibility of Anglo-Russian cooperation in thwarting German intentions, Bismarck replied:

In any case, real material bases could be more easily found for cooperation between Germany

¹¹ B.D. VI p. 780. To borrow an illustration of Dean Fieldhouse's, perhaps no better indication of the Nonconformist attitude can be shown than the prevailing feeling that existed amongst them during the First World War. Nonconformists constantly urged that an allied victory over the Central Powers was impossible as long as despotic Russia was a member of the allied cause. It was only after the Kerensky seizure of power, that Nonconformity, in a first flush of excitement over the Czarist fall, was willing to accept Russia as a righteous member of the allied powers.

and France than for cooperation between Russia and England...The whole scheme (combination) would certainly be absurd (unsinnig) but the idea of an Anglo-Russian combination would be at least just as absurd.¹²

Bismarck's successors reflect the same persistent conviction that England would never be able to draw close to her bitter Russian rival. Bulow's dispatch to the Kaiser on January 21, 1901, merely repeats the ingrown belief that an understanding between England and Russia was impossible:

...Die von den Engländern angedrohte Verständigung mit dem Zweibund ist ein nur zu unserer Einschüchterung erfundenes Schreckgespenst, womit die Engländer schon seit Jahren operieren.¹³

This was the conclusion to the crystalized animosity of a hundred years of sharp Anglo-Russian conflict. In the nineties it was a foregone conclusion that, when war broke out, it would involve England and Russia. The beginning of the Russo-Japanese war seemed to bring this assumption even closer to realization. When the Dogger Bank incident occurred, on October 21, 1904, it was momentarily felt throughout Europe that that the dénouement of the century old struggle had arrived. Although the situation seemed balanced on the razor's edge, the two Governments kept their heads and war was averted.

In the short space of three years after the serious Dogger Bank affair, the great Anglo-Russian conflict

¹²Langer, op. cit. pp. 54-55.

¹³G.P. XVII p. 21.

was resolved in an Anglo-Russian entente. In this rather abrupt fashion the entente seemed to spring into being and altered the complete alliance system on the European continent.

The purpose of this thesis is not to trace the rivalry that existed between England and Russia, but to examine the development of the British desire to settle the conflict that had poisoned Anglo-Russian relations for so long. Roughly, this development falls between the years 1898-1906. Particular attention will be devoted to the Dogger Bank incident which later proved to be the catalytic event in bringing about the Anglo-Russian entente.

Two distinct threads emerge in this inquiry; firstly, England's desire to settle colonial issues with the entente Powers in the face of growing German hostility; secondly, France's determined effort to bring Great Britain and Russia together, ever since her disastrous defeat at Sedan.

I

EARLY ATTEMPTS AT ANGLO-RUSSIAN COOPERATION

The growing German preponderance on the continent after 1871 induced France to search for allies. The ideal combination would have been an Anglo-French-Russian entente; unfortunately Anglo-Russian hostility seemed almost insurmountable. Persistently, however, French statesmen charted a policy of winning cooperation from Russia and Britain with the ultimate hope of forming an entente. Thiers was the originator of this plan¹³ in the early years of the Third Republic. It was continued, although pursued with greater activity, by the French minister of foreign affairs the Duc de Decazes

¹³ Langer, op. cit., p. 32. According to A.J.P. Taylor both "Russia and Great Britain...welcomed French friendship and wanted a strong France, neither feared Germany: they wished to use France as an ally only in the Near East--and against each other. In 1870 France could have won Russian favour by supporting the freeing of the Black Sea; or she could have won British favour by opposing it. Neither would have been of any use to her against Prussia. The French were determined not to repeat the policy of the Crimean War; on the other hand, they had important financial interests bound up with the maintenance of the Turkish empire and therefore had to hope that England would go to the defence of Turkey, though they would not do so themselves. To win Great Britain without losing Russia; to win Russia without losing Great Britain; and not to lose Turkey to either--this was the central problem of French diplomacy..." A.J.P. Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918, pp. 221-222.

and later by the Republican leader Gambetta. The task proved to be a formidable one.

Aside from the jarring collisions in areas apart from Europe, England and Russia had entered a period of diplomatic isolation on the continent in relation to one-another. The last time that both had worked together was on the Sleswig question in 1850. It was not until 1875, during the Franco-German war scare, that the two states showed vigorous signs of breaking through the diplomatic rust that had set in after the Crimea War. Neither England nor Russia was prepared to see Germany eliminate France to the detriment of the balance of power in Europe.¹⁴

On May 5, 1875, the British foreign minister, Lord Derby, expressed his opinions to the Queen concerning the instability of Franco-German relations; he believed that more active intervention would be necessary in order to preserve peace. Clearly the Queen and Disraeli shared his anxiety¹⁵ and approved of his message to the British Ambassador, Lord Odo Russel, in Berlin on May 3, enquiring whether reliance could be placed on Russia for intervening. On May 6, Disraeli wrote to Derby:

My own impression is that we shd. construct some concerted movement to preserve the peace of Europe like Pam did when he baffled France and expelled the Egyptians from Syria.

¹⁴ For the "war scare" episode see Fuller, The War Scare of 1875 (American Historical Review XXIV, July 1926) also Taffs, The War Scare of 1875, (The Slavonic Review, IX, 1930-1) pp. 335-49; 632-49.

¹⁵ Letters of Queen Victoria, (2nd Ser. 1926) II, 389-92.

There might be an alliance between Russia and ourselves for this special purpose.¹⁶

The following day Lord Odo Russel was instructed "to support the Tzar's movement for peace."¹⁷ Meanwhile, the French were intent upon capitalizing on the situation. Decazes, in Paris worked hard to bring about concerted action by London and St. Petersburg in support of France.¹⁸ The determined moves of Britain and Russia checked Bismarck before the situation deteriorated further. Within a matter of weeks, the war scare had blown over. The incident was important because it showed that the two wing-Powers of Europe could work together in the face of a common danger; and that it gave the French hope for an amiable alignment of Forces in Europe against Germany. After twenty years, Britain and Russia were momentarily brought together; "apprehension of Germany had for once smoothed away the memories of the Crimean War."¹⁹

The excitement of the war scare and the sudden grouping of the two old European rivals were speedily followed by another acute problem that threatened the peace of Europe, and played havoc with the French plan to win her two prospective allies. In July 1875, the Christian population of Herzegovina rose in rebellion

¹⁶ Moneyppenny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, II p. 762.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 762. Also Pratt, La Diplomatie Francaise de 1871 a 1875, (Revue Historique CLXII) pp. 60-84.

¹⁸ D.D.F., (1st Series) Nos. 400, 403, 405.

¹⁹ Taylor, op. cit., p. 226.

against the Ottoman government. The Great Powers called a conference at Constantinople in December 1876. It was hoped to settle the Balkan outbreak so as to satisfy the three states (Austria, Russia, and England) who stood outside the actual ground of conflict, but who were directly affected by any change in the status quo in the Balkans. The conference, as was expected, ended in failure on January 20, 1877. During the conference, Decazes utilized all opportunities to lay the basis for an entente with England and Russia.²⁰ Comte de Chaudordy, the French plenipotentiary, sided demonstratively with Ignatiev and Salisbury on every point, while Decazes pointed out to the English ambassador, Lord Lyon, that the German chancellor's policy was to disrupt any development that would lead to an Anglo-Russian-French combination.

Gambetta's attempt to draw closer to Russia and at the same time win British friendship, was the continuation of the Thiers-Decazes policy. It is generally looked upon as a ludicrous gesture, by succeeding generations who are aware of the alliance concluded between Russia, Germany and Austria in 1881. However, it is too often neglected to recognize the strength of the anti-Ger-

²⁰ D.D.F., (1st Series) II Nos. 126, 127, 131.

man Pan-Slav movement that was steadily growing in Russia, particularly after the disappointment which Russia suffered at the Berlin Congress.²¹ The new Czar, Alexander III, was a staunch adherent of the nationalist doctrine. He was surrounded by rigid pan-Slavists like Milutin, Ignatiev and Pobiedonostsev. Michael Katkov, the famous editor of the Moscow Gazette and violent Germanophobe was at the height of his career when he wrote:

What a pitiful role, our diplomacy has been playing in subordinating Russia to the ally of our enemy. Germany is closely bound to Austria, and Austria is crowding Russia out of the East and damaging her most vital interests. Austria could never have competed with Russia so boldly, and alas, so successfully if she had not been supported by Germany.²²

Katkov left a lasting influence on the Czar.

In the short duration of the "Great Ministry", Gambetta's cautious conservatism and the appointment of men like Miribel and Chaudordy impressed Alexander. Although he could not sympathize with Republicanism, he was conscious of the benefit of close relations with France.²³ In 1882, General Skobelev, just after Gambetta's fall, visited Paris. Here he addressed a group of Serbian stu-

²¹ Fay, The Origins of the World War, I p. 67.

²² Spender, Fifty Years of Europe, p. 82.

²³ Toutain, Alexandre III et la Republique Française, pp. 7-11 also Potiemkine, Histoire de la Diplomatie, II, p. 91.

dents, expressing the innermost feelings of the Pan-Slav hope:

A struggle is inevitable between the Teuton and the Slav. It cannot be long deferred. It will be long, sanguinary, and terrible but I have faith that it will culminate in the victory of the Slavs.²⁴

The French press hailed the words of Slobeliev with enthusiasm. Gambetta had recognized the underlying antagonism that existed between Slav and Teuton. He saw an opportunity of bringing this to the advantage of France.

In a letter to Ranc, Gambetta showed himself free from any aversion to autocratic Russia, openly declared his desire for a Triple Entente and also revealed some interesting opinions of the Prince of Wales:

...Les rêves politiques de la Russie vont être entravés par L'Autriche, qui prend dès maintenant une attitude hostile. Elle influe sur la Roumanie. Voyez-vous par la suite L'Autriche s'allier à la Roumanie et à la Turquie contre la Russie? Quel conflit! Le prince de Galles le prévoit pourtant. Il ne partage pas l'hostilité d'une partie de la nation anglaise contre la Russie. Il s'oppose de toute sa jeune autorité à l'application des mesures qui pourraient lui être préjudiciables. Je sens en lui l'étoffe d'un grand politique. ...Je souhaite que la Russie ait pour ennemis nos ennemis. Il est clair que Bismarck veut s'allier aux Autrichiens. Il faut donc que la Russie s'aperçoive que nous pourrions être ses alliés. Avant qu'il soit longtemps, je vois la Russie et l'Angleterre être avec nous, pour peu que nous ayons une politique intérieure convenable.²⁵

²⁴ Langer, op. cit., p. 240.
²⁵ Deschanel, Gambetta, (Paris 1919) p. 198.

By continuing Thiers' policy, Gambetta constructed the bridge that would link England and Russia together in 1907. Clearly, he envisaged the Triple Entente of later years, which was to smash the German preponderance in Europe. But with Gambetta's fall from power on January 26, 1882, and the British occupation of Egypt in the same year, Anglo-French relations deteriorated. Because of continued colonial strife between the two in South East Asia and Africa,²⁶ France turned from England to Russia, eventually completing an entente in 1894. The first link in French foreign policy was completed. Anglo-Russian relations remained bitter and strained because of the Bulgarian problem of 1885-7 and the Penjdeh crisis (1885) in the Middle East. This condition lasted until the middle of the nineties, when the Conservative Government under Lord Salisbury began a revision of policy in regards to Russia.

The Anglo-Russian Entente of 1907, sprang into being with sudden surprise to many European diplomats. Actually, direct British overtures to Russia were made as early as 1898, to find some basis for settling colonial and financial disputes.²⁷ The actions that led up to England's friendly approach to Russia could be observed

²⁶ Moon, Imperialism and World Politics, pp. 139-153; 312-319.

²⁷ B.D. I pp. 1-41.

in Lord Salisbury's cabinet in 1886, and later in the Near Eastern crisis caused by the Armenian Massacres; which in turn inspired a deluge of articles that appeared in responsible British periodicals, reflecting English public opinion. These incidents presaged a shift in England's relations with Russia.

The kidnapping of Prince Alexander of Bulgaria, in 1886, by orders of Russian officials produced a new Balkan crisis. The policy of Lord Salisbury and, particularly, the Queen,²⁸ was to support the new Bulgaria, in contradiction to England's previous position of thwarting Russia's attempt to construct a greater Bulgarian state. The reason given by Sir William White, British ambassador at Constantinople, was that a "Bulgaria consolidated on a national basis afforded the best defence against an advance on the part of Russia."²⁹

The Cabinet showed signs of serious disagreement on the issue. Lord Randolph Churchill, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, led the opposition. He believed that a wiser policy would be to cease opposing Russia, and work rather for an understanding with her, which in turn would secure the Indian frontier at the expense of the

²⁸ Letters of Queen Victoria, (2nd Ser. 1926) III, p. 261.

²⁹ Pribram, England and the International Policy of the European Great Powers, p. 34.

Balkans. Obviously, he cared little for Turkey or Constantinople, if he could bring about better relations between London and St. Petersburg. On September 15, 1886, he wrote to Lord Salisbury:

...M. de Staal has just been to see me. ...He tried to ascertain my views as to our interests in the Balkan territories; my reply was (speaking only for myself) that our chief interests were Egypt and India, and that anything which affected our interests in those countries, would necessitate very strong action on our part. ...Finally, I hinted at an understanding with Russia by which she should give us real support in Egypt, abandon her pressure upon Afghanistan, in which case she might settle the Balkan matters as she would--or, rather, as she could!³⁰

Lord Salisbury appreciated the seriousness of the situation and perhaps realized that a revision in policy was necessary. On September 7, 1886, he had already written to the Queen stating that:

...A section of the Cabinet showed a strong inclination to depart from traditional policy of this country of resisting the designs of Russia upon the Balkan Peninsula. Lord R. Churchill, Lord G. Hamilton and Mr. Smith were the three who took this view. It was not shared by the majority of the Cabinet and therefore will not effect the policy of the government. But it may at any moment produce difficulties, inside the Cabinet, of a serious kind.³¹

The following day he wrote to Lord Cranbrook:

³⁰ Churchill, Lord Randolph Churchill, II pp. 157-158.
³¹ Lady Cecil, Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury, III p. 319.

...We had a rather disagreeable discussion in Cabinet from which it appeared that three of the members--Churchill, Hamilton, and Smith--and possibly Beach--were disposed to abandon all efforts to stay the progress of Russia in the Balkan Peninsula, and even to see her in Constantinople without raising any objection. This difference of opinion will cause very serious trouble, I fear, before long.³²

The breach in British hostility to Russia had appeared. It was to grow much larger in the near future.

Growing Armenian nationalism in the Ottoman Empire, chafing under constant misgovernment and heavy Turkish oppression, resulted in rebellion and massacre (1894-1897). The Turkish Government viewed with alarm, the growth of the nationalist movement and dealt harshly with the Armenians in a series of massacres that culminated in the great slaughter at Constantinople. The Armenian nationalists, meanwhile, had established far flung propaganda posts throughout Europe and America, in order to announce to the world the misery and humiliation suffered by the Armenian people under the Turkish yoke. They were convinced that only by active European intervention could the plight of the Armenian people be ameliorated. These nationalist activities proved immensely successful in arousing public opinion. Most important was the reception that the cause received in England.

