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Light on the Volcan Darkness

Crawfurd-Price

L. A. B. Barnard

Massachusetts

Crawford Pine - traced with
at The Lodge, Westland
Oct 27-28 1915.

L. A. B.

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LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

BY

CRAWFURD PRICE

AUTHOR OF "THE BALKAN COCKPIT"

WITH MAP

LONDON : SIMPKIN, MARSHALL
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PREFACE

THERE is scarce a statesman in Europe to-day who would not willingly sacrifice years of office to know exactly what Bulgaria is driving at. No sooner does one Ministerial declaration insinuate that she is at last beginning to recognize where lie her true interests, than hot upon its track comes another which throws us back into confusion worse confounded. By general profession, however, Bulgaria holds herself up for sale. "Look upon us as mercenaries," said a highly placed Bulgarian politician to a "Weekly Dispatch" representative. "It is our duty to ourselves to be mercenary. . . . As a matter of fact, we cannot think of humanity, or civilization, or any of the other ethical inducements. It is our business to think only of Bulgaria."

It is a racial habit of the Bulgars to be so obsessed with the present as to forget the importance of the future. The prospect of making slight concessions

PREFACE

to Serbia in 1913 was so distasteful to them that they ignored all chances of failure, overlooked the benefits which would have accrued—even to them—from a preservation of the Balkan League, and precipitated the war which left them in such sorry plight. The most unfortunate result for them was not that they lost Central Macedonia and Kavalla, not that they returned to their frontiers minus half their artillery, but that they failed to learn the self-sought lesson.

The same mentality drove Bulgaria to war in 1913 as caused Germany to plunge Europe into bloodshed a year later. The one sought a military hegemony in the Balkans, the other in Europe. The same spirit governed the two peoples, the same system controlled the spirit. The crime of 1913 and the diplomatic blundering by which it was attended were the natural outcome of Bulgarian policy, a policy conceived and elaborated by King Ferdinand and seconded by his present Government. It was a policy of Austrophilism as opposed to Russophilism, a policy of Bulgarian hegemony as opposed to the Balkan League, a policy in which Ferdinand, Hungarian officer and noble, triumphed over Ferdinand the ruler of a people

PREFACE

who, though not pure Slavs, are nevertheless closely related to the Slav stock.

Our Near Eastern policy has not hitherto produced very satisfactory results. We have, perhaps, failed to differentiate between friends and potential enemies, and it is more than probable that a clearer appreciation of some of the arguments outlined in this little volume would have saved us from at least some of our mistakes. At our bidding Serbia has consented to concessions which entail a surrender of her most vital national interests, and has thus demonstrated her attachment to the Powers of the Triple Entente in a manner which must provoke our profound admiration. Unfortunately, a full discussion of the existing position is rendered impolitic by the critical nature of the diplomatic situation in the Balkans, and one can only hope that subsequent developments will justify the heavy sacrifices which we have called upon our Ally to make in the common weal.

The necessity for the publication of a third edition of my pamphlet on "The Intervention of Bulgaria" has led me to reproduce it in book form, together with several supplementary articles which I have contributed to the weekly and monthly

PREFACE

reviews. As each of these articles is more or less complete in itself, the recapitulation of certain arguments has been unavoidable. These, however, have an important bearing on the questions at issue, and their repetition is, therefore, not entirely disadvantageous. I must express my indebtedness to Mr. A. H. E. Taylor for permission to include herein his able paper on "Serbo-Bulgarian Relations" which appeared in the current number of the "British Review."

C. P.

LONDON, September 10, 1915

CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. WHAT I THINK OF THE SERBS	9
II. THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA AND THE CENTRAL MACEDONIAN QUESTION	16
III. THE ATTITUDE OF GREECE	48
IV. THE RÔLE OF SERBIA	70
V. THE SERBO-BULGARIAN SITUATION	96
MAP OF THE BALKAN PENINSULA	

I

WHAT I THINK OF THE SERBS*

STORIES of the Balkan peoples emanating from writers who perambulate through the peninsula and forthwith return home to convey their hastily formed impressions to paper are almost invariably misleading. So dissimilar to our own is the temperament of the Orient, so difficult is it for us to penetrate into the inner mentality of these nations which have so lately emerged from the shadow of Ottoman rule into the sunshine of independence, that to squeeze them into our own narrow perspective and judge them according to our insular codes is to subject them to serious injustice and leave ourselves marooned far from an adequate appreciation of their virtues and vices.

This argument is particularly appropriate when applied to Serbia and the Serbs. No nation has been more misunderstood and more persistently maligned. The honest inquirer has to force his way, so to speak, through a jungle

* Reprinted from the *Outlook*, August 28, 1915.

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

of superficial examination wherein tangled masses of ignorance and prejudice block his progress at every step. Travellers jump from one Balkan capital to another and return with the easily demonstrable statement that Bukarest, Sofia, and Athens all stand nearer to Western Europe than does Belgrade. But in so doing they ignore considerations of infinitely greater importance than the memories of the gilded cafés and the spacious, well-planned streets which have so impressed them. They overlook the fact that whereas a Teuton monarch with a coterie of experienced advisers was imported into Rumania, whereas a German prince carried a veneer of Western culture into Bulgaria the while Russian officials and money planned an administration and an army, and whereas a scion of the House of Denmark laid the foundations of Modern Greece, Serbia represents the unaided progress of her own people. No European Power helped her to overthrow the Turk. No foreign prince carried to her the germ of Western progress. She chose as her rulers the men of humble origin who, by their bravery and prowess, had led her to freedom, and, unassisted and uninfluenced from without, she strove to create a nation and a kingdom from within herself.

Few things are more striking in most Balkan

WHAT I THINK OF THE SERBS

lands than the contrast between the Western veneer which has been glossed over the capital and the rawness of its immediate country-side. Yet one could almost measure the progress in the heart of Serbia by the yardage of wood-paving in the streets of Belgrade. Within certain obvious and necessary limits the capital and the provincial towns have advanced side by side, and in architecture, as in municipal enterprise, great and noteworthy progress has been registered.

The Serbs are the most democratic of nations. There are practically no rich men in the country, and in normal times there are no poor. All have sufficient for their meagre requirements. They are a nation of peasant proprietors. Almost every peasant owns the Serbian equivalent of "three acres and a cow"—possessions which cannot be taken from him even for debt. Co-operation, based upon the national *zadruga* (or communal settlements), flourishes to an extraordinary degree, and, steadily and surely, this is revolutionizing the agricultural development of the country and bringing the latest machinery to the aid of a rich and fertile soil.

The cult of democracy has penetrated every phase of national life. These descendants of the men who led the Balkan races in the struggle

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

for freedom enjoy perfect social, political, and legal equality. Their constitution is of the most liberal, and religious tolerance has developed to a marked extent.

The personal character of the Serbs is distinguished by a certain happy-go-lucky temperament, a peaceable disposition—there is little crime in the country—and an absence of avarice. They are not naturally pugnacious, but once racial sentiment is aroused they enter the fray with no thought but to conquer or die for the motherland.

As recent and decisive victories have so abundantly demonstrated, this outward garb of the peasant farmer covers some of the finest fighting material in Europe. Putnik himself is the son of a village schoolmaster, but Mishitch, Stepanovitch, and Pavlovitch—leaders whose names will henceforth figure large in Serbian military history—are sons of the soil. The rank and file are men of fine physique, possessing tremendous powers of endurance and full of indomitable pluck and heroism. They regard this, like their previous wars of 1912 and 1913, not as some crisis which has suddenly burst upon them, not as a regrettable necessity born of a premeditated conspiracy to overthrow their liberty, but as a normal portion of their existence, a part which

WHAT I THINK OF THE SERBS

destiny has called them to play upon the stage of life. Patriotism is so much more to them than suffering and death that they endure hardships unknown in other armies and lay down their lives with a willingness which bears eloquent testimony to their devotion to the *patrie*. Herein, perhaps, lies the secret of their magnificent success. This, maybe, is the trait in their character which enabled them, worn out by previous wars and ill-equipped as they were, to triumph over the armed might of the Hapsburgs.

Despite the provocation offered after their first victory, when the beaten Austrians left behind them a trail of massacred old men, women and children, and outraged maidens, the victors exacted no reprisals. Their prisoners—totalling nearly 25 per cent. of their own effectives—have been well fed, and, despite the most diligent research, I was unable to discover any case of ill-treatment. If the measures adopted towards the Albanians in 1912 and 1913 were somewhat harsh, few can hold them to have been altogether unjustified, for in his flagrant disregard of all the laws of civilized warfare the Albanian is unequalled save by the modern Hun.