³²

Cecil, op. cit., p. 319.

The sincere humanitarian outcry that carried through England, forced the Rosebery Government (which was now in office) to take decisive steps. Russian interests were equally concerned in this area as they were the rulers of the remaining segment of Armenian populations in Russia. Russia could not remain indifferent to the situation in north east Anatolia, particularly if any other state showed signs of intervening on behalf of the Armenians.

Lord Rosebery revealed his position in a speech delivered at the Lord Mayor's banquet on November 9. He stated, that in the Far East, "Cordial action with Russia is a fact over which we may rejoice" and that relations between the two countries had never been "more hearty". He made similar statements about Anglo-French relations.³³ Following events showed that Lord Rosebery's efforts were designed to bring about a rapprochement with Russia and with France. The Armenian question chartered the course that England, France and Russia were to follow.³⁴

³³ Times, November 10, 1894.

³⁴ There can be little doubt that France and Russia joined England to form a Near Eastern Triplice, in order to prevent England from forcing a radical change in Turkey. A change in the status quo in the Ottoman Empire was not desired by either France or Russia. Russia, in particular, who was committed heavily in the Far East, wanted Near Eastern questions "put on ice". Thus, their only hope was to work with England in order to check her. Radolin, German ambassador to St. Petersburg, reported to Berlin that official circles in the Russian foreign office wished to put a damper on the English: "Beide Mächte hätten sich daher den Engländern angeschlossen, um diesen einen Dämpfer aufzusetzen und ein Recht zu haben, mässigend in die Entschliessungen einzugreifen. Die englische Politik in der Türkei könne in Russland niemals gebilligt werden." G.P. X No. 2446.

When Lord Salisbury entered office in June, 1895, it was generally expected that he would execute a volte face by resurrecting old ties with the Central Powers. The Armenian question, which he was obliged to settle, prevented this. He informed the German ambassador, Count Hatzfeldt, that England was preparing to make extensive concessions to Russia in the Turkish Empire, in order to secure her cooperation on the Armenian question.³⁵ There is much evidence that his diminishing faith in the recuperative powers of the Porte had led him to believe that collapse was inevitable. If collapse was inevitable, it was desirable to prepare partition diplomatically in order to avoid anxiety which might provoke a war.³⁶ This con-

Whereas the Franco-Russian Entente was designed as a thrust against the German preponderance on the continent, ironically it was isolated England that first felt the impact of the new combination, in the Far East, Near East and Africa. It was natural for England to respond to the situation by either drawing closer to the Central Powers or to lay the foundation for better understanding with France and Russia. Lord Rosebery chose to cooperate with the Entente (as indicated by his speech at the Lord Mayor's banquet on November 9, 1894). The German reaction was essentially the same, as whenever England showed signs of advance to the Entente Powers; Berlin would not permit itself to believe that British cooperation with France and Russia could materialize into a Triple Entente. Marschall, expressed his opinion on the Triplice to Bulow on January 8, 1895: "An eine Verständigung zu Dreien--mit Frankreich--vermögen wir nach wie vor nicht zu glauben, da es uns ausgeschlossen erscheint, dass England genügende Kondessionen zu machen bereit und in der Lage ist, um Russland und Frankreich zu befriedigen während bei einer entente zu Zweien--ohne Frankreich--der Dreibund voraussichtlich unschwer weine Rechnung würde finden können." G.P., IX, No. 2201.

³⁵ G.P. X No. 2396.

³⁶ A dispatch of Lord Salisbury's in the British Documents

clusion was perhaps, the most crucial decision of Lord Salisbury's career. Russia was to be offered the Bosphorus and Constantinople, while the Triple Alliance was also invited to partake of the division. The immediate foreign reaction to his proposal was disappointing. Russia displayed a very suspicious and cautious attitude; quite the contrary to what was generally expected in

explains this decision in a most lucid manner: There is no such thing as a fixed policy, because policy like all organic entities is always in the making. I do not know that I can sum up the present trend of English policy better than by saying we are engaged in slowly escaping from the dangerous errors of 1846-1856. Palmerston was a disciple of Canning and with him believed that foreign policy should follow your political proclivities. France was Liberal, Russia and Austria despotic,--therefore in his mind, it was our policy to shake off the Russian and Austrian alliance and cultivate that of France. Such a policy is obviously unsound,--similarity of political faith is no more indicative of a useful ally than similarity of religious faith would be.

Politics is a matter of business: Our allies should be those who are most likely to help or not to hinder the interests of which we, as a government, are the trustees. Now the interests of France clashed with ours on almost every coast; those of Russia only on the Afghan-Perso frontier, those of Austria nowhere. Therefore it was our policy to maintain the friendship with Russia and Austria which had existed during the first half of this century, and by its help to keep France within bounds.

But Palmerston would be guided by common sympathies instead of by common interests. He made war with Russia; he insulted Austria; and he ostentiously made friends with France. In order to baulk and baffle Russia he, and his school, set up as a political faith the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

Forty years have past away and look at the results. We have not kept France--she is more our enemy than ever. But the feud with Russia remains. Austria has become of less importance, because out of the fragments of her dominions or her following Germany and Austria

the face of past Russian activity in the realms of the Turkish Empire. Committed in Far Eastern schemes, Russia suspected that England was trying to involve her in a European conflict which would relieve pressure in the Far East for England.³⁷ The Chinese problem was soon to be settled and England stood in complete isolation at Peking.

Baron von Holstein, commanded considerable power in the German foreign office. His anti-British views were commonly known. At the particular moment of Lord Salisbury's suggestion of partition, the chancellor and

have been created; and we have to find in the nominal alliance of these two last what consolation we can for the necessity of coping, practically alone, with the alliance of France and Russia. If we had only listened to the Emperor Nicholas when he spoke to Sir Hamilton Seymour, what a much pleasanter outlook would meet us when we contemplate the continent of Europe. It is much easier to lament than to repair. It may not be possible for England and Russia to return to their old relations. But it is an object to be wished for and approached as opportunity offers. At all events efforts should be made to avoid needless aggravation of the feud between them which Governments and not the nations have made. The French and German people both hate us; the Russian people do not. It is not possible to stop the impulse which past mistakes have given. The generations whose political beliefs were moulded by the passions of the Crimean war is only now dying out. We may, without any fault of our own, find ourselves opposed to Russia on this question or that, in consequence of past commitments. All that we can try to do is to try to narrow this chasm that separates us. It is the best chance for something like an equilibrium of Europe." B.D. VI P. 780.

³⁷ G.P., X No. 2196-8.

foreign minister were absent from Berlin. Holstein, therefore, was able to bring his full influence to bear on any decision. E. Brandenburg, the prominent German historian, comments on Holstein's views:

...In Salisbury's suggestion he saw nothing but the wish to stir up strife, separate us from Russia, break up the Triple Alliance, and cause disturbances everywhere, and let Britain meanwhile fish for herself in the troubled waters.³⁸

Holstein warned strongly against becoming involved in what he believed were British plans for creating enmity between Triple Alliance and Russia. Similarly, Austrian policy could never adjust itself to the idea of Russian control of Constantinople; "On more than one occasion the Emperor Francis Joseph declared emphatically that he would not tolerate any aggression by Russia either with regard to Bulgaria or Constantinople."³⁹

Perhaps, if the Continental Powers had agreed, the Russians would have shown greater desire to cooperate in working with England on the final partition of the Ottoman Empire. As it was, Germany and Austria proved inimicable to the idea; Holstein suspicious of the English driving a wedge between Russia and the Triple Alliance,⁴⁰ Austria "abhorring" the idea of a change of the status quo in

³⁸ Brandenburg, From Bismarck to the World War, p. 75.

³⁹ Brandenburg, Ibid., p. 77.

⁴⁰ There is abundant evidence that much of Holstein's suspicion of England was shared by other members of the

the Near East.

The appearance of a series of periodical articles paralleled Lord Salisbury's efforts to win cooperation from Russia. In contrast to the periodical literature of preceding years, it can safely be inferred that public opinion as a whole was moderating its bellicose attitude to Russia. In 1895, Canon MacColl wrote an article entitled "Russia and England", in which he expressed the opinion that: "Of all the Powers of Europe we are the two who have most to gain by a friendly understanding, and most to lose by a policy of antagonism."⁴¹ He suggested quite freely, to allow Russia to expand as she might in Turkey. An anonymous article of the same year spoke of the advantage for the two wing-Powers of Europe, of approaching problems:

Not as question for England or for Russia,
but as one for England and Russia. In
other words, all international Asiatic
questions arising along that zone that

foreign office and by the Kaiser as well. William II made it a consistent policy to turn Russia's attention to the Far East in order to relieve tension on Germany's eastern frontier. (See "The Kaiser's Letters to the Tzar") This policy also had the effect of lessening friction between Austria and Russia in the Balkans and the Near East. That he shared Holstein's view of England stirring up trouble between the two alliance systems on the continent and then withdrawing into isolation, is seen in his minute on a dispatch from Eulenburg to Hohenlohe: "Russland wird wenn offen von uns unterstutzt auch unseren Wunschen gerecht werden. England selbs im gunstigsten Falle nur uns auszunutzen suchen und uns in richtigen Augenblick sitzen lassen. Das so bestimmte Versprechen bezuglich der Garantie an unsrer Ost-grenze wenn wir Frieden halten ist von hohem Werth, und unser Dank dafur aussert sich am Besten in einheitlichem Austreten im Orient!" G.P. IX No. 2313.
⁴¹ Canon MacColl, Russia and England, Contemporary Review, 1895, Vol. LXVII, p. 11.

divides the respective regions of influence of England and Russia should be handled as if for practical purposes England and Russia had become a dual empire, with a common foreign office and a common foreign policy.⁴²

Lord Randolph Churchill's oppositional stand in the Cabinet of 1886 had grown into a revision of national policy, carrying with it a considerable section of public opinion. The succeeding years brought an even greater determination on the part of the British Government to "narrow the chasm" that had separated England and Russia for so many years.

⁴² Anonymous, The European Partners in Asia, Contemporary Review, 1895. Vol. LXVII p. 613.

II

DIRECT BRITISH OVERTURES TO RUSSIA

Excluding the Armenian crisis, the problems of the Far East occupied the attention of the European Powers from 1895 until 1905. The Great Powers were increasingly concerned by the shift, in the balance of power in the Far East.⁴³ In 1891, (largely under the influence of Count Sergius Witte), the final decision was made to begin construction of the Russian Trans-Siberian Railway. It was felt, in Tokyo and London, that the immediate effect of the railway, would transform the entire concept of the political alignment of forces in the Far East. The Japanese were anxious lest the improved Russian transport system strengthen Russian influence so as to outweigh their own means on the Chinese mainland and in Korea. Similarly, Great Britain feared Russia's growing dominance over the Peking court, and the prohibitive tariff system practised by Russia, in her spheres of influence, which virtually made trade impossible.

⁴³ The political and military threat that faced England in China, was reinforced by increasing commercial rivalry. In 1894, Great Britain was in possession of 65% of China's trade; approximately 85% of imports and exports were transported in British ships. The quantitative difference between England's trade with China, and that of the Chinese share, held by Russia, France and Germany was great; but after 1894, the commercial rate of development of these three States, in China, increased so rapidly that the gap between them and Great Britain steadily diminished. See McCordock, British Far Eastern Policy 1894-1900, pp. 71-75.

British policy in China, as in Turkey, was keyed to the support of the Celestial Empire. Until 1894, England displayed a consistent policy of insuring the territorial integrity of China. During the Sino-Japanese War, the decisive Japanese victories had a profound effect upon British Public opinion. The policy of bolstering China as a bulwarck against Russia, was seriously held up for question. Lord Salisbury's shaken faith in Turkey was paralleled by a loss of faith in China. British public opinion had begun to abandon its previous stand in favour of China, for friendship with Japan. On September 24, 1894 the Times wrote:

...Great Britain and Japan have no interests which are obviously in conflict with each other. There are some interests which may prove of the highest importance that are common to both nations.... Despite her pledge to China not to occupy Korea, Russia still hankers after the possession of a secure and open harbor on the Pacific... But neither Great Britain nor Japan could look upon its fulfillment without concern. To Japan's future development as a maritime state, no more dangerous blow could be inflicted. To ourselves it would be a cause of considerable cost and anxiety. Rumors are already abroad of diplomatic intervention at the close of the campaign, whatever the issue of that campaign may prove to be. Should such intervention take place, it would be strange if the representatives of Great Britain and Japan are not found, at least on some important points, standing side by side.⁴⁴

A similar view was expressed in the St. James Gazette:

⁴⁴ Chung Fu Chang, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 16-17.

If Japan aspires to be a first rate naval power, Europe cannot hinder it... England's policy must be to take cognizance of the fact and be satisfied therewith... If Japan and China desire to fight it out, that is their business... For ourselves, if Japan acts as a counterpoise to the formidable Empire which is stretching one of its arms round Northern Asia, we are no losers, and if Japan throws open the gigantic territories of China, we, of all peoples in the world have most to gain by it, in spite of the competition of Yokahama and Tokio.⁴⁵

Contrary to Japan's wishes, at the culmination of the Sino-Japanese War, Russia was determined to secure the independence of Korea. The great Trans-Siberian Railway venture could not be permitted to end in the ice-choked harbor of Vladivostok, Russia was desirous of maintaining the independence of Korea, because, eventually it was felt, St. Petersburg would fall heir to the entire peninsula.

France was working hard to strengthen her alliance with Russia, and was, therefore, willing to demonstrate support of her ally's cause in the Far East. The manoeuvres of Berlin in support of Russia, were even more exaggerated than those of the French. Berlin was determined to nail Russia down in the Far East. This plan was motivated by several factors. The Kaiser's overriding concern was to relieve pressure on Germany's eastern frontier; what better method to achieve this, than by

⁴⁵ McCordock, op. cit., pp. 118-119.

diverting Russia's interest to the Far East?⁴⁶ Holstein, who firmly believed that an Anglo-Russian war lay in the 'logic of history', saw an excellent opportunity to aggravate the situation, by giving Russia greater diplomatic support in Asia; at any rate, if a war did not come about, at least the danger of an Anglo-Russian-French combination would be more difficult to come by.

Russia was thus assured of French and German diplomatic support against the combined weight of England and Japan. Even though Russia played fast and loose with France against Germany concerning the Chinese loan, the Kaiser was intent on overlooking Russian perfidy, in order to insure St. Petersburg success in the Far East.⁴⁷ Successful Russian activities in the Pacific became an important concern for Germany.

In the Congolese Treaty dispute, Great Britain had felt the full impact of the Triple and Dual alliances. The Eastern Triplice threatened to repeat the example with

⁴⁶ The Kaiser's letter of Nicholas II April 26, 1895. "For that is clearly the great task of the future for Russia to cultivate the Asian Continent and to defend Europe from the inroads of the Great Yellow race. In this you will always find me on your side ready to help you as best I can. You have well understood that call of Providence and have quickly grasped the moment; it is of immense political and historical value and much good will come of it. G.P., IX p. 359.

⁴⁷ G.P., IX Nos. 2313, 2318.

equal force. Lord Rosebery, however, had already begun the attempt to settle disputes with Russia in a business like manner. As indicated above, Lord Salisbury, continued and elaborated this policy. In his Guild Hall speech of November 9, 1895, he expressed hope that conflict in the Far East was not inevitable and that:

I should be sorry that we felt any undue sensitiveness in that matter. I cannot forget the great words of Lord Beaconsfield--'in Asia there is room for us all'. And there is stretching before us a long vista of commercial, agricultural and humanitarian improvement to which we may devote, with the utmost profit and glory, the energies of our race, without interfering with or having need to fear the efforts of anybody, be they who they may, who propose themselves as our competitors in that struggle.⁴⁸

Speaking a few months later, Mr. Balfour went even farther in expressing the views of the Government:

There need be no contest, no petty contest, no mean jealousies between civilized nations as to how they are best to turn to account the potential riches of the East or South. I for my part frankly state that so far, for example, from regarding with fear and jealousy a commercial outlet for Russia in the Pacific Ocean which should not be ice-bound half the year, I should welcome such a result as a distinct advance in this far distant region, and I am convinced not merely that Russia would gain by it, that the world generally would gain by it, but that British commerce and enterprise would be the gainers. Let us lay to heart this doctrine that what is good for one is not necessarily bad for the other--surely Asia and Africa are large enough for all of us.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Times, November 11, 1895.

⁴⁹ Times, February 4, 1896.

An anonymous article in the Edinburgh Review stated:

The main object to be kept steadily in view is some permanent understanding between Russia and England... There is every reason, ...why Great Britain and Russia should endeavour to act in accord in solving the problems of the Further East.⁵⁰

The Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902, depended largely upon the outcome of relations between England and Russia. The alliance, certainly did not contain the element of inevitability. In England, Press statements and Government announcements, clearly indicated a willingness to reach a settlement with Russia. If the Anglo-Russian dispute had been settled, there is room to doubt whether the Anglo-Japanese Alliance would have been signed.

The German occupation of Kiao Chau, on November 14, 1898, and the threatening manoeuvres of Russia in preparation for the seizure of Port Arthur, intensified the struggle of the European States in Asia, and tended to isolate England. The Continental Powers, momentarily checkmated in Europe, fell into a "natural" combination in Asia, against the world's greatest Power.⁵¹ Spring

⁵⁰ Anonymous, Political and Commercial Affairs in Asia, (Edinburgh Review), January 1896, pp. 237-266.

⁵¹ Eyre Crowe, in a well informed memorandum, explained the certainty, of such a situation arising, because of specific geographic factors: "The general character of England's foreign policy is determined by the

Rice, in Berlin observed: "The whole sum of the tendency here is distinctly--organize a continental alliance against England."⁵²

In 1898, the partition of China appeared imminent. Lord Salisbury, in a determined move to prevent England's diplomatic isolation in the Far East, and a change in the status quo in Europe and Asia, made a "daring" overture to Russia.⁵³ On January 17, he instructed Sir N. O'Connor,

immutable conditions of her geographical situation on the ocean flank of Europe as an island state with vast overseas colonies and dependencies, whose existence and survival as an independent community are inseparably bound up with the possession of preponderant sea power... Its formidable character makes itself felt the more directly that a maritime State is, in the literal sense of the word, the neighbour of every country accessible by sea. It would, therefore, be but natural that the power of a State supreme at sea should inspire universal jealousy and fear, and be exposed to the danger of being overthrown by a general combination of the world. The danger can in practice only be averted--and history shows that it has been so averted--on condition that the national policy of the insular and naval State is so directed as to harmonize with the general desires, and ideals common to all mankind, and more particularly that it is closely identified with the primary and vital interests of a majority, or as many as possible, of the other nations." B.D. III pp. 402-403.

⁵² S. Gwynn, Letters and Friendships of Sir Cecil Spring Rice, p. 226.

⁵³ Temperley, Penson, Foundations of British Foreign Policy, p. 499.

British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, to approach Witte, to see:

...whether it is possible that England and Russia should work together in China. Our objects are not antagonistic in any serious degree: On the other hand we can both of us do each other a great deal of harm if we try. It is better therefore we should come to an understanding. We would go far to further Russian commercial objects in the North, if we could regard her as willing to work with us.⁵⁴

O'Connor seems to have gone even farther than his instructions implied. Reporting to Lord Salisbury of his discussion with Count Mouraviev, he explained: "I said that I thought any understanding, to be really effective and lasting ought to extend to the general area of our respective interests, and not to be confined to the important questions affecting the Far East."⁵⁵

The immediate Russian response appeared favourable; Witte showed interest in the British approach,⁵⁶ and may have instilled greater hope in the British Government. Lord Salisbury proceeded to lay his cards openly upon the table. On January 25, he instructed O'Connor to continue discussion along these lines:

...The two Empires of China and Turkey are so weak that in all important matters they are constantly guided by the advice of Foreign Powers. In giving this advice Russia and England are constantly opposed, neutralizing each other's efforts much more frequently than the

⁵⁴ B.D. I No. 5.

⁵⁵ B.D. I No. 6.

⁵⁶ B.D. I No. 8.

real antagonism of their interests would justify; and this condition of things is not likely to diminish, but to increase. It is to remove or lessen this evil that we have thought than an understanding with Russia might benefit both nations.

We contemplate no infraction of existing rights. We would not admit the violation of any existing treaties, or impair the integrity of the present empires of either China or Turkey. These two conditions are vital. We aim at no partition of territory, but only a partition of preponderance. It is evident that both in respect to Turkey and China there are large portions which interest Russia much more than England and vice versa. Merely as an illustration, and binding myself to nothing, I would say that the portion of Turkey which drains into the Black Sea, together with the drainage valley of the Euphrates as far as Bagdad, interest Russia much more than England; whereas Turkish Africa, Arabia, and the Valley of the Euphrates below Bagdad interest England much more than Russia. A similar distinction exists in China between the Valley of the Hoango with the territory north of it and the Valley of the Yangtze.

Would it be possible to arrange that where, in regard to these territories our counsels differ, the Power least interested should give way to and assist the other? I do not disguise from myself that the difficulty would be great. Is it insuperable?...⁵⁷

Lord Salisbury had put forward his proposal. Russia refused to counter with anything substantial, except a diplomatic cordiality that meant little.⁵⁸ Russia, supported by Germany and France in the Far East, perceived her strengthened position in China. The Balkan agreement signed with Austria on May 8, 1897 added to her sense of security in European affairs. The British proposals, while

⁵⁷ B.D. I No. 9.

⁵⁸ Temperley and Penson, op. cit. p. 500.

inviting because of their straight forwardness, did not conform to Russia's design, as visualized by St. Petersburg. Lord Salisbury had asked for "a partition of preponderance," but, "no partition of territory"; more important, he was against any "infracton of existing rights." Russia could never have complied with this scheme. The general backward condition of Russia's industry could not compete against the industrial advanced countries in the Chinese market. To protect herself, Russia needed tariff choking barriers, the very opposite of what Lord Salisbury had proposed. Following Germany's example, Russia seized Port Arthur on March 16. England's efforts to come to an understanding with Russia, again had failed.

St. Petersburg's refusal to come to terms with Lord Salisbury did not put an end to England's desire for an agreement. In 1895, there appeared the first of a series of articles, in responsible British magazines, calling for a settlement with Russia: By 1901 this trickle developed into a veritable flood of periodical literature, condemning Germany as England's real enemy and urging for a more friendly attitude to Russia. The anti-German press campaign, had actually begun a little earlier, particularly after the passage of the second German naval law. The National Review led the campaign,

under the direction of its intensely anti-German editor, Mr. Maxse. Other periodicals rapidly joined in their criticism of Germany and their clamour for better relations with Russia. The contributors to these arguments were largely influential journalists, who carried a good deal of prestige. E.J. Dillon attacked British foreign policy bitterly. In May, 1901, Dillon wrote, that by remaining at loggerheads with Russia, England would reap the disadvantages. He was also quite careful, to point out Germany's "supernatural hatred" for England and her "longing for the hour to strike when she may oust us from our political and commercial position in the world." Most important, he raised the point, that "it is a moot question whether the sharp point of Russia's Far Eastern policy is really levelled against Great Britain." Continuing, he wrote:

Why, then, should we wantonly irritate Russia instead of employing the tactics which the German Kaiser has used with such success in his relations towards this country? If enmity with Muscovy is unprofitable, why not try friendship?... In any case, our interests do not clash with Russia's aims to anything like the same extent or with the same degree of intensity as with those of our circumspect ally, Germany.⁵⁹

Sir Rowland Blennerhassett, who shared Mr. Maxse's anti-German views, wrote a trenchant article for the *National Review*, also suggesting a more cordial relationship

⁵⁹ Dillon, *Micawberism in Manchuria*, (*The Contemporary Review*) May, 1901, pp. 649-63.

with Russia. He did not fail to stress that, "For the present, the most constant factor which England has to calculate on in international affairs is the ill-will of the German people." Juxtaposed to this idea, he reasoned that, "The country, however, with which it is of supreme importance that England should have relations as clear and distinct as possible is Russia."⁶⁰

The similarity of the logical pattern followed in these articles is clear and distinct. Stating the threat of German military, naval, political and economic development, the invariable conclusion drawn is the necessity of settling all outstanding disputes with Russia. Calchas, an anonymous writer, who had played a considerable role in the press campaign, stated: "The ruling political fact of the nineteenth century has been the rise of the German Empire--at our expense, as Germans imagine the twentieth century is mainly destined to show." One of the cardinal points to offset this difficult situation, according to Calchas, was:

To settle with Russia by withdrawing opposition in the Near East and in the Far East so far as Manchuria is concerned, would relieve to an extraordinary extent the sense of diplomatic pressure under which the nation and the Foreign Office live now. It would advance Russia's economic development by several generations, it would make a Continental coalition against us impossible, and it ought to be the grand aim of British policy...A better understanding with St. Petersburg is indispensable to the freedom

⁶⁰ Blennerhassett, England and Russia. (The National Review) March 1901, pp. 21-32.

and confidence of our diplomacy.⁶¹

Ignotus, another anonymous writer,. stated, "The interests of Germany clash with ours everywhere; those of Russia hardly anywhere beyond the reach of a friendly understanding."⁶² Perhaps, what is even more striking, was the attitude of Lansdowne; whereas the possibility of an Anglo-Japanese alliance had already entered the realm of serious consideration, the British Government was willing to listen to any Russian proposal, as late as April, 1901. Lansdowne, on April 23, had written to Sir Charles Scott, British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, stating:

Count Lamsdorff has always impressed me favourably, and I am as ready as you are to give him credit for a desire to pursue a conciliatory policy...

Be this, however, as it may, we shall certainly not reject an overture, if one is made to us; and you cannot do wrong in repeating that we wish to be friends, and that we recognize the special interests which Russia possesses in Manchuria.⁶³

The height of the periodical press campaign was reached when an article on "British Foreign Policy", by A.B.C. appeared in the National Review. It, too, opened the argument by referring to the "avowed hostility of Germany, to which even the British official world can no longer

⁶¹ Calchas, Will England Last the Century? (Fortnightly Review) January 1901, pp. 20-34.

⁶² Ignotus, Germany and England (Fortnightly Review) April 1901. pp. 663-674.

⁶³ Lord Newton, Lord Lansdowne, A Biography, p. 215.

remain blind", it went much further in actually outlining a proposed Anglo-Russian understanding. A.B.C. were (apparently the articles were written by a group of persons holding similar opinions) convinced that "raw material for an Anglo-Russian agreement abounds." The proposals for an agreement put forward by A.B.C. fell under three headings:

I. The Near East

With regard to the Near East the basis would be that whilst Russia abstained from any attempt to interfere with the status quo in Egypt, we should frankly recognize that the fulfillment of what Russia regards as her historic mission in the Balkan peninsula conflicts with no vital British interests, and that in Asiatic Turkey we should abstain from favouring the development of German schemes of expansion.

II. Persia and Central Asia

With regard to Persia and Central Asia, we might offer Russia our co-operation in the development of railway communication between the Caspian and the Persian Gulf, and in securing for her a commercial outlet on the Gulf in return for an undertaking on the part of Russia to respect the political status quo along the shores of the Gulf.

III. The Far East

With regard to the Far East the question is necessarily more complicated, as Japan would have to be taken into the counsels of the two Empires and a basis of agreement arrived at which would satisfy her as well as Russia and Great Britain.

As far as Japan is concerned, such a basis might be found in the recognition by Russia and England of the Japanese claim to an exclusive sphere of influence of Korea.

Japan would presumably, in return for this concession, have no objection to a formal agreement under which Great Britain would recognize Russia's claim to regulate her political and commercial position in the Yangtze Valley, each Power binding itself to give no support in those regions to the enterprise of any other Power. With regard to all other questions in China, Great Britain, Russia and Japan would agree to take no steps without mutual consultation.⁶⁴

The general idea was accepted with enthusiasm. The Times approved of the proposals for the settlement in the Far East, but was slightly sceptical about giving Russia a free hand in the Balkans. On the whole, however, the Times supported the A.B.C. campaign.⁶⁵ The French press also expressed a sympathetic attitude.⁶⁶ The reaction in St. Petersburg which was the most important thing, was very disappointing. The special correspondent of the Times in St. Petersburg reported the Novoe Vremya as stating that, "England is not now the important Power she used to be and no longer plays such a leading part in the affairs of the world."⁶⁷ Therefore, Russia saw no reason to enter any agreement with England. Convinced of her strength and stability in the Far East, Russia was prepared to travel the course of expansion alone. The result was final, England had displayed her frank intentions and

⁶⁴ A.B.C. British Foreign Policy (National Review) November 1901, pp. 343-58.

⁶⁵ Times, October 29, 1901. The Times had received advance copies of the article.

⁶⁶ Times, November 23, 1901.

⁶⁷ Times, November 23, 1901.

had been rebuffed. England and Japan were driven together by the obstinate refusal of Russia to come to an agreement. Lord Newton, summing up the situation, wrote:

Thus, wherever Lord Lansdowne looked in 1901 on the continent of Europe he found coolness and hostility. England was isolated, and it was therefore not surprising that the project of an alliance with a non-European Power should now be entertained.⁶⁸

The French had begun to realize the inevitability of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, which in turn, would have considerably affected their position in Europe. Cambon, warned Lansdowne, that England, would only involve herself in the quarrels of Japan. Lansdowne was able to reply, that he had earnestly tried for an understanding with Russia in the Far East, but, having met with no encouragement in St. Petersburg, he had therefore been forced to the opposite extremeity.⁶⁹ A month after the Alliance was made public, Cambon stated to Lansdowne that, "he regretted the conclusion of our Agreement with Japan on the grounds that it rendered more remote the prospect of a good understanding which he had at one time thought might be established between Great Britain and Russia."⁷⁰ Regardless how keen, rivalry grew between France and England, French diplomats never ceased contemplating an Anglo-French-Russian Entente.

⁶⁸ Newton, op. cit., p. 217.

⁶⁹ D.D.F. II, Nos. 88-91.

⁷⁰ B.D. II, No. 135.