We British have no more profound admirers than the Serbs. Our entry into this conflict

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

was, I believe, another of the factors which made it possible for them to triumph so decisively over the almost insurmountable obstacles which lay between them and victory. And in this their hour of need they are looking across to Britain for help and sympathy. Their confidence in us goes farther than a conviction that Britain cannot be beaten and that we shall help them stamp out the fell disease which is proving a more potent enemy than the Hapsburg armies. It is inconceivable to them that we should be a party to any proposal to take from them territory which they have conquered with their life's blood in other wars. They cannot appreciate the diplomacy which would resolve the Balkan problem like a game of noughts and crosses, for they are the men who fought and bled at Koumanovo, at Prilep, and at Monastir.

Serbia has admittedly rendered tremendous service to the Allies by her victories over Austria-Hungary. Her people now look to us to fortify, not to stifle, their *moral*, to consolidate, not to weaken, their position, and to join with them in their efforts to put their army in a fit condition to go forward into hostile territory when at length the clarion sounds the general advance on Berlin.

WHAT I THINK OF THE SERBS

On our sepulchre of ages
Breaks the resurrection morn,
From the slough of direst slavery
Serbia anew is born.
Through five hundred years of durance
We have knelt before Thy face.
All our kin, O God ! deliver !
Thus entreats the Serbian race.
(Serbian "National Anthem.")

II

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

AND

THE CENTRAL MACEDONIAN QUESTION*

IT is a far cry from the historic battlefields of Flanders, where the flower of Britain's manhood has built up an impenetrable barrier to German progress seaward, to the little-known plains of Galicia and Hungary. But it is there, in that vast Eastern theatre of the war, that lies the high road to victory. The annihilation of the Osmanli and the disintegration of the armed might of the Hapsburgs must be the prelude to the destruction of Prussian militarism. It is there that the rank and file of enemy armies know not the cause for which they fight, and would loathe it if they did; there that capture brings no remorse to the martial soul, and where defeat, when it comes, will herald demoralization and despair. And on the fringe of that arena

* First published as a pamphlet in June 1915.

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

neutral onlookers whose participation on the side of the Grand Alliance would materially shorten the duration of the war and thus render inestimable service to the causes of civilization and humanity stand ready to turn defeat or victory to their national profit.

But for the completeness of the Serbian victories Bulgaria would doubtless have been swept into the Teuton flood, and Rumania and Greece condemned to military inactivity. An Austrian success would have permitted the Kaiser's legions to spread from Antwerp to Baghdad, and the future Russian flanking movements into the plain of Hungary and our costly operations against the Dardanelles would have been incapable of dealing the master blows at enemy resistance which they are destined, sooner or later, to effect. To-day, Rumania, fearful of a prolonged conflict, is seeking to maintain her neutrality until the satisfaction of her national aspirations can be accomplished with a minimum of military effort; Greece is risking a failure to deliver the Hellenic population of Turkey largely by reason of the menace from Bulgaria; and Bulgaria is scheming to retrieve past blunders in Macedonia as a price of the aid which she is in a position to offer to the Entente Powers.

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

To question the services which these three States could render to the cause of the Allies is to ignore both the importance of their geographical position and the acknowledged strength of their military forces. Rumania can place in the field from 600,000 to 700,000 well-trained, sturdy peasant soldiers. She has an extensive irredenta to redeem, and the mere concentration of her forces on her western frontier would be sufficient to draw off an appreciable Austro-German army from the Russian front in Galicia. If we seek the causes of her continued hesitation, we shall find them in the fact that she is reasonably sure to obtain Transylvania whatever be the outcome of the present struggle, coupled with her desire to include at least Bukovina and the Banat in the plunder, the necessarily complicated negotiations connected with the forthcoming change in sovereignty over the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and the intention of her statesmen to materialize their schemes of national expansion as far as is possible by diplomatic rather than military intervention.

The continued neutrality of Greece is based upon arguments of a more substantial nature, which have not been rendered any the less potent by reason of the readiness of the British public to consider that King Constantine's

18

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

refusal to follow the counsel of his late Premier was solely due to his relationship to the German War Lord. King Constantine, to the writer's personal knowledge, has never doubted either that the Allies will emerge victorious from this world-conflict or that the interests of his country run parallel to those of Britain and France, and if ever the telegrams exchanged between him and the Kaiser in the first days of the war come to be published, it will be found that he therein not only laid down Greece's position on clear and unmistakable lines, but scornfully declined to entertain the German suggestion that Greece should stand by the while Bulgaria attacked Serbia. Throughout the duration of the war Greece has rendered inestimable service to the Allies by her attitude of benevolent neutrality and the provision of every facility for the transport of war material through Salonika to Serbia. While it is not the purpose of this article to analyse the reasons which motivated the recent refusal of the King to sanction Greek intervention, it is highly desirable, in the interests of a correct appreciation of the situation and its probable development, that the existence of more cogent considerations than that of mere marital ties should be signalled.

M. Venizelos, as befitted the character of so

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

bold and far-seeing a statesman, was to such an extent convinced that the inauguration of hostilities against the Dardanelles so completely changed the situation which had pre-existed, and so inevitably flung the whole future of Hellas into the balance, that he developed a readiness to take risks which had previously prevented his moving to the support of Serbia, and to stake all on one big, courageous stroke. Wishful of running his submarine into the national Marmora, he was ready to hazard the obvious dangers of the hostile minefield. He was a captain of uncommon ability, and, in the opinion of the writer, he would probably have carried the enterprise to a successful conclusion. But the risks were unmistakable. The Bulgarian danger, which he had previously recognized as vital, was ever present, and the lives of millions of Hellenes in Asia Minor would have been endangered.

Whether a greater measure of support from the diplomatic representatives of the Entente Powers would have enabled M. Venizelos to break down the barriers which confronted him ; whether, in fact, they could have so resolved the military situation in the Balkans as to permit Greece to provide not a paltry 15,000 or 40,000 men as the Prime Minister proposed, but an

20

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

army of a quarter of a million for the attack on the Dardanelles, remains to be thrashed out at some more opportune moment. For the present it must be admitted that if consideration be given strictly to the arguments of the case, King Constantine could have come to no other decision than that which he adopted, and which was, in fact, that of his General Staff. The only other question is whether, at such a critical epoch in world history, a nation is justified in flinging prudence to the winds and embarking on an enterprise the ultimate end of which is hidden behind a thick veil of opportunism and presumption. Probably she is.

Although Rumania's assertion of inability to march while Bulgaria's intentions remain obscure should not be taken too seriously (since Greece would attack Bulgaria if she moved against Rumania), there can be no doubt that the principal cause of the continuance of Greek neutrality lies in the menace of a flank attack by Bulgaria. The danger does not cease at Kavalla, for once King Ferdinand's armies advanced they would pursue their course at least as far as Salonika, and from thence into Serbian territory. It therefore follows that Greco-Bulgarian hostilities could not be localized and would inevitably involve Serbia. The attitude of Bul-

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

garia is accordingly endowed with an importance out of all proportion to the actual military assistance which she is in a position to render to either side, and unless very serious arguments can be advanced in her favour, she lays herself open to a charge of having acted in a manner distinctly at variance to the interests of the Entente Powers. If we find that she has openly or covertly taken advantage of her position to hamper our own action or that of any of our Allies, she must be held to strict accountability, and we shall make more progress at Sofia by insisting upon this prospect than by suggesting compensation which would be disagreeable or unfair to those who are fighting on our side.

King Ferdinand's army emerged from the War of the Allies sorely depleted in numbers and equipment, and the financial resources of the State were reduced to such an extent that, in the meantime, little has been done to set the military house in order. Britain and France, who had seen their hopes of a durable Balkan *bloc* shattered by Bulgaria's treacherous attack on Greece and Serbia in 1913, kept their hands in their pockets, with the result that she sought and obtained a loan in Berlin upon usurious terms. This influx into the Treasury, however, served little other purpose than to pay off old

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

debts, with the result that the army has scarce made good the wastage of men alone. In point of material it is the most unready of the fighting forces of Europe. Nevertheless, thanks to her geographical situation, Bulgaria could have fallen effectively on the rear of the Turco-German hordes defending the Dardanelles, though her progress towards Constantinople would have been laborious and costly. Simultaneously, she would have freed the Greek army and navy for co-operation and robbed Rumania of her favourite reason for continued inaction. Bulgaria, no less than the other Balkan States, stands to gain nothing and to lose all by the victory of the Central Powers. That a just appreciation of this circumstance is rendered difficult by disappointment and chagrin detracts not one iota from its verity. Where, then, is the sticking point? The answer is to be found chiefly in Central Macedonia.