The Japanese position after 1902, was immeasurably improved. Tokio was assured that in a war with Russia Great Britain would prevent a second European Power from intervening. In the Far East, the war clouds appeared on the horizon. The Russians sought to counter the Anglo-Japanese Alliance by forming a Continental League on the model of the earlier Eastern Triplice. Berlin would not hear of the plan. The German Foreign Office was still banking on Anglo-Russian conflict, which was to all appearances, nearing its climax. Holstein wrote:

Es in unserem Interesse liegen dürfte, freie Hand zu behalten, damit Seine Majestät der Kaiser die Möglichkeit hat nicht nur für etwaige Unterstützung, sondern selbst für die Fortgewähr der Neutralität angemessene Kompensationen verlangen zu können.⁷¹

Delcassé was well aware of the dangers of a Russo-Japanese War for France. A conflict in Asia would lessen Russia's interest and power in Europe.⁷² The Anglo-Japanese alliance might even cause a major outbreak in Europe. France was not prepared to enter a war with England over a Far Eastern question which did not directly affect her. It was clear that all the benefits of such a conflict would go to Russia while France with her far flung colonial Empire would suffer the full impact of Great Britain's superior navy. Force of logic drove

⁷¹ G.P. XIX (1) No. 5920.

⁷² Renouvin, La Question D'extreme-Orient 1840-1940, p. 220.

France and England together in 1904 to preserve the peace of Europe.⁷³

In 1890-4, the first link in the French policy of establishing an Anglo-French-Russian entente was achieved. The Anglo-French agreement of 1904 was the second link. The final link was to bridge the Anglo-Russian gap. The next three years which were marked by heightened Anglo-Russian tension were paradoxically the formative years of an Anglo-Russian Entente.

⁷³ Taylor, op. cit., p. 404.

III

THE DOGGER BANK INCIDENT

The signing of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, did not put an end to the endeavours of the British Government, to reach an understanding with Russia. As late as February 12, 1902, the Times emphatically declared that the Alliance did not preclude an agreement with Russia. During the years 1903-4, Lansdowne was in constant communication with the Russian Foreign Office. The Russo-Japanese War momentarily interrupted these discussions; nevertheless, they contained the embryonic form which was later to develop into the rapprochement of 1907.

The talks of 1903-4, were not restricted to isolated problems, but encompassed the whole problem of Anglo-Russian relations. Again, the question fell under three main headings: "(1) questions concerning China in which Russia had a special interest (2) questions concerning India, in which Great Britain had a special interest and (3) questions concerning Persia in which both powers were interested."⁷⁴ Hardinge's report to Lansdowne on November 22, 1903, indicated the position of the Russian Government, concerning a settlement. As

⁷⁴ B.D. IV, No. 181 A

before, the two chief difficulties lay in Northern China and Persia, but the difficulties did not appear insurmountable to either Government.⁷⁵

The views of King Edward VII, in relation to Russia, were well known. Even, during the Russo-Japanese War, the King was "as eager as before to supplement the Anglo-French entente by an Anglo-Russian understanding."⁷⁶ During his visit to Copenhagen, on April 14, 1904, in celebration of King Christian's birthday, he met Isvolsky at the British Legation. Isvolsky reported the discussion which he had with King Edward, to Lamsdorff the same day. The opening remarks, reveal some very interesting designs entertained by the King:

Le Roi, qui a reçu ici la nouvelle définitive de la conclusion de l'accord anglo-français, commença par m'exprimer la grande satisfaction qu'il en ressentait et la conviction que cet événement non seulement serait bien faisant pour l'Angleterre et la France mais pourrait aussi avoir la plus heureuse influence sur la politique générale. "Puisqu'en y mettant une bonne volonté 'mutuelle'," me dit Sa Majesté, "on a réussi à régler des litiges qui avaient duré entre l'Angleterre et la France pendant de longues années, cela me donne l'espoir d'arriver par la même méthode à des résultats encore plus importants c'est-à-dire à une entente analogue avec la Russie--entente qui a toujours été et continue à être l'objet de mes plus sincères désirs...mon nouvel Ambassadeur, Sir Charles Hardinge, aura pour instructions de s'appliquer à établir les relations les plus cordiales avec le Gouvernement Russe et de rechercher les moyens d'en arriver à un accord complet sur les questions qui nous divisent sur

⁷⁵ B.D. IV No. 181 B

⁷⁶ Lee, King Edward VII, II p. 283.

les différents points du globe. Je voudrais que le rapprochement qui s'est fait entre l'Angleterre et la France servît de premier pas et, pour ainsi dire, de pont aboutissant à cette autre entente, certainement plus difficile, mais encore plus nécessaire et désirable.⁷⁷

Three weeks later, Benckendorff communicated to Lansdowne, Lamsdorff's views of the King's discussion with Isvolsky. The Russian Government was pleased with the King's proposals and looked forward to "as complete an understanding as possible... as soon as the end of the war offered an opportunity of entering on negotiations on this subject."⁷⁸

After 1895, the desire in England for settlement with Russia had developed steadily, but Russia's stubborn reticence had prevented a rapprochement. When the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was signed, the British Government still continued its efforts to secure agreement with St. Petersburg; one might add, its efforts were almost tireless. The outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War altered the situation considerably. The treaty obligations that England carried in alliance with Japan, prevented further advances of the British Government to Russia. The aggravated international situation caused by the Russo-Japanese War, brought England and Russia closer to the expected conflict, that Europe awaited.

⁷⁷ Lee, op. cit. pp. 284-285.

⁷⁸ B.D. VI No. 184 A and B.

The first sign of acute friction began over the Straits,⁷⁹ in August 1902, when Russia attempted to make use of the Volunteer Fleet. During the Russo-Turkish War, St. Petersburg created the so-called Volunteer Fleet, as a defensive measure, in order to forestall an expected English attack. Theoretically, the Volunteer Fleet was manned by civilian crews subject to naval discipline and training. The two highest officers were always commissioned

⁷⁹ The problem of the Straits, remained a source of conflict between England and Russia throughout the nineteenth century. In 1833, Russia had aided Turkey against the victorious armies of Mehemet Ali, (the protégé of France) and was rewarded for this service by the Treaty of Unkiar Skellesi. Turkey undertook to close the Dardanelles to all enemy fleets, that sought to penetrate the Black Sea. This Treaty was negotiated exclusively for Russia's benefit, in order to protect her southern shores from attack. No individual agreement with Turkey, could help but effect the entire balance of power in Europe. In seven years, the Treaty of Unkiar Skellesi was challenged by Palmerston. The Treaty was modified to the detriment of Russia, by the Treaty of London (1840) and the Straits Convention of 1841. Palmerston recognized the principle of the closure of the Straits, as regards to entry into the Black Sea, but he also forced Russia to accept an addition to this principle, extending to exit from the Black Sea as well. Russia was thus prevented from sending her fleet into the Mediterranean via the Turkish Straits. These principles were again confirmed by the Treaty of Paris in 1856 after Russia's disastrous defeat in the Crimean War. In addition, the Treaty of Paris forbade Russia or Turkey to construct naval fortifications on the Black Sea or to sail ships of war in the area. This Treaty remained in force until 1871, when Russia took advantage of the opportunity to abrogate the distasteful clauses, while France and Germany were locked in conflict. The new London agreement, resulting from Russia's successful abrogation of the Black Sea Clauses, annulled the Provisions of 1856, but introduced the principle, that foreign navies might

by the Government. Whereas in times of peace the ships of the Fleet carried the mercantile flag and engaged in commercial transportation, chiefly between the Black Sea ports and the Far East, during emergencies, they could be placed upon a war footing and be expected to carry out naval duty. The Volunteer Fleet displayed this hybrid character during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, when it was

enter the Straits, if the Sultan judged it necessary for the safeguarding of the other clauses. This was a complete reversal of what Russia had previously striven for. What Russia desired was the sole right to leave or enter the Straits, or the complete closure of the Straits. The principle of the closure of the Straits, in its origin had been, to provide Russia with a "lock and chain" at the Dardanelles. At the Congress of Berlin, England had stated: "Her obligations concerning the Straits were limited to an agreement with the Sultan to respect in this matter only the independent decisions of the Sultan." England did not feel obliged to respect the decision of the Sultan if the latter tried to close the Straits at Russia's request, for such a decision would not be independent. England, Saburov claimed, was reserving the right to enter the Straits and threaten Russia's interests whenever she pleased. Russia's lock and chain would prove valueless, unless she could get the support of Germany and Austria in blocking England's proposal. Bismarck was willing to give this in return for friendly Russian relations. The closure of the Straits to naval warships remained a fixed principle. For the Straits Question see: S.M. Gorai-nov, Le Bosphore et les Dardanelles, (Paris 1910), J.T. Shotwell, A Short History of the Question of Constantinople and the Straits, (International Conciliation No.180, 1922); Buxton and Philipson, The Question of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, (London 1917). W.L. Langer, Russia and Straits Question and European Powers 1904-8, (English Historical Review) January 1928. E.J. Dillon, The Eclipse of Russia, (N.Y. 1918) pp. 231-244.

dispatched to the Far East, as part of the expeditionary force of the Great Powers.⁸⁰ The issue, in August 1902, was the sending of four torpedo-boats through the Straits in order to strengthen the Black Sea Fleet. The Sultan, whose permission was asked, acquiesced, provided that the boats flew the commercial flag; carried no armaments; and passed at intervals of twenty-four hours. Russia accepted these principles in the transport of the boats. Four months later, O'Connor informed the Porte of the abuse of existing Treaty regulations and "announced that Great Britain would demand the same privileges if occasion arose."⁸¹ The situation remained undecided, until rumours in April 1904, indicated that the hard pressed Russian Government, had decided to send the Black Sea Fleet to the critical battle areas of the Far East.⁸² Such a move, would have involved the infringement of Treaties governing the Straits and would also have raised certain questions concerning the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

Previously, Viscount Hayashi had expressed his concern about these rumours, that if the Black Sea Fleet should pass the Straits, they would add considerable weight in the Far East. He questioned Lansdowne, of the attitude that the British Government could be expected

⁸⁰ Roux, La Marine marchande russe, (Revue des deux Mondes) September 1904.

⁸¹ B.D. IV p. 41.

⁸² Lee, op. cit. p. 289.

to take; hoping that, "if there were any question of such an occurrence, they might count upon the 'good offices' of His Majesty's Government."⁸³ Lansdowne refused to make any definite comment other than that the passage of the Fleet through the Straits would be regarded, "as a grave violation of the Treaty engagements entered into with us and other Powers by Russia."⁸⁴ To the French Ambassador, he expressed himself more strongly, stating, "It would be quite impossible for us to acquiesce in such a step, (i.e. to permit passage of the Volunteer Fleet) and, if it were taken, we should be driven to meet it by adequate measures, which might render a collision inevitable."⁸⁵ He also pointed out to Turkey, her Treaty obligations, to prevent the egress of armed vessels through the Dardanelles. Tied down in the Far East, Russia could not hope to carry on a struggle in the Near East. The Volunteer Fleet, as a fighting unit remained bottled up in the Black Sea. Two vessels however, did secure passage through the Straits, after the Russian Government promised that they were to be used exclusively for commercial use. As soon as the Smolensk and the St. Petersburg entered open waters they began a series of captures, interfering with international trade. In the Red Sea,

⁸³ B.D. IV No. 274

⁸⁴ B.D. IV No. 274

⁸⁵ B.D. IV No. 401

the P. and O. steamship Malacca was seized, carrying some munitions for Singapore. The crew and passengers were safely landed at Port Said. St. Petersburg was immediately notified by Lansdowne, demanding release of the Malacca; this was carried out, the ship being docked at Algiers. Another incident in the Far East sent a new wave of indignation through the country. The Knight Commander, a large vessel, bound from New York to Yokohama, was intercepted by Russian ships. The crew was taken aboard a Russian craft and landed in Vladivostock. The British ship was then sunk. The speech delivered by Lansdowne in the House of Lords, indicated the exasperated feeling that was growing in England.⁸⁶ Delcasse, who was extremely sensitive to the situation, impelled St. Petersburg to modify its actions, in order to preserve the peace in Europe.⁸⁷ Direct British threats and active French persuasion convinced the Russian Government of the dangers of pursuing, so hazardous a course. The attacks on neutral shipping stopped.

The expected violation of the Straits by Russia, and the unlawful interference with neutral shipping, followed hard upon one another. Indignant public feeling in England against Russia, because of these hostile

⁸⁶ Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, Vol. CXXXVIII, 1433-6.

⁸⁷ D.D.F. V Nos. 221-9.

acts, was reinforced by the Alliance with Japan, who was then engaged with Russia in a decisive struggle for predominance in Asia. The mutual antagonism of the two wing-States seemed to near its logical climax, in the disturbed atmosphere of international relations.

The war in the Far East had proved to be a series of disasters for Russia. The Russian high command saw their last chance in securing the control of the Seas by superior naval power. The Black Sea Fleet could not be utilized because of the Straits convention, which was enforced by England, the greatest naval power and the ally of Japan. St. Petersburg, therefore, decided to send the Baltic Fleet, under Admiral Rojestvenki, to the Far East in one last desperate attempt to stem the Japanese tide. The expedition had been suggested by a nationalistic outburst of public opinion. Unfortunately, the demand though opposed by the more level-headed bureaucrats and naval officers, was endorsed by the Tsar.

What followed was the most grotesque incident in Anglo-Russian relations. The Baltic Fleet making its laborious way from Libau, in the Baltic, and down through the North Sea on the night of October 21, ran into an English fishing fleet. Immediately, the Russian battleships opened fire on two of their own vessels as well as on the trawlers. One boat was sunk, two fishermen were killed and eighteen wounded. The incident seemed to be

the powder keg that would bring the threatened explosion in Anglo-Russian relations.

How such an absurd situation could have occurred, can best be understood by examining the prevailing mood and feeling in Russia. The gross negligence and inefficiency, which later proved to be the root of the tragedy, was the expression of a people witnessing the social disintegration of an empire;⁸⁸ embroiled in a war that clearly indicated defeat and ruin, all sense of proportion and reason vanished. The scene was laid for the most droll historical fantasy. Count Witte describing the emotional feeling in Russia, during that critical period wrote:

After the defeat at Mukden, the people, who are guided not by reason but by all manner of mystic impulses, conceived the hope of changing the destinies of war in our favour by sending our Baltic fleet to the Far East. They believed that under the command of Admiral Rozhdestvensky our Baltic fleet would defeat the Japanese. Of course it was a wild fantasy. It was a thoughtless plan, dictated by hope rather than by cold reason. It was clear to every sane observer that the fleet was doomed.⁸⁹

Perhaps it would have been more accurate to say "dictated by despair" rather than "by hope". Not only the Russian home population, but her fighting men, as well, showed a foreboding despair and suspicion of the developing events.

⁸⁸ Taylor, op. cit. p. 248: "Turkey, Austria-Hungary, and Russia were all three, in their different ways, 'ram-shackle empires', competing for first place on the road to ruin."

⁸⁹ Witte, The Memoirs of Count Witte, p. 132.

Eugene S. Politovsky who was Engineer-in-Chief to the squadron (later killed at the Battle of Tsushima) kept a sort of diary, which he mailed, as regularly as possible, to his wife in Russia. Actually these letters were never meant for publication, but were purely private and subjective reports of how the situation and the voyage seemed to him. Fortunately these letters have been published and form an invaluable source of information concerning Admiral Rojestvenski's Baltic Fleet.

Politovsky's opening pages of his diary clearly indicate the lurking suspicion that seemed to have filled the Russian mind during that crucial period. Suspicion and anxiety formed the psychological atmosphere throughout the Fleet. At times, it bordered on panic. The Times reported Danish papers as stating: "Russian officers showed much nervousness during the passage of the Baltic fleet through the narrow Danish waters. The Russians were afraid of Japanese mines."⁹⁰ Anchoring off Bornholm, on the long voyage to the Far East, Politovsky entered in his diary:

October 3 (old style)...To night there will be danger. We shall all sleep in our clothes and all guns will be loaded. We shall pass through a narrow strait. We are afraid of striking on Japanese mines in these waters.

⁹⁰ Times, October 24, 1904. The Dogger Bank incident was not reported until October 24.

Perhaps there will be no mines; but considering that long ago Japanese officers went to Sweden and, it is said swore to destroy our fleet, we must be on our guard. This strait is eminently suitable for torpedo-boat attacks or for laying down mines.⁹¹

After the occurrence of the attack on the Hull Trawlers, the British Government, through diplomatic channels, enquired of several Governments of countries bordering the North Sea and Baltic, whether they had previous knowledge of Japanese activities in those areas or whether they had agreed to supply torpedoes or mines to the Japanese Government. The answers were invariably in the negative.⁹² Count Metternich, the German Ambassador, in London, telegraphed Berlin on October 13:

I am informed on reliable authority that if the Russian Black Sea fleet sails, mines are to be laid in the Sound and Cattegat by agents in Japanese employment.

I beg that this warning may be communicated to the Russian Government. (Bulow: Has anything been done about this?)

German Note. Richthofen replied: On A/16/288 nothing has been done by me, since (1) the information given did not seem certain enough to be passed on, and (2) passing it on to the Russian Government did not appear to me compatible with our neutrality.^{92A}

Later on the same day, Politovsky made another entry in his diary:

October 3, 4 P.M.... We are steaming with the greatest precaution. The fleet is split into several divisions, steaming at a certain distance from one another. Each division is sur-

⁹¹ Politovsky, From Libau to Tsushima, pp. 3-4.

⁹² British House of Commons, Command Paper 2328, pp. 14-15; 30-31.

^{92A} Dugdale, German Diplomatic Documents 1871-1914, Vol. III, p. 182.

rounded by torpedo-boats. Whenever a steamer or sailing-ship is observed on our course or coming toward us, a torpedo-boat goes ahead and clears the way--that is drives them aside.⁹³

Caution is ever an asset, but the extremes that the Fleet went to bordered on the pathological. Four days later Politovsky made another entry:

October 7...At three o'clock a Swedish steamer approached the fleet, flying a signal that she had very important dispatches. Apparently the Russian agent reported that a very suspicious three-masted sailing ship had sailed from the fiords. An order has now been given to train all guns on every passing vessel. We met ships hitherto, but the torpedo-boats always drove them out of the way. We have already passed the most dangerous spots. Half an hour ago it was reported to the Admiral that either the Navarin or the Nachimoff (I do not remember which) had signalled that they had seen two balloons. What can this be? Can it be the Japanese?⁹⁴

The suspicion constantly grew that the Japanese were lying in wait, prepared to attack whenever the Fleet should show itself off guard. Tension continued to mount in the Fleet. The evening of the same day Politovsky wrote:

8 p.m. ...Panic prevails on board. Every one examines the sea intently. The weather is glorious. It is warm. There is moonlight. The slightest suspicious-looking spot in the water is carefully watched. The guns are loaded. The crew are standing about on deck. One half will sleep at their guns without undressing; the other half and officers will keep watch to-night. It is curious that we

⁹³ Politovsky, op. cit. p. 4.

⁹⁴ Politovsky, op. cit. pp. 9-10.

are so far from the theatre of war and yet so much alarmed. The crew treat the matter seriously.⁹⁵

On the night before the attack on the Hull Fishing Fleet, he mentions the first emergency that the Fleet encountered:

October 20 (New Style) 9 p.m. ...A signal has just been received (by wireless telegraphy) that the Kamchatka, which had dropped astern, was attacked by torpedo boats...

10 p.m. ...The Kamchatka reports that she is attacked on all sides by eight torpedo-boats.⁹⁶

The final inquiry into the affair established the fact that the Kamchatka had fallen behind the Fleet by approximately ten miles owing to engine trouble. Isolated from the Fleet, the Captain and crew were extremely nervous, anticipating imminent attack. Incorrect and panicky messages, sent by the Captain of the Kamchatka to Admiral Rojestvenski, so alarmed the Fleet, that it "perhaps, incidentally" caused the events "which followed".⁹⁷

On the following night, as the Fleet continued its voyage it approached the Dogger Bank, an extensive submarine shelf 170 miles long by 70 miles wide, situated sixty miles from the English coast. The Dogger Bank had been an active fishing area in the North Sea.⁹⁸ The English fishing fleets were in the area pursuing their busi-

⁹⁵ Politovsky, op. cit., p. 10.

⁹⁶ Politovsky, op. cit., p. 12.

⁹⁷ Report of the Commissioners, drawn up in accordance with Article 6 of the Declaration of St. Petersburg of the 12th of November, 1904. A. & P., CIII, (Cd. 2350).

⁹⁸ There are several large fleets, permanently at sea all

ness, and in full accordance with international sailing regulations. Politovsky, after the attack, entered in his diary:

October 21 ...About 1 a.m. they sounded off quarters having seen ships ahead. They let the ships get nearer and then there began...

What it was words fail to describe! All the ships of our division were ablaze. The noise of the firing was incessant. The searchlights were turned on. I was on the after bridge and was positively blinded and deafened by the firing...

A small steamer was rolling helplessly on the sea. One funnel, a bridge, and the red and black paint on her side were clearly visible. I saw no one on deck--they had probably hidden themselves below in terror. First one, and then another projectile from our ship struck this unfortunate steamer. I saw there was an explosion. The order to cease firing was given, but the other ships continued to fire and no doubt sank the steamer.⁹⁹

the year round fishing on the Dogger Bank. These fleets number from a 100 to a 150 vessels. Each boat is ketch-rigged, from 65 to 95 tons. The boats are manned by crews of five or six. The crews receive small standing wages and a commission. The greater proportion of the boats are owned by companies, although there are some individual owners. The leading skipper in a fleet is known as the "Admiral" and the entire fishing operation is carried out in obedience to signals from his ship. The Admiral's duties are to select the ground over which the fleet shall fish, and to signal when the trawl is to be shot, and when hauled. His orders are issued in the daytime by means of a flag and at night by rockets.

The vessels fish in fleets with a view to saving expenses. If each individual vessel were to carry its fish to market, there would be a great loss of time. If they would store it, ice would have to be provided to keep the fish from spoiling, and this item would lower profits considerably. By fishing in fleets, one vessel a day is sufficient to carry the fish to market, and the owners of the fleets provide steamers for this purpose. Fishing is generally carried on at night, continuing all the year round.

⁹⁹ Politovsky, op. cit., p. 13.

An hour and a half later Politovsky learned that, not only had foreign ships been attacked but vessels of the Baltic Fleet as well:

2:30 a.m. ...What a misfortune! A signal has come from the Aurora, "Four-underwater shot-holes, funnels torn, the Chaplain severely wounded, and a captain of gun slightly."

Our division fired on the Aurora. She and the Dimitry Donskoi were detached (we are in six divisions) At the time of the firing on the steamers the men lost their heads. Probably some one took her to be Japanese and fired on her with the six-inch guns; she was very far off. A very sad occurrence.¹⁰⁰

When this "sad occurrence" became generally known, a veritable fury of outraged public opinion burst forth in England. King Edward minuted the telegram, sent to the Foreign Office announcing the attack, as "a most dastardly outrage".¹⁰¹ Lord Rosebery proclaimed, "an unspeakable outrage". Lansdowne immediately sent a dispatch to Hardinge, in St. Petersburg, informing him of the attack and instructing him to explain to Count Lamsdorff, "of what has occurred and say that it is impossible to exaggerate the indignation that has been provoked... The matter is one which admits of no delay."¹⁰² The Times foreign correspondents reported the foreign press, as expressing their complete amazement over the unprovoked attack of Admiral Rojestvenski's Fleet. They were all, quite in agreement that England had suffered an outrageous

¹⁰⁰ Politovsky, op. cit., pp. 13-15.

¹⁰¹ B.D. IV No. 5.

¹⁰² B.D. IV No. 6.

assault by the blundering Baltic Fleet.¹⁰³ The Times also reported that Count Lamsdorff had made personal statements that, upon further investigation, if the Baltic Fleet was found in the wrong, Russia would promptly make full reparations to the British Government.¹⁰⁴

A deputation of fishermen, who were in closest reach to the centre of attack, were brought to the Foreign Office in London to furnish the authorities with as much information on the attack as possible. Captain John Fletcher, of the carrier Swift, described the incident as follows:

The Swift reached the Dogger Bank on Friday night, and we immediately started fishing. The weather was hazy but not what we should call thick. You might have seen lights easily a quarter of a mile off, though the ships carrying them might be invisible. We were just to the north-westward of the fishing fleet, and had our fishing gear down when the strange lights appeared. The vessels carrying them had then evidently become aware of the presence of the fishing fleet, for they came towards us at the rate of only about three or four miles an hour. I was, owing to our position to the northward, about the first to see these men-of-war. In ten minutes or so after I sighted them they were amongst us and stopped. Our fishing fleet had all their regulation lights burning--the duplex fishing signal at the masthead, the white light below it, the green light on the starboard, the red on the port side, and a white light at the stern. The Russian fleet, which lay in a line south-west and north-east, heading south-west, began to use their flashlights to examine our

¹⁰³ Times, October 25, 1904.

¹⁰⁴ Times, October 24, 25, 1904.

vessels and then to fire their guns. I thought it was simply blank shots to warn us to stand off, more especially as our admiral immediately sent up two green rockets advising us to bear to starboard as he was doing as much as possible for us with our trawls down. I had altered course towards the west so as to give the warships a wider berth when a shell struck the water a few feet from our port bow, and bursting gave us a drenching. I shouted to the crew that the warships were firing shell, so that they might lie down. I stuck to the bridge, but took care to get behind the funnel and ventilator so that I might at least have them between me and damage. The firing lasted from a quarter of an hour to twenty minutes, and another shot whizzed between the wires over the bridge a foot or two from my head. We could see the flash of the guns of four different ships. They at last stopped firing and then resumed their course, going off much faster than they came and, indeed, soon disappearing in the haze and darkness, without troubling themselves in the least about the damage they had done.¹⁰⁵

Another Captain, of the Magpie, made the following statement:

You ask if it was possible for any one to mistake our ships for torpedo-boats. It is impossible. It must be remembered that there were not less than 160 fishing boats, and through the midst of these the fleet of warships passed. The whole affair did not last more than twenty minutes. I first saw the fleet, which was in line, owing to the flashing signals presumably from the flagship. Then searchlights were turned on us, and then the firing began...not a quarter of their shots could have taken effect. When the firing ceased the ships disappeared as quickly as they first came into view.¹⁰⁶

The publication of the scanty facts of the attack on the

¹⁰⁵ Times, October 25, 1904.

¹⁰⁶ Times, October 25, 1904.

Hull fishing fleet produced increased irritation within the Nation, calling for swift action on the part of the Government. The city of Hull sent the following telegram to the Prime Minister:

Greatest indignation prevails here at unprecedented and wanton attack on Hull fishing fleet by Russian warships, resulting in loss of valuable lives. We appeal to the Government to take the speediest and strongest measures possible to ensure full redress and a complete security against further Russian outrages.¹⁰⁷

Intense indignation did not confine itself to the city of Hull. In London, a large crowd of people awaited Count Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador, who was expected back from Germany. When the train arrived at ten o'clock his carriage was immediately surrounded by the hooting crowd. Fortunately for the Ambassador, a special squad of police were stationed in the area, prepared for such an event. The crowd was dispersed and the carriage proceeded to the Embassy.¹⁰⁸

On the eve of the 25th, the Liverpool Philharmonic Society, in presenting its program in advance, announced that Sen̄r Sarasate would play a medley of Russian songs for the violin. At the last moment, this piece was dropped. Tchaikovsky's Slavonic March was omitted as well, so as to "avoid giving occasion for a hostile demonstration or

¹⁰⁷ Times, October 26, 1904.

¹⁰⁸ Times, October 26, 1904.

hurting the susceptibilities of the audience."¹⁰⁹

Joseph Conrad, in a long and biting letter to the Times, criticized the officers of the Baltic Fleet for "colossal stupidity or inconceivable malevolence".¹¹⁰ Criticism of the Russian Navy also came from quarters that were considered friendly or in favour of closer relationship with Russia; although it may be added that the well-balanced statements of Grey and Lord Salisbury, condemning the outrage, kept public feeling within reasonable bounds. Grey, speaking at Cornhill-upon-Tweed, elaborated upon the North Sea outrage, but went on to say that though there had been unpleasant incidents before, he had seen no real signs that Russia wanted to pick a quarrel with us, and that he was confident that, in this case, the Russian Government, which he believed was anxious to continue our friend, would at once make the fullest reparations in its power.¹¹¹ On October 25, Count Lamsdorff called at the British Embassy conveying a message from the Czar who "wished to express his sincere regret to the King and the Government for the sad loss of life that had occurred," to say that he would take steps to afford complete satisfaction to the sufferers

¹⁰⁹ Times, October 26, 1904.

¹¹⁰ Times, October 26, 1904.

¹¹¹ Times, October 26, 1904.

as soon as the circumstances of the case were cleared up.¹¹² Two days later, the Times reported that a subscription drive had opened under the direction of the Journal de St. Petersburg for the victims of the North Sea disaster. The Journal had gone on to say that it considered the Incident not only as a British, but as a Russian calamity as well.¹¹³

The message sent by the Tsar, expressing his sympathies and apology for the Incident was well received in England. What was considered inexcusable was the manner in which the Russian Admiral continued his voyage without regard for the injured fishermen and without immediately informing the British Government or his own of the Incident. The King replied to the Tsar's message:

...What has caused me and my Country so painful an impression is that your Squadron did not stop to offer assistance to the wounded, as searchlights must have revealed to your Admiral that the ships were British fishing vessels. ¹¹⁴

Feeling grew that an apology was insufficient. "Mere apologies to us will not suffice. Some punishment must be meted out to the Russian officers," wrote the King.¹¹⁵ Lansdowne informed Hardinge, that he had spoken to the Russian Ambassador and had demanded ample and the fullest reparations to the sufferers. Lastly, the British Government would consider as indispensable a searching in-

¹¹² Times, October 26, 1904.

¹¹³ Times, October 26, 1904.

¹¹⁴ Lee, op. cit., pp. 301-302.