Central Macedonia has long been the Mecca of Bulgarian ambition. It is a fair land, inhabited by a race of Slavs who have been subject in turn to Greek, Bulgar, Serb, and Osmanli. And when the muffled bells of history began to ring out the death toll of Turkish rule in Europe, the Russia that made the Bulgarians the precious gift of independence bade them

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

turn their eyes westward and wrest the Macedonian Slavs from Greek influence. The while her neighbours, left to their own devices, struggled to consolidate their self-won freedom, the Bulgarians, sponsored by the great Tsar, set about the Bulgarization of Macedonia with that perseverance and thoroughness for which the race is justly famous. Constitutional Turkey might well have proved the grave of these deep-laid schemes. Instead, thanks to the crass stupidity of the Young Ottomans, it provided opportunity for their realization. The cruel despotism of the Committee of Union and Progress achieved the apparently impossible—it united those afore-time enemies, Greek, Serb, and Bulgar, in a common effort to oust the Crescent from the Peninsula, and treaties were signed which matured in the Balkan War of 1912. They remained in vigour until Bulgaria destroyed them the following year by her attack upon Greece and Serbia.

Bulgaria's friends have slightly shifted their ground since the question of her intervention in the Great War first claimed the attention of the Chancelleries of Europe. In place of cut-and-dried assertions that the Macedonian Slavs are of Bulgarian race, we are now more often confronted with the desirability of satisfying Bul-

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

garian "national aspirations" over Central Macedonia. Probably realizing that it is easier to call a Macedonian a Bulgar than to prove him one, his nationality is largely ignored, and we are asked to hand him over to King Ferdinand by reason of his Bulgarian sentiment. The change of argument is sound, even from a purely Bulgarian point of view, but it is questionable whether it advances any more solid reasons for disturbing the existing *status quo* in the Balkans than did its more chauvinistic predecessors.

The Macedonian Slavs present a thorny, complicated problem. It is insoluble by reference to old historians, because, like the Bible, anything can be proved by isolated quotations from them. It is equally difficult of solution by natives because both Serbs and Bulgars can put forward mutually substantial claims, and by visitors because the traveller has almost invariably toured the country in tow of a dragoman of one or other of the races, and has assimilated the ideas of his guide rather than divined the nationalism of the people.

It once happened, during Himli Pacha's *régime* in Macedonia, that an English author arrived at Salonika and sought permission to journey into the interior. The honesty of his intentions was well expressed in the introduction which the then

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

British Consul-General gave him to the Valli. "Mr. X," wrote our representative, "wishes to tour Macedonia in order to establish the truth of the situation as between Greek and Bulgar." Shortly afterwards another man of letters arrived on the scene. He also was thirsting for first-hand knowledge; but, in handing him a similar letter of introduction, the Consul felt it necessary to add: "I deem it only right to advise Your Excellency that the truth which this gentleman desires to establish is not the same as that sought by Mr. X, whom I presented to you recently." There are, in fact, few Britons who have enjoyed the advantage of permanent residence within the sphere of dispute, and if the writer claims to speak with a certain measure of authority, it is because he has spent the past six years in Macedonia, during which time he was thrown into constant and close contact with the mixed population which it supported.

The Macedonian Slav has affinities to both Serb and Bulgar. He is emphatically a man without any deep sense of nationality, and one who *could* have been assimilated by the Bulgarians, and who *has* been assimilated with unexpected rapidity by the Serbs. The few refugees who have fled across the Bulgarian frontier prove nothing. They are mainly peasants who, having

26

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

hitherto enjoyed immunity from military service, flee from it now as they did when the Young Turks introduced conscription. They are of no more consequence than the Germans who were wont to leave the Fatherland and drone out vile noises in our streets, or the Bulgarians who periodically cross over into Serbia rather than serve with the colours. They have been joined by those who were forced to play the part of refugees rather than suffer extinction at the hands of Bulgarian bands, by Macedo-Bulgar agitators, and by a number of peasants lured over by promises of less work and more pay. The exodus has, significantly enough, been confined to that sector of Serbia having a common frontier with Bulgaria, and any suggestion of official persecution inevitably presumes that the Serbians are so oblivious to the fact that the eyes of Europe are turned upon them as to deliberately single out their most vulnerable point as a suitable terrain for the inauguration of a policy of oppression. The recent occurrences around Strumnitza are the demonstration of a determination on the part of the Bulgarians to repeat the methods which served them so well during the Turkish *régime*, but which are foredoomed to failure when applied against Serbian territory. On the other hand, the writer

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

was an eye-witness of the fact that during the recent campaign the Macedonians fought with great courage by the side of their Serbian brethren.

Yet, although the recent change in the tone of Bulgarophile articles suggests that the arguments which can be advanced to prove that the Macedonian Slav is a Bulgar are at least disputable, the fact remains that not only have a majority of the inhabitants of that territory for years referred to themselves as Bulgars, but they have been called and considered as such by their rulers, their neighbours, and by the world in general. This might be held seriously to weaken the Serbian case, were it not the outcome of a chain of circumstances which we shall now proceed to discuss.

The Balkan States were not always the important military factor which they represent to-day. Time was when any claim to political attention which they possessed lay in the fact that they had been ear-marked as suitable victims for Russian and Austro-Hungarian territorial expansion. Slav, Teuton, and Magyar alike turned their greedy eyes towards the Peninsula. Russia, absorbed in her designs on Constantinople and the Dardanelles, desired an outpost in the Balkans which should serve to pave her way to

28

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

the Golden Horn, and as a check to Austrian ambition. Austria, fired with the dream of an Empire stretching down to the Ægean Sea at Salonika, regarded the Serbs as predestined prey, and accordingly viewed their progress southward with equanimity. Russia, on her part, settled her choice upon the Bulgars as occupying a territory geographically nearer to her and more closely approaching her sphere of influence. She made them the gift of a shadowy independence, gave them a Russian military and civil administration, and did everything in her power to extend their principality to the west.

In the early 'sixties the Tsar's Government inaugurated a campaign which resulted in the establishment of a schismatic branch of the Orthodox Church known as the Exarchat. Strangely enough, the idea was welcomed, to a certain extent, by the Turks. Regarding both Greeks and Serbs as dangerous revolutionaries, they recognized in it only a means of assailing the solidly entrenched position of the one, and a weapon which could be turned with advantage against the other. The Serbs were oblivious to the menace which lay hidden in the scheme, for the Bulgars were at that time but a tribe which it appeared probable would ultimately become a part of the Serbian kingdom. Thus, Prince

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

Michel lent diplomatic support to the proposal, and actually dispatched his most energetic propagandist—a Croate named Verkovitch—into Macedonia to there create a movement in its favour. But the Exarchat, once obtained, speedily developed into an instrument of Bulgarian propaganda. In its true guise as a national rather than a religious institution it became the advance guard of Bulgariam in Macedonia.

Despite the coming of the Exarchat, Serbian influence in Macedonia remained notably strong until 1876, when, in open sympathy for her brethren in Bosnia and Hertzegovina who had risen against Turkey, she took up arms on their behalf. The Serbs fought heroically, but the object for which they had struggled went unattained. The following year Russia, in pursuit of her particular ambitions, declared war against the Porte. Serbia again joined in, and Turkey was compelled to make peace on the victor's terms at the very gates of Constantinople. Despite the military assistance which Serbia had rendered at the cost of heavy sacrifices, she saw herself abandoned by Russia, who, in the Treaty of San Stefano (1878), produced a map which accorded to Bulgaria a huge territory, including Central Macedonia. It was Great Britain who

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

quashed the San Stefano accord and bade the Powers assemble at Berlin, where the Bulgarian principality was narrowed down to the limits which it enjoyed until the *coup d'état* in 1908. But, in the mind of the Bulgarians, San Stefano had outlined their real frontiers, and even as late as 1913 these were put forward as the present aim of Bulgarian ambition.