¹¹⁵ Lee, Ibid., p. 302.

quiry so as to establish who was to blame for the "culpable blunder."¹¹⁶ On October 26, Count Benckendorff visited Lansdowne and explained that measures had been taken for the purpose of intercepting the Russian Fleet at Vigo so as to acquire full information as of the incident. Lansdowne replied that it was absolutely necessary that an official statement should appear in the newspaper by the next day. He also insisted that the Russian Fleet should be intercepted at Vigo because, "If it were allowed to continue its journey without calling at Vigo, we might find ourselves at war before the week was over." His reason for this strong statement was that:

We could not admit that the Russian Fleet should be allowed to proceed upon its voyage, carrying with it persons who were responsible for the North Sea incident: their departure would not only enable them to elude justice but would also render it impossible to obtain conclusive results from the enquiry which the Russian Government had promised to undertake.¹¹⁷

The Russian Ambassador drafted a telegram for St. Petersburg, in Lansdowne's presence, explaining that the British Government regarded the immediate trial of the officers responsible for the Incident as absolutely necessary. On the same day, Lansdowne received an apology from Count Benckendorff on behalf of the Russian Govern-

¹¹⁶ B.D. IV No. 12.

¹¹⁷ B.D. IV No. 13.

ment. Accepting the apology, Lansdowne added, that the British Government could not be satisfied with this alone but insisted upon appropriate punishment for the guilty persons.¹¹⁸

The only explanation offered by the Russian Government for the attack was that the panic stricken officers considered themselves justified in treating as enemy, any vessel encountered on the route to the Far East.¹¹⁹ The French Press carried statements by Admiral Rojestvenski stating that his actions were in accordance with the instructions that he had received before sailing. Lansdowne immediately objected to such a doctrine as the presence of the Russian Fleet would be a menace to neutral shipping in any area which it might pass.¹²⁰ On October 27, the Russian Ambassador was notified by Lansdowne that the explanation offered by the Admiral was unacceptable; he then proceeded to outline the three demands of the British Government which would have to be met, if the crisis was to be averted:

(1) Before Russian Fleet leaves Vigo enquiry to be made by Russian authorities as to persons responsible for attack on fishing fleet. All these to be left behind, as well as any others whose testimony is essential to elucidation of facts.

(2) A full inquiry to be held at once as to the facts by an independent Court with an international character. Procedure might be laid down in Articles IX to XIV of Hague Convention, and commission might be formed of

¹¹⁸ B.D. IV No. 13 Enclosure II.

¹¹⁹ B.D. IV No. 13 Enclosure II.

¹²⁰ B.D. IV No. 20

naval officers of high rank representing the two Powers concerned and, say, three other Powers.

(3) Russian Government to undertake to punish adequately any persons found guilty by Commission.¹²¹

On October 26, Campbell-Bannerman addressed a Liberal meeting at Norwich, he referred to what he termed, "the unparalleled and cruel outrage perpetrated by the Russian fleet on our fishermen", and said he, "was glad the Government had at once called for apology and reparation."¹²²

The following day the Times wrote:

The passing of another twenty-four hours without any substantive reply from Russia to our demands for reparation has undoubtedly greatly aggravated the situation, which now must be described as extremely grave...the tick of national indignation is steadily and rapidly rising...With the insolent and brutal comments of the Russian Press we need not concern ourselves, save to remark that, if they reflect the sentiments of the ruling classes in Russia, war could be but a question of hours... Now for the first time, the blood of the masses is fired...¹²³

When the King had seen the manner in which the Press had attacked the incident he modified his attitude, fearing that continued bellicose threats might lead to war. He immediately wired to Lansdowne on October 28, "Strongly deprecate pressing for punishment of Admiral. Russia could not accept such a humiliation."¹²⁴

¹²¹ B.D. IV No. 14

¹²² Times, October 26, 1904.

¹²³ Times, October 27, 1904.

¹²⁴ Lee, op. cit., p. 303.

He wrote again to Lansdowne on the following day:

I feel convinced in my own mind that the Russians are anxious now to make any "amende honorable" consonant with their own dignity, so I think we should endeavour to meet them half way. The Press has become so violent that it may drag us into a war before we know where we are, and war between Russia and Great Britain would be so serious a calamity that we can hardly think of its possibility ...I am convinced that an International Commission as suggested from St. Petersburg is the only way out of the difficulty, but on calm reflection I feel sure that the Russian Admiral did take some of the vessels of our steam trawling fleet for Japanese torpedo-boats or destroyers and opened fire at once, probably from superior orders that he had received in consequence of the scare about Japanese boats endeavouring to destroy the Russian Squadron on their way to the Far East. Excuse these hurried lines, but I am anxious that you should receive them this evening.¹²⁵

King Edward was anxious not to drive Russia into an embarrassing situation, from which she would not be able to negotiate. Already, on October 27, Count Lamsdorff had informed Hardinge, that British demands for trial and punishment of the guilty persons were "humiliating and unacceptable to a Great Power."¹²⁶

On the same day an official report of Admiral Rojestvenski's was communicated to the British Foreign Office explaining the North Sea incident as:

Occasioned by the action of two torpedo-boats which steamed at full speed under cover of

¹²⁵ Lee, op. cit., p. 303-4.

¹²⁶ B.D. IV No. 15.

the night, and shewing no lights, towards the ship which was leading our detachment. It was only after our searchlights had been turned on that it was remarked that a few small steam craft bearing a resemblance to trawlers were present.

The detachment made every effort to spare these craft, and ceased firing as soon as the torpedo-boats had disappeared from sight.

Our ships refrained from giving assistance to the trawlers on account of their apparent complicity which they manifested by their persistence in attempting to pass through our line.¹²⁷

After examining the telegram, Lansdowne explained to Benckendorff that, "the version given by the Admiral was one which would not carry the slightest conviction with it in this country." He questioned the possibility of finding Japanese torpedo-boats in the middle of the North Sea, thousands of miles from home waters, and added that the British Government still demanded a searching inquiry of the persons responsible for the attack. He suggested, therefore, that the Admiral, leave behind at Vigo those individuals responsible for the attack. The investigations could then be entrusted to an independent Court possessing an international character.¹²⁸ Two days previously, the Admiralty was ordered to send six battleships and all armoured cruisers and available Destroyers to Gibraltar. On October 27, further instructions were relayed to the Vice-Admiral of the Channel Fleet at

¹²⁷ B.D. IV, No. 16.

¹²⁸ B.D. IV, No. 16.

Gibraltar, explaining that, "It may become necessary for you to stop the Baltic Fleet, by persuasion if possible, but by force if necessary."¹²⁹ Persuasion was explained to mean six battleships, four armoured cruisers, and all available destroyers from the Mediterranean. The British Admiralty had hoped that by surrounding the Baltic Fleet with an overwhelming number of fighting ships the Russian Navy would not appear dishonoured in yielding to British demands at Vigo.¹³⁰

The next day, Hardigne in St. Petersburg received a communique of the following telegram which had been sent to Benkendorff in London:

Desiring to throw as much light as possible on what has passed in North Sea our august Master considers it useful to submit the scrupulous examination of this question to an international commission of enquiry as foreshadowed by the Convention of the Hague. By supreme order Your Excellency is invited to propose this mode of solution to the British Government.¹³¹

On the same day, Count Benckendorff informed Lansdowne that Admiral Rojestvenski had been instructed to remain at Vigo.¹³² The Russian Government was preparing to yield, but under the condition that any arrangement agreed upon should not give the British Government control of the

¹²⁹ B.D. IV, No. 19.

¹³⁰ B.D. IV, No. 19, Enclosure No. 2.

¹³¹ B.D. IV, No. 20

¹³² B.D. IV, No. 20.

proceedings. In a conversation with the Russian Ambassador, Lansdowne asked Count Benckendorff, since the British Government had accepted the Russian proposal, whether he could authorize the Prime Minister to make a statement concerning Russia in this manner:

"The Russian Government, on hearing of the North Sea incident, at once expressed its profound regrets. The Russian Emperor telegraphed to the King in the same sense.

"The Russian Government also promised the most liberal compensation.

"They have now ordered the detention at Vigo of that part of the Fleet which was concerned in the incident, in order that the Naval Authorities may ascertain what officers were responsible for the incident.

"These officers and any material witnesses will not proceed with the Fleet on its voyage to the Far East.

"An enquiry will be instituted into the facts. The Russian Government consider that for this purpose it would be useful to entrust this inquiry to an international commission of the kind provided for by the Hague Convention.

"Any person found guilty by this tribunal will be tried by the Russian Government and punished adequately.

"The Russian Government undertake that precaution will be taken to guard against the recurrence of such incidents, and with this object special instructions will be issued to the whole Russian Fleet, so as to secure neutral commerce from all risk.

Count Benckendorff agreed that Lansdowne could so authorize the Prime Minister.¹³³

Hardinge meanwhile had received an invitation for a private audience with the Tsar on October 31.

¹³³ B.D. IV, No. 20.

Nicholas expressed his general satisfaction with the proceedings but hastened to add two complaints. He objected to the threatening attitude of the Press, and particularly the naval preparations that the British Government had organized against the Baltic Fleet.¹³⁴ An entry in Politovsky's diary reveals the tension that existed between the two fleets in the Mediterranean:

The English ships escorted us all night. They are now steaming on each side of us...When our ships stopped the English probably took it for a hostile demonstration. They quickly assembled astern of our division and formed in battle order. Horrid folk! They are Russia's eternal enemy. They are cunning, powerful at sea and insolent everywhere.¹³⁵

A further dispatch of Hardinge's to Lansdowne described the general comment in St. Petersburg concerning British Naval action. Hardinge considered the proceedings to establish an International Commission of Enquiry as satisfactory, though advancing somewhat slowly. The naval measures undertaken by the British Government, he felt would only, "create a very bad impression in Russia and, if repeated, might even constitute a serious danger to the maintenance of peace." He went on to point out that even circles generally well disposed towards England showed great irritation at the unfriendly action.

¹³⁴ B.D. IV, No. 24.

¹³⁵ Politovsky, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

He therefore, urged greater caution at a moment when Russia appeared willing to reach a settlement on the issue. The remaining part of the dispatch was devoted to explaining public opinion in Russia and its possible effects on both the Russo-Japanese War and Anglo-Russian relations. Hardinge suggested that England was becoming the symbol of Russia's defeat to the Russian masses. "The educated classes consider that, had there been no Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Japan would never have dared to go to war with Russia." Identifying England as the real enemy of Russia, widespread feeling developed that a decisive thrust at England by invading Afghanistan and India would win Russia a preponderating influence in the Far East. The reactionary elements led by the Grand Dukes helped in propagating this idea, so as to divert the attention of the masses from the immediate difficulties and poverty that affected regions where the reserves had been mobilized. He continued:

If such a war occurred, I feel convinced that the first opportunity would be seized by the Russian Government to patch up peace with Japan and thus put an end to an extremely unpopular war, and so free the Russian Army to concentrate its entire energy and forces in a determined attack on India. The network of railways converging on Orenburg and the Caspian make the transport of troops and war material a task of small difficulty as compared with those experienced in Manchuria, and the casus foederis upon which the Anglo-Japanese Alliance is based would not arise if

the casus belli were found to exist in an incident similar to that which occurred in the North Sea.

Although the danger of our country being plunged into war appears for the moment to have been happily averted, it is I regret to say, more than probable that some fresh incident may before long occur by which public opinion may become once more inflamed, and in drawing Your Lordship's attention to the very excitable frame of mind of Russian public opinion, I would venture to point out the great risk which may at any moment be incurred of a long and costly war by an action having the semblance of menace or humiliation, the Russian Government being at the present moment exceptionally sensitive as to their dignity as a Great Power owing to their reverses in the Far East and to their prescience of the possibly still more hopeless position in which they may find themselves before many weeks are over if a decisive victory is not achieved.¹³⁶

The report was minuted by King Edward, "A very interesting dispatch and one that raises serious reflections for certain eventualities." Within two weeks after the Foreign Office had received Hardinge's report, agreement was reached between London and St. Petersburg for the details governing an International Commission of Enquiry.¹³⁷

The investigation which followed was the first instance of an International Commission of Inquiry; this

¹³⁶ B.D. IV, No. 26.

¹³⁷ One point which caused considerable friction between the two Governments, resulted from the second article of the British draft proposal, which read: "The Commission shall enquire into and report upon all the circumstances attending the disaster in the North Sea and particularly as to where the responsibility for the disaster lies and the degree of blame which attaches to those upon whom that responsibility is found to rest." At first the Russian Government attempted to have the word "respon-

form of investigation differs in many respects from an Arbitration Court. A Commission of Inquiry only reports upon a case, leaving the parties free to act on the report or not, whereas in the case of an Arbitration Court the litigants have bound themselves to act by the findings.¹³⁸

The Commission was constituted by five Admirals, named respectively by the two Powers in controversy: Dubassov by Russia, Beaumont by Great Britain, Fournier by France, von Spauen by Austria-Hungary, and Davis by the United States. Admiral Fournier of France was chosen President of the Commission. The legal adviser of Great

sibility" omitted. This was rejected by the British Foreign Office. Then the Russians objected to the word blame, which they claimed in French (Blâme), carried with it the idea of punishment, and its proper equivalent in English was probably 'censure'." Again the British Foreign Office refused to consider altering the text that was previously approved by the Tsar. Finally St. Petersburg accepted the British draft except for two additional lines which were added to the second article by Russian choice. Article II now read: "La Commission devra faire un enquête et dresser un rapport sur toutes les circonstances relatives à l'incident de la Mer du Nord, en particulier, sur la question où gît la responsabilité et sur le degré de blâme concernant les ressortissants des deux Hautes Parties contractantes ou d'autres pays, dans le cas où leur responsabilité se trouverait constatée par l'enquête." Because the subjects of other countries were mentioned as well as Russia, the Russians felt the word blame was no longer aimed at their officers alone. See Appendix I for the draft agreement for the International Commission of Enquiry.

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Fry, A Memoir of Sir Edward Fry, pp. 280-2.

Britain was the distinguished jurist, Sir Edward Fry, that of Russia the informed writer and diplomat, Baron Taube.

The Inquiry opened on January 19, 1905 in one of the large halls of the Palais d'Orsay in Paris. After long sessions of examining various member of the Hull Fishing Fleet and the Baltic Fleet the report was presented on February 25, 1905. The findings generally favoured the British contentions that the act was unwarranted, but the verdict was softened by vague and somewhat incongruous remarks in favour of Admiral Rojestvenski. The most important paragraph of the report was the following:

The act of firing on the fishing fleet when no torpedo-boats were present was in the opinion of the majority of the Commissioners, unjustifiable. The Russian Commissioner dissents from this view and holds that the action of unknown vessels was responsible for what happened. The majority consider that the firing, even accepting the Russian version, was unduly prolonged, The Fishing fleet was in no way guilty of hostile action.