The abandonment by Russia was not the only set-back which Serbia suffered by drawing the sword on behalf of the Bosnians. Up to that time her position in Macedonia, despite the creation of the Bulgarized Exarchat, presented little cause for anxiety. She possessed many schools—those supreme instruments of Macedonian propaganda—and the sympathies of a fair share of the population. As an outcome of the hostilities the Turks, who regarded the Bulgars no more seriously than did the Serbs, closed all the Serbian schools, and it went ill with any Ottoman subject who dared declare himself a Serbian. Thus Serbia lost her hold on the people, who, temporarily obliged for political reasons to side with the Turks and convinced that the Bulgars had become the chosen of Russia, turned to Bulgaria as the one hope of salvation from Ottoman rule. The consequences of the ill-fated Treaty of San Stefano, with its

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

promises of a Big Bulgaria, were incalculable, and thenceforth it would have been difficult for the Serbs to have maintained their position in Macedonia, even under the most favourable conditions.

Subsequent developments, however, tended to enlarge the breach. Though the Serbians had been deserted by Russia, it is impossible to absolve them entirely from responsibility for the situation which had been created to their detriment. While the people remained, as ever, hostile to Austria, the Serbian Obrenovitch rulers played into the hands of the Hapsburgs, and there set in a series of quarrels between the rival dynasties and the politicians who exploited them, with the result that the nation, thus rent asunder, paid too little heed both to its own future and that of the Serbs under alien rule. In 1884, Austria, making use of Serbia as a pawn in the struggle against Russia, induced King Milan to attack the Bulgars at Slivnitza. Internal dissension robbed the invaders of any hope of success from the outset, but it was, nevertheless, largely due to the incompetency and cowardice of their ruler that the campaign ended in disaster. The lesson of that defeat, following on the heels of the Treaty of San Stefano, was not lost upon the Macedonians, who were quick to assume that to the

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

unpopularity of the Serbs with Russia must now be added the further drawback of military weakness.

During the succeeding years Bulgaria exploited to the utmost the favourable situation which had been thus created for her. In Macedonia the Slav peasants were given the choice of education in Greek Patriarchist or Bulgarian Exarchist schools, and their one hope of salvation from the bloody propaganda of the Komitadji bands lay in professed allegiance to the Bulgarian cause. In Europe, also, the Bulgarian flag was waved with telling effect the while the Serbs, pre-occupied with their dynastic and domestic troubles, sank into oblivion. When at last they aroused themselves from their lethargy and became conscious, in some measure, of their national responsibilities, it was too late. Central Macedonia had been Bulgarized, and, deprived of the scholastic arm and dependent only upon the activities of their own eleventh-hour Komitadji organization, the Serbs could do no more than reclaim the sympathies of the population on their own frontiers.

The Turks, also, hastened to class this troublesome section of Ottoman subjects as Bulgars. Not only was this solution imposed upon them by the diplomatic representations of the Great

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

Powers and the various panaceas which were brought to the healing of the Macedonian malady, but, since Turkish nationality is based upon religion, the peasant was registered as a Greek or a Bulgar according to the school or church which he attended. Thus it many times happened that both Greeks and Bulgars were to be found among members of one and the same family. To have professed Serbian race would have led to a speedy annihilation of the courageous patriot by one or other of the murder bands which infested the country.

Now while the activity of the Serbians was, under the circumstances, highly blameworthy, the temporary indifference to their responsibilities which they exhibited cannot, particularly in view of recent history, be held to justify the claim of Bulgaria to the Macedonians. The country was originally colonized, at the beginning of the seventh century, by the same Jugo Slav tribes which descended from the Carpathians and filtered into Serbia and the western part of the Balkan Peninsula. At various epochs in history alien Emperors made them subject to their rule ; but the Bulgars never succeeded in attaching any degree of permanency to their occupation, and when, prior to the Ottoman conquest, the Serbian leader Dushan regained Macedonia for

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

Serbia, he reconquered a Serbian race, in the same manner that the Balkan Wars left King Peter once more ruler of a people who sprang from the same stock as the men who routed the Turks at Koumanovo and Monastir.

It has, again, been held that though the Macedonian Slavs may, in reality, be more Serbian than Bulgarian, the employment of the foregoing argument is inadmissible, in view of the conditions of the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty in 1912. According to Bulgarian partisans, Serbia, by that document, acknowledged Central Macedonia to be Bulgarian. This is but an example of the inexact and unprovable statements which are circulated and accepted on behalf of Bulgaria. Just as the flimsiest arguments are often endowed with a certain superficial conviction when voiced by a popular advocate, so it seems that a large section of the public is ready to give ear to any proposition, however absurd, where the Bulgars are concerned. Take the theory of settlement on the basis of nationality. Few States would have more to lose by its strict application, and yet we find apologists for Bulgaria pleading for a solution of the Balkan tangle which shall be founded on the nationality of the inhabitants as it was presumed to exist in 1912. Striving to clutch at any available straw, they

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

fasten on to a principle the first application of which would entail the cession of Thrace to Greece. Obviously, geographical and economic considerations force Bulgaria to hold Thrace, but these are no more than two of the reasons which oblige Serbia to insist upon the retention of Central Macedonia and the Vardar Valley.

The statement that the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty of 1912 involved Serbia in an acknowledgment of the Bulgarian pretensions is either a calculated perversion of the truth or the result of ignorance of the clauses of the treaty. By Article 2 of that document Serbia only "recognizes the right of Bulgaria to territory east of the Rhodopes and the River Struma." What Serbia did was to agree to put forward *no claim* to the territory lying south-east of a line running roughly from the Lake of Ochrida to Mount Golem, "if the two parties become convinced that their organization into an autonomous province is impossible in view of the common interests of the Bulgarian or Serbian nationalities, or for other reasons of an internal or an external order." It should be obvious, therefore, that Serbia agreed to make a sacrifice by reason of certain fundamental considerations, and it will be of assistance to ascertain correctly what were the influences which animated the Government not only in the

36

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

interpretation of this article, but in the very foundation of the treaty itself.

To obtain a correct impression of the Serbian idea we must go back to the crisis provoked by the annexation of Bosnia and Hertzegovina in 1908. Europe was then brought very near to war—much nearer than the public in general imagined at the time—and the danger which had so closely threatened the Serbs convinced them of the necessity of obtaining the support of Bulgaria in the case of a hostile attack on the part of Austria. Subsequent developments have thrown this aspect of the situation into the background, but the writer has reason to know that therein lay the chief intention of M. Milovanovitch, the then Foreign Minister. The vital necessity of an outlet on the Adriatic supplied an additional enticement to Serbia, and though reference to this subject was expressly avoided in the treaty itself, it is an open secret that it was discussed by the delegates, and that no opposition was advanced by the Bulgarians.

Simultaneously faced with the desire for protection against Austria, the economic importance of an outlet to the sea, and the necessity for the liberation of the Macedonian Slavs, Serbia saw herself unable to realize all her ambitions. She also under-estimated her own military strength.

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

The shadow of the mailed fist of Bulgaria had fallen upon her, and feeling that some sacrifice was imposed if negotiations were to proceed, Serbian statesmen agreed to the annexation by Bulgaria of certain sections of Macedonia, without in any way surrendering their conviction that its inhabitants were, despite the Bulgarian propaganda, of Serbian race.

But even this surrender was agreed to on certain conditions, which were incorporated in the military convention. Paragraph 4 of the Treaty declares that, "with the object of securing the fulfilment of the present treaty in the fullest manner, and corresponding fully with the purposes aimed at, there will be concluded a military convention," and that "the military convention shall constitute an inseparable part of the present treaty." It is clearly shown, therefore, that the surrender of Central Macedonia was contingent upon the fulfilment by both sides of the terms of the military convention. In other words, when M. Milovanovitch agreed to the annexation by Bulgaria of the territory lying south-east of the Ochrida-Mount Golem line, he did so on the understanding that Bulgaria would perform the military obligations which she undertook under the convention.

Those obligations included liabilities :

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

1. To provide an army of 100,000 to aid Serbia against the Turks in Macedonia.

2. To send an army of 200,000 to the assistance of Serbia in the case of trouble with Austria.

Bulgaria entirely failed to fulfil these promises. She sent but 20,000 men with the Serbians to Macedonia, and even this small force was withdrawn three days after hostilities commenced and marched off on a political and unopposed expedition to Salonika. Later, when Austria ordered the withdrawal of the Serbian army from Durazzo and Serbia was thus threatened with the loss of her hardly won Adriatic port, Bulgaria was not only unable to provide the agreed-upon military assistance, but refused even diplomatic support to her ally. Although Dr. Daneff was requested to back up the Serbian point of view at Vienna, he contented himself with advising the Austrian Government that Bulgaria would never make common cause with Serbia against the Monarchy.

Bulgaria had therefore failed to fulfil the terms of the military convention, and, since the convention formed an "inseparable part of the treaty," the treaty itself became at least liable to amendment. Further, in view of the fact that the spirit of the document is held to be

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

even as important as its letter, it is logical to suggest that, if the military convention had been subjected to any eleventh-hour alteration, the Serbian case with regard to the disputed lands would still be a good one, for it must be obvious that M. Milovanovitch took into consideration the armed resistance which Bulgaria would presumably render when he made the territorial concessions referred to in Central Macedonia.

It might, indeed, be advanced with reason that the failure of Bulgaria to act in accordance with the terms of the military convention was in itself good and sufficient cause for the revision which Serbia subsequently demanded. But while Bulgaria had fallen short of her obligations, Serbia rendered assistance for which no provision had previously been made. Appreciating the difficulty experienced by her ally in the taking of Adrianople, she dispatched an army of 50,000 men and a number of siege guns against the Thracian fortress. No attempt was made to bargain for this necessary assistance, but the Serbian Government advised Bulgaria that compensation would be expected. The ingratitude of the Bulgars for this aid caused the Serbs to awaken to the realities of the situation. Shortly afterwards (December 1912) Bulgaria refused to sign peace with Turkey

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

solely in her own interest, and the Serbs found themselves obliged to maintain an army of 400,000 men in the field for months in order to second the ambitious schemes of Tsar Ferdinand.

It must be obvious, even to the declared partisan, that the situation which had evolved called for a fairer division of the spoils. A wholly inadequate idea still prevails concerning the services which Serbia had rendered to the Allies, and it is therefore necessary to insist upon the great importance of the battle of Koumanovo. The Turks were of opinion that they could do no more than hold their own in Thrace, and they planned to smash the Serbs on the plains of Macedonia and then advance on Sofia from the west. Had this scheme matured the Bulgars would have been withdrawn to the defence of their capital, and the whole course of the campaign might have undergone a complete and tragic transformation. But the Bulgars were in no mood to recognize any other factor in the success save that of their own armed force, and rode roughshod over the facts and arguments with which they were confronted.

“Every difference which may arise in relation to the interpretation or the carrying into effect of any article of the Treaty, the present Secret

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

Annex, or the Military Convention shall be referred to the final decision of Russia from the moment when one of the parties declares that it considers it to be impossible to come to an agreement by means of direct negotiation." Thus reads Article 4 of the Secret Annex. A conference was duly proposed and accepted by M. Gueshoff, not in his case in order that an agreement might be reached, but that an indefinite situation might be maintained until General Savoff was in "a position to undertake energetic action at certain points." Arbitration by Russia was next suggested, and again accepted by Bulgaria, but at the moment when Dr. Daneff was presumed to have already left Sofia for St. Petersburg the Bulgarian army attacked its quondam allies and ushered in the bloody and disastrous war of 1913.

Thus Bulgaria, confident that Serbs and Greeks would fly in terror before her battalions, put the question of Central Macedonia to the sword, and lost. With the first shot from her cannon she destroyed the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty of 1912. To talk of the "injustice" of the Treaty of Bukarest is illogical. It is the "injustice" which all defeated combatants have to accept at the hands of their victors. It is the "injustice" which Germany will have to

42

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

suffer. And, it may be asked, shall we take count of the millions which the Kaiser's Government have spent to Germanize Alsace-Lorraine and prate of the "injustice" of the reversion of these provinces to France?

The plain truth of the matter is that the exclusive Bulgarian right to Central Macedonia cannot be substantiated. There is not an argument available in her cause which cannot be countered with overpowering effect from the Serbian side. Therefore, we are being invited to ignore our Serbian Allies, together with recent history, in order to secure, so it is alleged, Bulgarian intervention on our side and settle a well-established peace upon the Balkan Peninsula. Both objectives are, in themselves, admirable enough, but the measures which it is proposed to adopt to achieve them will scarce bear analysis.

The great services which Serbia has rendered to the Allies should not blind us to the fact that she is fighting her own battles. She is struggling for territorial expansion, not for national disintegration; to add new lands to her realm, not to lose those she has won by enormous sacrifice in other wars. For the Serbs, Central Macedonia represents more than the blood of her sons and the reclamation of part of her

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

ancient empire. The common frontier with Greece and the possession of the Vardar Valley are of immense strategical and commercial importance to her. It should not be assumed that the possession of a port, or ports, on the Adriatic will remove the necessity for railway facilities to Salonika, for Southern Serbia will naturally continue to seek an *Ægean* outlet for its products. Again, Italy, possessed of Taranto and Vallona, has it in her power to close the Adriatic at any moment—an action which would render Serbia as dependent upon the Vardar Valley as she is to-day. It is, perhaps, only when one realizes that the Uskub-Salonika railway has been the thread upon which the very existence of Serbia has hung since August last that one is able to appreciate how impossible it is for her to willingly allow any Power—least of all Bulgaria—to step in between her and the port owned by her ally.

We serve no useful purpose by suggesting that the satisfying of existing Bulgarian ambition would remove these dangers. The close relationship which has for years existed between the Foreign Offices of Vienna and Sofia, the bitter experience of 1913, the unfriendly attitude of the Bulgarian Press and people during the war, and the irregular raids on the railway which

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

have ceased only with a stern warning from the Allied Powers, have convinced the Serbians that any concessions west of the Vardar River will but encourage their neighbours in a desire for further expansion. One could wish that British sympathizers of the Bulgarian cause had taken their cue from the highly correct attitude of their Government. But instead of so doing, they have encouraged their friends in their ambitions and held out hopes that a policy which is little less than blackmail will be attended with success. Thus, although uncertain as to whether even the cession of Central Macedonia would capture such an elusive diplomacy as is that of Bulgaria, they have unwittingly fanned the flames of hostile neutrality. The movement which suggests that a settlement favourable to Bulgaria should be imposed upon Serbia cannot be too strongly condemned, particularly in view of the sacrifices which Serbia will be called upon to make in Dalmatia as the price of Italian intervention, and in the Banat in order that the assistance of Rumania may be obtained. It would be unacceptable to any section of the Serbian people, it would destroy the fine spirit which pervades their army, and rob us of the signal services which King Peter's soldiers are destined to render in the future.

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

One is, indeed, prone to wonder how such a decision as is so glibly contemplated could be put into effect. Bulgarian armies could not materialize the scheme, for the Serbs would assuredly risk all and hurry south to repel the invaders. Is England, then, to send her fleet, Russia her Cossacks, and France her Fantassins, to chastise this most gallant of our Allies in time of war? Let us be practical. Serbia has surely established her right to these Macedonian lands, but, if any doubt can be held to exist, then our pre-eminent duty is to side with our Ally and not with her enemy.

The policy of bribing Bulgaria at the expense of Serbia will not lead, as some appear to think, to the establishment of Balkan peace on a firm basis. Impose this distasteful solution on Greece and Serbia, and they will most assuredly unite once more to drive out their hereditary foe. Maintain the *status quo*, and Greece and Serbia will not trouble Balkan peace. Left to themselves when European intervention could have stayed the hand of war, they fought out their own salvation, and they are convinced that the peace of the Peninsula will only be assured so long as Bulgaria remains powerless to attack them with any hope of success. Bulgaria is admittedly following a policy of opportunism.

THE INTERVENTION OF BULGARIA

She will not take the field in order to help us win, even with Central Macedonia as a bait. Her intervention will follow when she is assured of our ultimate victory, and the forcing of the Dardanelles will do more to speed up her decision than any offers of Serbian territory. For this latter-day assistance we can offer her ample compensation to the east. The Enos-Midia line must, in common fairness, be restored to her, and it would seem that the general interests of the Allies would be served by allowing her to descend to the Sea of Marmora and giving her the port of Rodosto. Serbia could, and doubtless would, cede Ishtip and Kotchana; but no good purpose can be served by the submission of propositions entailing a crossing of the Vardar River.

Finally, we waste our time in discussing proposals for a renewal of the Balkan *bloc*. Bulgaria shattered the corner-stone of that rickety edifice in 1913. The best we can hope for is that time and circumstances will find all the Balkan States ranged on our side, in recognition of their individual, rather than their mutual, interests.