The Commission took into account that the Russian transport Kamchatka, which was delayed by a break down of her machinery and had later signaled to the Admiral that she was attacked by torpedo-boats, may have caused the events which followed. Therefore, the majority of Commissioners considered that Admiral Rojestvenski's precautions were not excessive under the circumstance. To ease the situation

still more:

The Commissioners unanimously recognized that Admiral Rojestvenski did all he could from the commencement to the end to prevent the trollers from being the objects of fire from the Russian squadron. The Commissioners were unanimous that under the circumstances preceeding the firing incident, that there was such uncertainty in regard to the danger of this squadron as to warrant Admiral Rojestvenski in continuing his route. However, the majority regretted that the Admiral did not inform the neighbouring maritime Powers of what had occurred.

and lastly:

The Commissioners declared their views, as formulated, are not of a nature to cast any disrespect upon the military valour or upon the sentiments of humanity of Admiral Rojestvenski and the personnel of his squadron.¹³⁹

Russia had agreed, in advance, regardless of the decision of the Commission, to indemnify the Hull fishermen. In accordance with this pledge, "£65,000 was paid by Russia to the British Government on March 9, 'in full satisfaction of all claims for compensation to the sufferers from the incidents of the 21st October.'" ¹⁴⁰

The general manner in which Lansdowne handled the Dogger Bank affair and the ensuing negotiations, was correct and prompt. The British Government was in a position to deal harshly with the Baltic Fleet; instead the stable and persistent attitude of Lansdowne turned a crisis fraught with danger, into a problem solved by

¹⁴⁰ B.D. IV, p. 38.

peaceful means. The Dogger Bank settlement was indeed, a reflection of Lansdowne's admirable diplomatic abilities. It also, indicated Great Britain's sincere desire to come to a full agreement with Russia at the zenith of Anglo-Russian rivalry.

IV

THE DOGGER BANK INCIDENT AND ITS EFFECTS ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The formation of the Franco-Russian Alliance completed the division of the European Continent into two hostile camps. To all appearances, Great Britain in her 'splendid isolation' seemed to be the deciding factor in any future development. By throwing her weight on the side of the Dual Alliance or on the side of the Central Powers, it was obvious she could bring down the balance sufficiently, to ensure a military or political victory. In reality, this was not entirely correct. England could control the balance of power in Europe and therefore, remain the deciding factor in any grouping of powers, providing the two Continental Groups would allow her to play this role. Unfortunately for England they would not.

In the closing years of the 1880's, extra-European interests began to play an ever growing part in international affairs; one might say that the European problem was receding into the background. Africa, Asia, and the South Pacific were the new regions that attracted the attention of European diplomats. In these new areas, France, Russia, and Germany pushed forward relentlessly;

all simultaneously, running into headlong collision with the world's greatest Power--Great Britain:

With the shift of interest to world affairs there was, from the very outset, danger of collaboration between the two alliance groups against their common rival, England. The idea of a continental league was somewhat nebulous and, as it proved, there were insurmountable obstacles in the way of its realization. But that does not mean that it did not on occasion function informally or that England did not sense the threat. Co-operation between the continental powers always implied the possibility of a pooling of naval forces, which would have created for England a danger of the first magnitude.¹⁴¹

Lord Salisbury, who had considerable faith in British isolation,¹⁴² did not object to reaching a concrete agreement with European Powers in the face of growing tension and instability in international relations. The younger British Statesmen had even less faith than he in isolationism, and showed an even greater desire to prevent England from falling victim to a coalition of the three great Continental Powers. In order to ease pressure on England and to avert the manoeuvres of a possibly serious coalition, they became willing to agree on a territorial settlement and on a common policy with any State that showed a willingness to cooperate. The Anglo-German talks at the turn of the century had failed so completely, as

¹⁴¹ Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, p. 789.

¹⁴² Temperly and Penson, op. cit., pp. 518-519.

to rule out future chances for a friendly settlement between the two; besides, the growing anti-German feeling in England occasioned by the bellicose German attitude in regards to the construction of a powerful fleet and imperial policy in general, had begun to convince many Englishmen, that Germany was England's true enemy.

Some length has been devoted to tracing the development of periodical literature, in its endeavours to convince the British population of the need to draw closer to Russia. The stand taken by a number of these writers after the Dogger Bank Incident, revealed how deep British suspicion of Germany had become. These journalists, fully condemned the blundering movements of the Baltic fleet, but at the same time, they either saw Germany as the ultimate culprit, or at least the nation to benefit most from the national tragedy. The most exaggerated statement of this view was made by the Fortnightly Review:

We must remember in the first place that the true storm centre is not in Admiral Rojestvenski's Fleet, London, St. Petersburg, or the Far East. It is in the New Palace at Potsdam. There wrapt in the lingering memories of Frederick the Great, the busy brain and insatiable ambition of the greatest ruler in Europe is engaged in weaving nets for the entanglement of other nations and the extrication of his own from an impasse of his own making...

What were the Kaiser's thoughts after the outrage on the Dogger Bank Fishermen?...The Kaiser was probably thinking not of Port Arthur or of Bagdad, but of the Scheldt, Holland, Port Mahon, and the Balearic Islands.

and then echoing the A.B.C. campaign of 1900 the article continued:

Nothing but a quarrel between England and Russia is necessary to enable Germany to have her pleasure of England.¹⁴³

E.J. Dillon, in an article entitled, "Was the North Sea Incident Made in Germany?" revealed the immediate suspicion that attached itself to Germany, in the British mind. As in the other articles the argument pointed out, that a war between Great Britain and Russia would be, "a bleeding à blanc of Germany's two most potential enemies, without her running any risk or incurring any odium." At the same time, the incident could not have happened at a more opportune moment, seeing that the understanding between England and France (which the Germans looked upon as a thorn in their flesh) had not as yet, been passed by the French Chamber. A final outbreak of hostility between England and Russia could, it was hoped in Berlin, smash the chances of the Anglo-French Entente.

The Dogger Bank Incident:

Could not have been more helpful to Germany's policy if it had been forged and fashioned by the shade of the iron Chancellor in the twilight of Walhalla.¹⁴⁴

In the midst of the most violent crisis in Anglo-Russian relations the most important and influential periodicals

¹⁴³ White, Anglo-Russian Relations, (The Fortnightly Review), December 1904, pp. 960-68.

¹⁴⁴ Dillon, Was the North Sea Incident Made in Germany? (Contemporary Review), December 1904, Vol. 86, pp. 883-901.

carried articles that attempted to implicate Germany one way or another. The Russian Fleet was briefly chastised, and then the accusations of Germany followed. As Great Britain slowly abandoned her policy of "splendid isolation", it had become quite certain by 1904, that any lasting settlement that England would make, would be with France. This however, would have a much deeper significance if it should ever be brought to realization. France in alliance with Russia would inevitably serve as a bridge for an Anglo-Russian rapprochement. Germany, for the two previous decades, had staked everything on the axiom of inevitable conflict between England and the Dual Alliance.

The news reached Germany early in 1904, that England and France were about to settle their differences and cooperate in the face of new problems that were appearing on the international horizon. The adverse events, suffered by Russia in the Far East convinced Berlin for the moment that the Anglo-French Entente could not weather the storm. France would not commit herself to active intervention on Russia's behalf in Asia and, at the same time, her intimate understanding with England might provoke Russia's resentment to a point at which the Dual Alliance would become worthless. Bülow wrote to Radowitz that, "Time is working against France."¹⁴⁵ Germany was confident that, sooner or later, Great Britain and the

¹⁴⁵ G.P., XX (1), No. 6484.

Dual Alliance would come to blows. Bulow cautioned William II that two points were to be avoided, "Firstly, that our relations with Russia be injured because of the war...on the other side letting ourselves be pushed forward by Russia against Japan or still more against England."¹⁴⁶ Germany was preparing for the explosion in the Far East; only then would she consider deals with Russia or England, depending upon what each side would be willing to offer.

France, meanwhile, worked feverishly to resurrect the old Thiers-Decazes-Gambetta policy of creating an Anglo-French-Russian Entente. The first link was established by the understanding reached between England and France in 1904.¹⁴⁷ The next stage was to calm the storm that had broken between England and Russia because of the Dogger Bank incident. The person most responsible for the successful management of this program was Delcassé,

¹⁴⁶ G.P. XIX (1), No. 5961.

¹⁴⁷ "Delcassé had planned to play off Great Britain and Russia; instead France was in danger of being caught between them. The alignment of France and Russia versus Great Britain and Japan had somehow to be undone. France needed the Russian alliance to preserve her continental independence; hence she could not desert Russia. But equally she could not risk war with Great Britain. Two alternatives remained. Either France must reconcile Russia and Japan and so prevent a war in the Far East; or she must herself be reconciled to the British, so as to tempt them away from Japan's side--enough at any rate to prevent their giving Japan active assistance. The Anglo-Japanese alliance, by forcing France into an open declaration of hostility to Great Britain, became in fact the inevitable prelude to the Angl-French Entente." Taylor, op. cit., p. 404.

a true "disciple of Gambetta;...it became his aim to reconcile Great Britain and Russia, with France as the vital link between them."¹⁴⁸

The Dogger Bank Incident threatened French plans by promising to widen the gap between England and Russia. The first mention of the incident in the French Press indicated the role that was to be played by France. The majority of the Journals admitted the brutality of the attack, but called for restraint and moderation. The Temps acknowledged England's right to prompt explanations and reparation, "for the grievous wrong done to her by Russian officers." Expressing France's desire to see the matter settled as speedily as possible, the Temps, went on to suggest:

Nowhere better than in France can the difficult situation created between two peoples by the lamentable North Sea incident be sanely judged. We too have experienced the profound emotion which an event of this sort can cause. This the British Government, which settled so promptly and pacifically with us the affair of the Boulogne fishermen, both knows full well. Let England ask Russia to display the same promptitude in liquidating the incident of the Dogger Bank. This is only natural. But let her at the same time be no less calm and not more pressing as regards formalities than we were. And we too can say to Russia that we have known the bitterness of yielding, in the face of wounded public opinion, to urgent claims. It was in the autumn of 1898, and it was England who pressed us, apparently with right on her side. Peace was maintained. Who now regrets it?¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Taylor, op. cit., pp. 380-1.

¹⁴⁹ Times, October 28th, 1904.

Similarly, the *Siècle* urged England to accept the good advice offered by France and allow her to be of service in settling the affair.¹⁵⁰

Delcassé instructed Cambon in London to explain the seriousness of the situation to the British. He feared that if the demands of the British Government should be excessive, Russia would refuse to negotiate.¹⁵¹ On October 28, the British Ambassador, Sir E. Monson, approached Delcassé, enquiring if he had offered his good offices to aid in settling the affair. Delcassé wrote to the French Ambassadors in London and St. Petersburg:

Je lui dit que je m'étais employé à rendre entre Londres et Pétersbourg les explications plus faciles. Il m'a répondu: 'Personne n'est plus qualifié pour cela'. "¹⁵²

Delcassé worked diligently to prevent a complete rupture of Anglo-Russian relations. Both in Russia and England he applied himself to this task.¹⁵³

The French Ambassador in Berlin, in a dispatch to Paris, explained German opinion of France's rôle as Mediator:

Les journaux officiels affectent de rapporter uniquement l'apaisement opéré à la sagesse des deux Gouvernements intéressés, et de passer sous silence les bons offices de notre Ambassadeur à Londres. ... Cette attitude de la haute presse semblerait indiquer que les cercles gouvernementaux en Allemagne ne sont pas autrement satisfaits de voir le conflit terminé sous les auspices de notre amicale intervention.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ *Times*, October 28, 1904.

¹⁵¹ *D.D.F.*, Vol. V, No. 397.

¹⁵² *D.D.F.*, Vol. V, No. 401.

¹⁵³ *D.D.F.*, Vol. V, Nos. 406, 413, 418.

¹⁵⁴ *D.D.F.*, Vol. V, No. 412.

Berlin had other plans for France and Russia and certainly did not desire to see France turn the Dogger Bank incident into an affair of general Anglo-Russian conciliation.¹⁵⁵

Germany was perhaps the country most affected by the Anglo-French entente and the Dogger Bank incident. The entente contained the seed of encirclement, the Dogger Bank the opportunity to prevent an Anglo-French-Russian Alliance. The two years following the Anglo-French entente witnessed one of Germany's most active diplomatic periods. Two unsuccessful attempts to conclude a treaty of alliance with Russia, first in November 1904 and again in July 1905, and a vigorous policy to thwart France in Morocco, indicated that the Berlin Foreign Office was alarmed by the grouping of the European Powers:

The complacency thus outwardly manifested (toward the Anglo-French agreement) did not reflect the real sentiments of the German government, for the Emperor, the chancellor and the foreign office were alarmed by the growing hostility of England and were disposed to ascribe the most sinister plans to Edward VII. From the moment that the Anglo-French entente was announced, they began to contemplate some counter-stroke which would enable Germany to recover the advantageous position which she had previously enjoyed.¹⁵⁶

It was not the Entente, alone, that constituted

¹⁵⁵ D.D.F., Vol. V. No. 412.

¹⁵⁶ Schmitt, Triple Alliance and Triple Entente, pp. 67-68.
See also Fay, Origins of the World War, Vol. I, P. 169.

a source of anxiety for Berlin. Bulow's argument that the conflict in the Far East between Russia and Japan would eventually bring Russia and England into sharper disagreement, and certainly keep France and England apart, was being proven incorrect. England and France did settle their disputes, but there was the reverse side to his argument. The Anglo-French Treaty indicated that it would help bring to a close the Russo-Japanese War on the basis of which a new Far Eastern settlement might be worked out. This could embrace the Anglo-Japanese and the Franco-Russian alliances. Talk of an Anglo-Russian rapprochement was in the air, particularly after King Edward's conversation with Izvolsky in Copenhagen:

The German Government, particularly Herr von Holstein, continued to apprehend that France and Great Britain would endeavor to mediate peace and form a new quadruple grouping with Russia and Japan by partitioning China.¹⁵⁷

This reasoning was not unwarranted, as indicated by a letter of King Edward's to the Tsar, in which he asked that in a future peace settlement "existing rights" of the powers should not be menaced.¹⁵⁸ The question of Manchuria was left open to Russia. The danger, therefore,

¹⁵⁷ Anderson, The First Moroccan Crisis 1904-1906, p. 178.

¹⁵⁸ Lee, op. cit. p. 289.

of an alliance between England, France and Russia became very real in the minds of German Statesmen:

The Emperor also suffered from the "nightmare of the coalitions", but his suffering assumed more varied forms. At one moment he feared a Franco-Anglo-American-Japanese grouping; at another an Anglo-Franco-Russian grouping; at another, an Anglo-Franco-Russo-Japanese grouping.¹⁵⁹

The Berlin Foreign Office would have to work quickly if it was to avoid the encirclement that it so dreaded.

Izvol'ski, whose pro-Anglo-French views were well known, was expected to become either Ambassador at London or Paris, or perhaps Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs. His cardinal aim was to unite the Franco-Russian Alliance with the greatest sea-Power in the world:

...if Russia could wipe the slate clean of her rivalries and quarrels with Great Britain, this would greatly strengthen her own international position. It would allow her to return to an active forward policy in the Balkans after being checkmated in the Far East. It would also be welcomed by France, who would be glad to see her ally and her new friend on better terms with one another. An Anglo-Russian Entente and a reconciliation with Japan might tend toward the formation of a quadruple combination which would quite outmatch the Triple Alliance and could hold in check Austrian ambitions in the Balkans and German ambitions in Turkey. This therefore was the program which Izvol'ski determined to carry out...¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ G.P. XIX, No. 6275, quoted in Anderson, op. cit. p. 178.
¹⁶⁰ Fay, op. cit., pp. 215-216.