III

THE ATTITUDE OF GREECE *

THERE has recently been manifested in England a very laudable determination to face facts. The nation insists upon further enlightenment upon the military situation, be it good, bad, or indifferent; and in proportion as the people are permitted the confidence of the Government, so undue optimism and pessimism are alike dissipated, and we settle down to grapple with the grim realities of the task before us. We recognize, for example, that a mere manifestation of discontent at the use of poison gas and liquid fire will avail us nothing, and we forthwith set about inventing means to overcome these obstacles. And if our efforts to secure the adhesion of still neutral States to our cause are to meet with success, we must apply the same principles to our political activities. We are fully cognizant of our own ideas and wishes,

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THE ATTITUDE OF GREECE

but it is to be feared that the somewhat disappointing results of our diplomacy in the Near East may be traced, in large measure, to a failure to appreciate and circumvent the difficulties which lie uppermost in the minds of the rulers and statesmen of the countries we would fain see ranged on our side.

Though the recent crisis in Greece was made the occasion of a remarkable outburst in the British Press, but few writers attempted to grapple with the facts of the case. The comments were distinguished by a general disposition to criticize Greece severely because she had not taken the step which would have harmonized with our particular interests, and a marked tendency to regard M. Venizelos as the Athenian representative of the Entente Powers and King Constantine as the paid agent of Germany. This attitude has permitted our enemies to exhibit the ex-Premier either as a tool in the hands of France and England or as a political hireling ready to sacrifice existing Greek territory without any definite promise of fitting compensation and drag his country into a conflict which would abandon her a prey to the appetite of ambitious neighbours. We do M. Venizelos much dishonour when we presume that he was led to his courageous decision to

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

discard all preconceived reasons for inaction and plunge his country into the whirlpool of war by any other motive than that of solicitude for the future of his own country. And we but blind ourselves to the obstacles which still block the pathway to Greek participation when we lightly protest that the King's action was decided by his marital relationship to the Kaiser. Both men are great patriots, both seek the furtherance of Greek interests; but one believed in the efficacy of a continued offensive and was prepared to risk a hostile attack on his flank, while the other wished to consolidate the positions already won and reserve a further advance till a more propitious occasion when the hazard should be less. In this article the writer proposes to consider the objections to intervention which were raised by King Constantine and his Staff, because he is convinced that they remain to be recognized and overcome despite M. Venizelos's success at the recent elections.

It is not only in England that the vital considerations which govern Greek participation have been lost sight of amid a mass of ill-drawn conclusions, party politics, personalities, and German intrigue. If ever a single question presented itself for decision at the polling booth, such was the case in Greece last June. Yet,

50

THE ATTITUDE OF GREECE

at a moment when every elector should have been encouraged to vote either for or against intervention, we find the issue obscured by a thousand-and-one charges and counter-charges of treason, by mutually shameless attacks on party leaders, and by a persistent abuse of the freedom of the Press. German intrigue, also, has developed to an extraordinary extent under the very eyes of the diplomatic representatives of the Entente Powers. Incidentally, it may be remarked that the machinations of Baron von Schenk and his assistants provide no new complication of the situation. The scandal existed in the early days of the war and was actively manifested as long ago as September last. In proof of which the writer may, perhaps, be permitted to quote from a telegram which he sent from Athens on September 8, 1914 :

“The activities of Baron von Schenk certainly deserve to rank among the interesting side issues of the Great War. The Baron arrived in Athens some time ago as the representative of Krupp’s, but, upon the outbreak of war, developed into the correspondent of Wolff’s Bureau. . . . Ignoring the little that’s in a name, he occupies an imposing suite of rooms at the Hôtel Grande Bretagne, where, surrounded by a secretary, two typists, and a messenger, he delivers himself

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

to the task of hoodwinking the Grecian public. Though the Baron possesses an apparently bottomless purse, all the Athenian Press that counts for anything, being wholeheartedly Anglo-French in sympathy, has declined his financial persuasion. The refusal of some newspapers to publish Wolff bulletins has driven the German Minister to lodge a protest with M. Venizelos. As showing the close connexion which exists between the Baron and his Government, it may be added that the bulletins bear the seal of the German Legation."

Since that message was dispatched the German Agency has profited by the absence of opposition to extend its sphere of action, with such effect that it is alleged that the Baron's missionaries delivered themselves up to wholesale bribery and corruption during the recent elections, and are now endeavouring to whittle down the Venizelist majority in the Chamber by similar Teutonic methods.

Having, of necessity, made passing reference to this sequence of squabble, animosity, rivalry, and intrigue, let us now endeavour to abstract from the unhappy *mélange* the real causes of Greek hesitation. The outbreak of war found Greece bound by treaty obligations to proceed to the assistance of Serbia in case that Power

THE ATTITUDE OF GREECE

was attacked by either Bulgaria or Turkey. It is also fairly certain that in August last M. Venizelos advised the Entente Powers that, should circumstances permit her to do so, Greece would willingly join forces with them. In the meantime the Greek Government adopted an attitude of benevolent neutrality, and in so doing rendered services to Serbia which cannot be lightly estimated. No proposal was put forward for active intervention until mid-December. The situation in Serbia was at that time critical in the extreme. Austrian hordes had invaded the land, the defending army was hopelessly short of ammunition, and, by all the omens, the day of Austrian triumph was at hand. An enemy success of the nature contemplated would have been fraught with the most untoward consequence for Greece, and it was under such circumstances that Britain, France, and Russia, doubtless basing their action upon M. Venizelos's declaration of August, invited Greece to proceed to the assistance of her ally, though not necessarily to declare war upon Austria and Germany. This proposal was submitted to the General Staff, who gave it as their opinion that the dispatch of the Hellenic army into Serbia would expose the Greek flank to attack from Bulgaria, and thus threaten both its own and Serbia's

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

communications with Salonika. The Greek Government thereupon signified their willingness to enter the conflict, provided that they were guaranteed by the Allied Powers against this flank attack, or, as an alternative, that Rumania could be induced to paralyse any Bulgarian offensive. The Powers "hoped" that Bulgaria would not move, but as no definite guarantees were offered, the proposal was rejected by M. Venizelos.

At a later date, presumably in January of this year, when there was much wild talk of a forthcoming Austro-German invasion of Serbia, Sir Edward Grey made further proposals to the Greeks, and on that occasion certain vague references were made with regard to compensations in Asia Minor. It should not be assumed that any definite promises were given by the Entente Powers, for British statesmen have laudably refrained from disposing of territory not yet in their possession. Once again the Greek Government, appreciating the objections of the General Staff, declined to quit their neutrality.

It has been suggested in England that the decision of the Staff was due not so much to fear of a flank attack by Bulgaria as to the Germanophile sentiments of its officers. This is another

THE ATTITUDE OF GREECE

of the opinions of which we must divest our minds if we are to approach a solution of the problem, for, while the chiefs of the Greek Staff confess to a profound admiration for the German army as a fighting machine (what soldier does not?), they are primarily concerned with the defence of their own country. The Greek army was paralysed by the ambiguous policy of Bulgaria.

In order that we may view the subsequent developments in their correct perspective, it is advisable that we here digress to examine briefly the attitude of Bulgaria. It will be remembered that after the defeat of Turkey by the Balkan States, in 1912, Bulgaria's choice of what M. Sazonoff called "the way of narrow opportunism" ushered in the bloody and disastrous war of 1913. She had previously, by the adoption of a threatening demeanour, driven Greece and Serbia to form an alliance for the defence of their mutual interests, but was nevertheless so convinced of her ability to inflict a humiliating defeat upon their combined forces that on June 30, 1913, she attacked both in the dead of night, and thus destroyed the treaties upon which the Balkan League had been founded. Instead of the anticipated easy triumph Bulgaria suffered a humiliating defeat, and, as a result,

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

lost the coveted Veles-Prilip-Monastir districts to Serbia, and those of Kilkich and Kavalla to Greece. It should, perhaps, be noted that the Bulgarian offensive had been determined upon in collusion with Austria. The War of the Allies culminated in the Treaty of Bukarest—a treaty which, as usual, left the victors satisfied and the vanquished discontented.

The prospect of remedying the diplomatic and military blunders of 1913 arrived much sooner than the most fanatical of King Ferdinand's subjects had dared hope. As a matter of fact, even before the ink was dry on the Treaty of Bukarest, Austria, to whom the Bulgarian defeat had likewise come as a bitter disappointment, had planned an attack on Serbia. Thanks to Italian opposition, the project failed to mature, but a little over a year later the Bulgars actually saw their hated neighbours at death-grips with the Hapsburgs. Keenly indeed did they watch every development of the campaign, and when, in December, Serbia appeared to be hopelessly beaten, the journals were already busily occupied in dividing up King Peter's kingdom between themselves and the Dual Monarchy. Serbia's brilliant revival and the ignominious defeat which she inflicted upon the invaders are now matters of history.

THE ATTITUDE OF GREECE

Yet, despite the further proof of Serbian prowess, Bulgaria clung to a belief that the importance of the military assistance which she was in a position to render would force the Entente Powers to satisfy her ambitions. In effect, King Ferdinand's army is the worst prepared for war of all the fighting forces of Europe, and it is doubtful whether he could to-day place in the field more than 150,000 equipped soldiers. Bulgaria's true value lies in her geographical position, which would permit her to exercise powerful pressure on the flank of the Serbian, Greek, or Turkish armies. Her continued neutrality has been largely governed by a fear of Russia and Greece on the one hand and of Austria and Turkey on the other.

Meantime she has continued to exploit the situation, particularly in the direction of forcing a revision of the Bukarest Treaty in her favour. In this she has been encouraged by her English sympathizers and by an exaggerated notion of her military value. This latter obsession presumably dates from the spring of 1913. In May of that year, General Savoff, the acting Commander-in-Chief, in a letter to the Bulgarian Premier, gave it as his opinion that the armed might of the Triple Alliance was greater than that of the Triple Entente. "France," he

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

added, "is unable to increase the strength of her army, and it is doubtful whether the 'Three Years Act' will greatly alleviate the situation, inasmuch as the project has met with great resistance from the masses." From this argument the General drew the deduction, subsequently shown to be incorrect, that the Triple Entente would be compelled to support Bulgarian claims, for, as between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, "the preponderance will rest with that group which has Bulgaria on its side" !

The patriotic lack of appreciation of real values, to which General Savoff was a disciple, undoubtedly persists in Bulgaria to-day, and it would, perhaps, pay us to humour it were it probable that such a course would, in itself, bring us any nearer a solution of the Bulgarian question. Certain it is that in February last an assurance of fixed neutrality from Bulgaria would have been of material service. It would have freed for action the 50,000 Serbian soldiers who were of necessity retained in Macedonia, removed the chief stumbling-block to Greek intervention at a critical period in the campaign, and permitted the Allies to insist that the opportune moment had arrived for Rumania to proceed to the realization of her *irredenta* in Transylvania.

THE ATTITUDE OF GREECE

But the statesmen of Sofia elected to persist in their policy of "narrow opportunism," and a great occasion was lost. To-day Bulgarian politicians openly assert that sentimental reasons do not appeal to her. She is, in short, prepared to support whichever cause will pay her price—and her price is nothing less than the restitution, at the expense of our Allies and friends, of all the territory for which she fought with such disastrous effect in 1913.

It was a recognition of the ability of Bulgaria to prevent Greece from rendering the wished-for assistance to the Grand Alliance that subsequently determined M. Venizelos to make a bid for her neutrality by an offer of the Kavalla district. The British Press has manifested the prevalence of an opinion that the Balkan League would have been reformed had the Cretan statesman had his way. There is, however, little foundation for such a belief, for not only was the Bulgarian Court and Cabinet still hand-in-glove with Austria, but her action on our behalf would, according to persistent declarations from Sofia, also have demanded the prior occupation of the Veles-Prilip-Monastir districts of Serbia—a surrender which the Serbians naturally declined to entertain. In any case, before M. Venizelos was able to develop his diplomacy Bulgaria

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

renewed her financial obligation to Germany, and the matter thereupon dropped. It was never even placed before the Greek Ministerial Council. Thereafter, "all *pourparlers* ceased in reference to the proposal submitted by Sir Edward Grey."

King and Minister now remained in accord until the attack on the Dardanelles was mooted in diplomatic circles. It is essential here to bear in mind that, though Sir Edward Grey had twice requested Greece to assist Serbia, there was no proposal that she should render aid to the Great Powers. Presumably the official view was that while the Allies would have welcomed the co-operation of the Hellenic army and navy, they considered themselves quite capable of forcing the Dardanelles without it. Greek assistance would have helped to shorten the war, thereby conferring a boon not only upon the Alliance but on the world at large, and it would have been suitably rewarded. But it was not, and possibly never will be, asked for.

It was this time M. Venizelos who wished to take the initiative. The extension of the arena of war to the Middle East was of vital moment to Greece. A great struggle was to be fought on a territory largely peopled by Greeks, the Turks were to be driven from the

THE ATTITUDE OF GREECE

capital whence the national Church had been governed for centuries, and probably also from lands historically, ethnographically, and ethnologically Hellene. The issue had developed from a simple question of the expediency of assisting friendly Powers into a direct challenge to Greece to enter the conflict or lose, possibly for ever, all claim to her great heritage in Asia Minor. In the opinion of this remarkable man the hour of destiny had struck. He felt that the time had arrived for Greece to take such action as would plant her in Asia Minor and bring into the fold some 4,000,000 Hellenes of Ottoman nationality. He subordinated the dangers which he had hitherto realized might arise from hostile neighbours to the vastness of his political outlook. He deemed that the mere right of representation at the Peace Conference justified the risks attendant upon intervention. Therefore, presuming the division of Turkey-in-Asia among the Entente Powers, he seized on the suggestions of territorial compensation which had been put forward by Sir Edward Grey in January and went to King Constantine with a proposal that an expeditionary corps of 40,000 Greek soldiers should be dispatched to the Dardanelles. He subsequently reduced the number to 15,000. On the face of it, the moment had arrived for

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

Greece to act, and M. Venizelos's desire to be "up and doing" was so obvious, and so accorded with our own particular interests, that no time need be spent in a more detailed discussion of his motives. Rather must we proceed to an investigation of the attitude of his opponents.

It may be submitted that no constitutional monarch would be justified in engaging the armed forces of his country without the approval of his competent military authorities. If this argument be allowed, it must also be admitted that it was incumbent upon King Constantine to subject the proposal of his Premier to minute examination in order to ascertain whether or not it was feasible from a military point of view. He therefore consulted his General Staff, who were not long in arriving at the conclusion that, from a purely military point of view, the new proposition would involve Greece in risks as great as, if not greater than, the two schemes which had been previously discussed and abandoned.

To-day, when the story of our own costly miscalculations has in part been made public, we shall, perhaps, be more inclined to admit that these Athenian soldiers brought to bear upon the problem a greater knowledge than we ourselves possessed, a sensible recognition of the

62

THE ATTITUDE OF GREECE

enormity of the operation. In a letter written to the writer shortly after the crisis (March 10) a member of the Greek Military Council wrote as follows: "The expeditionary force asked for (15,000) was considered too small to be of any practical help to the Allies, and consequently Greece would be obliged to send more reinforcements, which would necessarily weaken her military concentration on her northern (*i.e.* Bulgarian) frontier. Notwithstanding all that has been said (probably in order not to alarm the public), we know for a certainty that the Turkish army capable of being transported at any time for the defence of the Dardanelles amounts to 150,000 to 200,000 men. At the present moment the Allies have not at their disposal more than 15,000 troops for land operations, and, according to the calculation of the King and the Staff, if an army of at least 150,000 cannot be concentrated for this particular operation, the forcing of the Straits by the fleet alone is considered by all military experts as an undertaking of some considerable difficulty."

From this statement we can draw two important deductions:

(1) That the Staff considered that the suggested 15,000 men would be useless and would entail the subsequent dispatch of such reinforce-

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

ments as would expose Greece to an attack from Bulgaria.

(2) That they were discouraged by the fact that the Allies were proceeding without any effective plan of campaign, or what the *Times* described as the "want of knowledge and preparation which marked the inception of the attack on the Dardanelles."

Looking back across the history of the five months which have elapsed since that letter was written, it is difficult to lay aside the conviction that had the arguments of the Greek General Staff received the attention which they deserved, the Germans and Turks would not have been provided with the opportunity of transforming the Gallipoli Peninsula into a greater Gibraltar, and many precious British and French lives (as well as ships) would have been spared.

Apart from these purely military considerations, there were other questions, which, although of a secondary nature, are nevertheless worthy of discussion. No nation which has just participated in two campaigns can lightly unsheathe the sword again. The wars with Turkey and Bulgaria were as momentous to Hellas as is this Armageddon to us. The ruined homes, widowed women, orphaned children, and empty treasuries which will be ours in 1916 are the

THE ATTITUDE OF GREECE

portion of Greece to-day. Further, Greek intervention would have exposed the millions of Hellenes in Turkey to persecution, outrage, and massacre.