The knowledge of the conversation of Izvolsky and King Edward, in April 1904, reached Berlin, and somewhat shook their faith in an Anglo-Russian¹⁶¹ conflict. Coupled with this, the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg was suspected of working for an understanding with Russia.¹⁶²

Bulow's argument, that the Russo-Japanese War would prove to be the great stumbling block to an Anglo-Russian understanding, was beginning to crumble. It was further shaken by a dispatch from the German Embassy in London. The report analyzed the situation in the Far East, and recognized that the war was annoying to the British Government and that it certainly contained the possibility of an Anglo-Russian conflict. However, just as the English had created the Entente Cordiale primarily for the purpose of localizing the war in Asia, they hoped to use it now to put an end to the war by mediation.¹⁶³

An Anglo-Russian rapprochement was becoming more of a possibility in the middle of 1904 than ever before. The Russo-Japanese War might have been brought to a close by means of Anglo-French mediation. On June 6, 1904 the Kaiser, showing anxious concern, wrote to the Tsar:

I had an interesting conversation about the

¹⁶¹ G.P. XX (1), No. 6382.

¹⁶² G.P. XIX (1), No. 6033.

¹⁶³ G.P. XIX (1), No. 6052.

war with the French milit.--Attache, who, on my remarks that I thought it most astonishing that the French as your "Allies" did not send their Fleet down to keep Port Arthur open till your Baltic Fleet had arrived, answered that it was true, but that they had to reckon with other Powers. After many hints and allusions I found--out what I always feared--that the Anglo-French agreement had the one main effect, viz. to stop the French from helping you! Il va sans dire, that if France had been under the obligation of helping you with her Fleet or Army I would of course not have budged a finger to harm her...

I am sure England will by times renew her efforts to make proposals to you about mediation--it is in fact the special mission of Hardinge as I know--...I shall certainly try to dissuade Uncle Bertie as soon as I meet him from harrassing you with any such proposals.¹⁶⁴

Even Bulow began to appreciate the menacing possibility of joint Anglo-French mediation in the Russo-Japanese War.¹⁶⁵ The Tsar, at the moment, remained a dubious witness to Anglo-French designs; he seemed determined to go on with the war.¹⁶⁶

The Kaiser was more than anxious for Russia to involve herself ever deeper in Asia and was even prepared to offer Russia support in defying Great Britain. When he learned of the Tsar's plan to send the Volunteer Fleet through the Dardanelles in conjunction with the Baltic Fleet, he wrote to Nicholas II:

¹⁶⁴ Goetz, Briefe Wilhelms II 1894-1914, p. 341.

¹⁶⁵ G.P. XIX (1) No. 6051.

¹⁶⁶ G.P. XX (1) No. 6488.

It is a sound military idea and will ensure victory. As to the best manner of proceeding, I have, after ripely maturing the question and after having taken information, come to the following conclusion. The best plan would be to silently and quietly prepare the Fleet for its destination, not to breathe a word about your intention to anybody and any other Power. Then at the moment you think right, calmly and proudly steam through the Dardanelles. The Sultan as we both know for certain--will not offer the shadow of resistance and once you are out, we shall be vis à vis of a "fait accompli", which we all shall quietly accept. I have not the slightest doubt that England will accept it too though the Press may fume and rage and their Squadrons steam about a little as they often do in the Mediterranean. But they won't stir in earnest when they see that the rest of the Powers remain quiet.¹⁶⁷

With all the Kaiser's prompting, the Volunteer Fleet remained bottled up in the Black Sea. The Baltic Fleet, however, began its long voyage, setting off the great Anglo-Russian crisis as it left the North Sea. The Dogger Bank incident brought to light, in sharp distinction, the exact relationships of the various European powers. To France it gave the opportunity to ease the tension between England and Russia by turning the incident into a stepping-stone for an Anglo-French-Russian Triple Entente.¹⁶⁸ To Germany it momentarily promised a respite from encirclement. The German documents reveal very little about Germany's role in the affair. The editors emphatically deny that the Berlin Foreign Office sent any

¹⁶⁷ Goetz, op. cit., p. 345.

¹⁶⁸ Taube, La Politique Russe d'avant-Guerre, pp. 1-43.

alarm or word of information warning St. Petersburg of of Japanese torpedo-boats in the North Sea.¹⁶⁹ On the other hand one cannot help assuming that the German Government did display a private satisfaction at the violent diplomatic crisis caused by the attack on the Hull Fishing Fleet. It is necessary to note, that the Russian Baltic Fleet fired upon a German ship as well. The French recognized that:

La cannonnade par l'escadre russe d'un vapeur de pêche allemand, le Sonntag, qui se trouvait au jour critique dans les eaux du Hull, n'a pas donné lieu jusqu'à à présent à une réclamation de la part du Cabinet de Berlin.¹⁷⁰

German policy was now aimed at securing a Russo-German alliance. Berlin was willing to go to considerable lengths to avoid antagonizing St. Petersburg. On October 27, 1904, William II wrote to the Tsar explaining:

For some time the English Press has been threatening Germany, on no account to allow coals to be sent to your Baltic Fleet now on its way out. It is not impossible, that the Japanese and British Governments may lodge a joint protest against our coaling your ships... The result aimed at by such a threat of war would be the absolute immobility of your Fleet and inability to proceed to its destination from want of fuel. This new danger would have to be faced in community by Russia and Germany together, who would both have to remind your ally France of the obligations she has taken over in the treaty of Dual Alliance with you, the casus foederis. It is out of the question, that France on such an invitation, would

¹⁶⁹ Dugdale, op. cit., p. 183.

¹⁷⁰ D.D.F. V No. 429.

try to shrink her implicit duty towards her ally. Though Delcassé is an Anglophile "enrage", he will be wise enough to understand, that the British Fleet is utterly unable to save Paris! In this way a powerful combination of three of the strongest continental Powers would be formed to act, whom the Anglo-Japanese group would think twice before attacking.¹⁷¹

The diplomatic barometer in Berlin began to fluctuate wildly, and offers of a Russo-German alliance were followed by the Kaiser's scheme for a Continental League directed against Great Britain; Berlin was set to prevent or smash the impending encirclement that she feared and expected. Anxious over France's reluctance to join the League, the Kaiser was not averse to suggesting coercion. He again wrote to the Tsar in the beginning of December:

The British Government, as you will have seen in the English press, seems to think the actual moment opportune for an action against the provisioning of your Baltic fleet with coal. Under pretext that it is its duty to maintain strictest neutrality it has forbidden the German vessels belonging or chartered by the Hamburg-American-Line to leave British ports. My fears--I wrote to you longer ago--that this would happen have at last come true, and it is now incumbent upon me to take early steps to fix the attitude Germany has to take up vis à vis of this action. It is far from my intention to hurry you in your answer to my last remarks about your proposals about our defensive treaty. But you will I am sure be fully alive

¹⁷¹ G.P. XIX (1), No. 6118.

to the fact, that I must now have absolutely positive guarantees from you, whether you intend leaving me unaided or not in case England and Japan should declare war against me, on account of the Coaling of the Russian Fleet by Germany.¹⁷²

The Kaiser attempted to win the Tsar's appreciation and willingness to sign an alliance by a display of sacrifice and good intentions.

The successful efforts of Delcasse' in smoothing out the Dogger Bank affair had begun to show its effects in the Russian Government. The attitude of the Tsar had changed. The conciliatory attitude of the British Government in the Dogger Bank Incident had removed the immediate cause for alarm. The Tsar insisted that France should be informed of the negotiations, which was equivalent to refusing the offer. William II regarded that a preliminary notice to France would be fatal to the proposed alliance.¹⁷³ For the moment the alliance question was dropped; William II was forced to admit that the prize had slipped through his fingers. The only result was heightened tension between England and Germany.¹⁷⁴

It was not long before Berlin had begun to work out a new plan for alliance with Russia. Bulow, who had previously been against closer relations with Russia for fear of becoming involved in an Anglo-Russian conflict,

¹⁷² Goetz, op. cit., p. 353.

¹⁷³ G.P. XIX (1), Nos. 6124, 6126.

¹⁷⁴ Taylor, op. cit. pp. 423-424.

became increasingly anxious to draw closer to Russia. On February 15, 1905, he wrote to the Kaiser that his relations with the Tsar were of the utmost importance in the moment when Delcassé and Lansdowne were working for a "Franco-Anglo-Russian grouping". The Kaiser minuted this statement, "Die wird am Ende gelingen".¹⁷⁵

In the summer of 1905 the Kaiser engineered a private meeting with the Tsar, and in the seclusion of the Imperial yachts, secured the signature of Nicholas II to a treaty of alliance similar to the one the Russian Monarch had rejected eight months earlier. No sooner had the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Lamsdorff, been informed of the Treaty of Björko then he demanded its immediate annulment. He considered it incompatible with the obligations assumed by Russia towards France. Witte took a similar view of the alliance because of Russia's relations with France which were considered the corner stone of Russian diplomacy. The Treaty of Björko disintegrated before it could have any effect upon European international relations.

The aim of Germany was to keep Russia occupied in Asia; as the Kaiser commented, "The more the Russians get involved in Asia the quieter they are in Europe." Germany, however, failed to realize that Russia's Far

¹⁷⁵ G.P. XIX (1), No. 6093.

Eastern adventure, for the moment at least, was over. Checked in Asia by Japan, Russia inevitably turned her attention back to Europe. Within three years of her disastrous defeat at Tsushima, Russia was again locked in mortal conflict with Austria in the Balkans. France was greatly relieved to see Russia resume her old position in Europe.

"I hope," wrote the British Undersecretary in October, 1907, "the development of Russian foreign policy in the near future may show themselves in the Near East, where it will not be easy for Germany and Russia to work together." He got his wish.¹⁷⁶

The Anglo-French Entente awaited Russia's return to Europe. The path for Anglo-Russian reconciliation had been cleared.

¹⁷⁶ Sontag, European Diplomatic History 1871-1932, p. 115.

CONCLUSION

In the closing decade of the nineteenth century Great Britain was confronted by the ominous threat of a continental coalition. The growing colonial demands of the European States conflicted with Great Britain's in nearly every sphere of the globe. It was natural that the idea of a continental league should mature in the minds of European Statesmen as their attempts increased to secure concessions from the world's greatest colonial Empire.

England did not remain oblivious to this threat. The complete failure of the Anglo-German talks at the turn of the century, led England to seek negotiations with France. An Anglo-French understanding it was hoped would obviate the dangerous possibility of a continental alliance. The successful conclusion of the Anglo-French Entente in 1904 carried with it the seeds of a further understanding between England and Russia.

Whereas the rivalry that had existed between England and Russia during the greater part of the century, induced many continental statesmen to expect an Anglo-Russian conflict as inevitable, British Statesmen had al-

ready begun a serious attempt to clear the path for better relations with Russia. The Anglo-French Entente made it all the more clear that England could not remain allied to France and hostile to Russia, the ally of France. King Edward's conversation with Isvolsky at Copenhagen in 1904, promised healthier relations between England and Russia. However, the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War prevented this from materializing. To add to the strained relations between England and Russia, the Dogger Bank Incident occurred on October 21, 1904; a wave of anxiety swept through Europe; for a moment the expected conflict between the two wing-Powers seemed imminent.

In 1898, the conflicting interests of France and England met in violent collision in the Sudan. The Fashoda Incident marked the climax of Anglo-French rivalry. When the smoke had cleared from the diplomatic expulsion at Fashoda, England and France were brought to a vivid realization of what a conflict would mean to their respective positions in Europe as world Powers. After Fashoda, practical conflicts ended; the way was opened for an Anglo-French understanding.

As in Fashoda, so in the Dogger Bank affair, a dangerous crisis served to illuminate the nature of the conflict and the relations between the great European

Powers. The Dogger Bank Incident became the catalytic agent in dissolving a hundred years of Anglo-Russian rivalry, and at the same time served as the stepping stone for an Anglo-Russian Entente. In this manner:

The Dogger Bank Affair marked, indeed, the end of an epoch in European history--the epoch in which an Anglo-Russian conflict seemed the most likely outcome of international relations.

APPENDIX

Draft Convention for Settlement of
Dogger Bank Incident

Projet

Le Gouv(ernemen)t Imp(éria)l de Russie et le Gouv(ernemen)t de S(a) M(ajesté) Britannique, s'étant mis d'accord pour confier à une Commission Internationale d'enquête, réunie conformément aux Art(icle)s 9-14 de la Convention de la Haye du 17/29 juillet 1899, pour le règlement pacifique des conflits internationaux, le soin d'éclaircir par un examen impartial et consciencieux les questions de fait se rapportant à l'incident qui s'est produit durant la nuit due 8-9 (21-22) Octobre 1904 dans la Mer du Nord, -- au cours duquel le tir des pièces de canon de la flotte russe occasionna la perte d'un bateau et la mort de deux personnes appartenant à une flottille de pêcheurs britanniques, ainsi que des dommages à d'autres bateaux de ladite flottille et des blessures aux équipages de quelques uns de ces bateaux les Sous-signés, dûment autorisés à cet effet, sont convenus des dispositions suivantes.

Article 1.

La Commission internationale d'Enquête sera composée de cinq membres (Commissaires) dont deux seront des officiers de haut rang des Marines Imp(éria)le Russe et Britannique respectivement. Les Gouv(ernemen)ts de France et des États-Unis d'Amérique seront priés de choisir, chacun, un de leurs officiers de marine de haut rang comme membre de la Commission. Le cinquième membre sera élu d'accord par les quatre membres susmentionnés.

Dans le cas où il ne se produirait pas d'entente entre les quatre commissaires pour le choix du cinquième membre de la Commission, celui-ci sera choisi par S(a) M(ajesté) le

Chacune des deux Hautes Parties contractantes nommera également un juris-consulte-assesseur avec voix consultative et un agent, chargés à titre officiel de prendre part aux travaux de la Commission.

Article 2.

La Commission devra faire une enquête et dresser un rapport sur toutes les circonstances relatives à l'incident

de la Mer du Nord, en particulier, sur la question où gît la responsabilité et sur le degré de blâme concernant les ressortissants des deux Hautes Parties contractantes ou d'autres pays, dans le cas où leur responsabilité se trouverait constatée par l'enquête.

Article 3.

La Commission fixera les détails de la procédure qui sera suivie par elle pour l'accomplissement de la tâche qui lui est dévolue.

Article 4.

Les deux Hautes Parties contractantes s'engagent à fournir à la Commission Internationale d'Enquête, dans la plus large mesure qu'Elles jugeront possible, tous les moyens et les facilités nécessaires pour la connaissance complète et l'appréciation exacte des faits en question.

Article 5.

La Commission se réunira à Paris aussitôt que faire se pourra, après la signature de cet arrangement.

Article 6.

La Commission présentera aux deux Hautes Parties contractantes son rapport signé par tous les membres de la Commission.

Article 7.

La Commission prendra toutes ses décisions à la majorité des voix des cinq Commissaires.

Article 8.

Le Gouvernement Imp(éria)l de Russie garde à sa charge, par réciprocité, les frais de l'enquête faite par lui préalablement à la réunion de la Commission. Quant aux dépenses qui incomberont à la Commission Internationale d'Enquête à partir du moment de sa réunion

pour l'installation de ses services et les investigations nécessaires, elles seront faites en commun par les deux Gouvernements.

En foi de quoi les Soussignés ont signé le présent arrangement et y ont apposé le sceau de leurs armes.

November 25, 1904.

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