Now, although the instinct does not appear to us as noble, we acknowledge that Italy and Rumania have a right to barter their aid, and some of us actually encourage Bulgaria to do so. Can we, therefore, chide the Greeks if they, still steeped in the aftermath of war, seek to learn what their reward shall be for greater sacrifice? They can scarcely hope that their desire to return to Constantinople will survive the claims of more powerful Allies, and they have to face a remote possibility that, after Stamboul itself has fallen, the question of Asia Minor will still remain unsolved. We must also recognize that none of the Balkan States are in a position to face a prolonged war, and we must pardon them if they consider that events have as yet failed to signify that the end of German resistance is near at hand.

We have said that these last-named considerations (to which should be added one other which it would be impolitic to discuss) possess but a secondary importance. The great and ever-present obstacle was Bulgaria, and there seems little doubt that had the Allies been ready to

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

guarantee Greece against this menace, Greek soldiers might to-day have been fighting side by side with our own.

The object of the preceding recapitulation has been neither to present an apology for King Constantine nor to throw into prominence the courage and statesmanship of M. Venizelos. Its purpose has been rather to lift the difficulties which confront us out of the sea of personalities and misunderstandings in which they have been submerged. The considerations which we have cited are still existent—in some respects they are, indeed, aggravated—and will have to be met and overridden before we can look forward to the assistance of Greece. M. Venizelos returns to power at a moment when, unfortunately, even he will be unable to carry into execution his original programme. The ex-Premier remarked at the time of his resignation that Greece had lost an opportunity which might never again recur, but one is prone to wonder whether that declaration was not, in reality, more justly applicable to the diplomacy of the Allies. The German propagandists have not failed to profit by the occasion to rub in the lesson of the Dardanelles campaign. The Hellenes are a highly imaginative people, and it requires little encouragement to set them wondering whether,

THE ATTITUDE OF GREECE

had they joined the Allies last March, their fleet would not now be lying at the bottom of the *Ægean* instead of the *Majestic*, the *Triumph*, and the *Bouvet*, or calculating what would have become of their 15,000 soldiers in a campaign which left us a legacy of 38,636 casualties to May 31. Many of them go farther, and conjure up visions of King Ferdinand's satisfaction if he had lived to see the whole Greek army disabled before the Turco-German fortifications !

I wish to close this article with a personal note. If I have analysed the situation somewhat bluntly and made many statements which will be distasteful to British readers ; if, despite an immense personal admiration for the character and statesmanship of M. Venizelos, I have permitted myself to assert that some, at least, of the arguments upon which King Constantine's attitude was founded are sound, it is because I feel that even in the face of the hindrances to progress presented by the Dardanelles and the important set-back which Russia has received, we may still be able to resolve the situation to our benefit. But the difficulties which I have outlined must be squarely faced. First and foremost, we must either bring in Bulgaria on our side—which will be next to impracticable until the Straits are forced or Austria is crushed—

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

or see to it that she will maintain a strict and definite neutrality. That course is necessary, not so much because of the probable effect which the entry of King Ferdinand's army would have upon the Dardanelles campaign, but because it would free Greece, and go far towards bringing Rumania in when the Russians re-occupy Galicia. Bulgarian assistance will carry full weight only if it involves the co-operation of the other Balkan States.

We cannot accomplish our ideal by forcing Bulgaria's neighbours to make all the concessions which she has been encouraged to demand, or by negotiations with Sofia to which they are not a party. Lord Crewe's "frank and friendly warning" to the Southern Slavs that "neither in consequence of a war of liberation boldly undertaken nor with the help of powerful coalitions has any nation realized to the full extent all its desires of expansion or its dreams of territorial acquisition," might well be repeated to the Bulgarian capital, and we on our part would achieve much by an acknowledgment that our allies and friends in the Balkans have also vital interests, which it is their national duty to defend. It is not desirable to enter publicly into a detailed exposition of ways and means; but it may be said that no solution of the Balkan

THE ATTITUDE OF GREECE

problem can be considered feasible which is not based upon a recognition of those "vital interests," together with a definite scheme of compensation for sacrifices made and an equal distribution of the burden. The offers of territory must be made by the nations which own it; it must be a willing, not a forced surrender. The first step, therefore, should be a conference between representatives of Serbia, Greece, and Rumania, to which, it might be hoped, a Bulgarian delegate would be summoned with brief delay.

IV

THE RÔLE OF SERBIA *

IN a vague, indefinite kind of way, the average Briton realizes that Serbia has offered a stout resistance to her Austrian foe, that she has twice arisen from the depths of apparently certain defeat to strike terror into the heart of the invader, and that she has evidenced most laudable qualities of courage, dash, and heroism. But it is safe to assume that the vast majority of the occupants of these protected islands fail to appreciate, in any adequate degree, the immense importance of the military services which she has already rendered to the Allied cause, which themselves may, perchance, sink into insignificance in comparison with the increased sacrifices yet to be imposed upon her ere the tide of enemy offensive in the Eastern theatre reaches its flood. The prosecution of the costly Anglo-French operation in the Dardanelles is dependent not so much upon added men and munitions as upon

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THE RÔLE OF SERBIA

the ability of Serbia to resist a renewed Austro-German effort to reach Constantinople and link up Berlin with Baghdad.

The rôle of Serbia has been one of steadily increasing importance—hence, perhaps, its failure to strike the imagination of the British public. A year ago some writers from whom we might have anticipated a clearer conception of contemporary politics did not hesitate to voice the opinion that, in taking up arms, we were staking our Imperial existence on an effort to preserve the independence of a worthless little Balkan State. It was only at a later date that the true inwardness of Teuton diplomacy became apparent, and it was revealed to the world that Serbia was but the excuse and not the cause of Armageddon. Austria had, in fact, ventured far, but she discovered her mistake and was prepared to relent. Though for years she had plotted to stifle the independence of the Serbian nation, she hesitated on the brink and decided to resume conversations which, there is every reason to believe, would have resulted in a satisfactory solution of the crisis.

But *Der Tag* had arrived for the German nation. Its military leaders considered the moment favourable for the realization of their dreams—for the establishment of a German

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

military hegemony in Europe—and, ignoring the Austro-Serbian quarrel, they interposed with an ultimatum to Russia, followed, within twelve hours, by a declaration of war.

For the Allies the value of the Serbian army was at first confined to its ability to detach a certain Austrian force from co-operation with the German armies on other frontiers. For the Serbians the struggle was one of self-preservation. In effect, the South-eastern theatre originally absorbed some 300,000 Austrians and thus vitally weakened the forces opposed to Russia during the critical period of concentration.

The Serbian army was drawn up in a northerly yet central position, from whence it could be opposed to an invasion either down the Morava valley or across the Drina river. It was a tired, war-worn, and ill-equipped army. It had fought and beaten Turkey and Bulgaria and suppressed a serious revolution on the Albanian frontier. For two years and a half its soldiers—almost the entire manhood of the nation—had been with the colours, and only six months had elapsed since their dismissal. Its cannon were the same old guns that had battered the way to victory through the three campaigns, its stocks of ammunition were reduced to a perilously low ebb, and the shortage of rifles was such that when

THE RÔLE OF SERBIA

the troops eventually went into action, less than half the effectives of some divisions were armed. Scarce a man possessed a complete uniform, and, for the most part, the secondary but necessary impedimenta of war—tents, overcoats, pontoons, and the like—were non-existent. In short, the campaign caught the Serbian army in the greatest degree unprepared for war, a fact which may be accepted as good and sufficient proof that the Government had no hand in the crime of Serajevo.

With the exception of a few outpost detachments of 3rd Ban (men from thirty-nine to forty-five years of age), General Putnik, the chief of the Serbian General Staff, maintained his concentration on the line Palanka-Arangelovatz-Lazarevatz until August 12, when the Austrians invaded from the west and north-west in force of four army corps (roughly 200,000 men). The Serbs thereupon set out to the encounter, and, much to the surprise of the enemy, met him on the eastern slopes of the Tzer mountain (Tekerish) in the early morning of August 16. The Austrian penetration had met with no effective opposition, and they had every excuse for anticipating that the encounter would take place at a point nearer the heart of Serbia. Roughly put, the distance from Lazarevatz to Tekerish is three times as

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

great as that from the Drina to the same point, and our Ally's initial tactical success was only rendered possible by the fact that the average distance marched by her divisions was about fifty miles per twenty-four hours. Battle immediately developed on a line drawn from Shabatatz through to Liubovia, and during four days a severe combat continued with varying success. By the evening of August 19, however, the Serbian triumph was complete, and the Austrians were hurriedly retreating to their own territory, a broken, panic-stricken rabble.

Several features of the "Battle of the Jadar," as this engagement was called, are worthy of notice. The Serbs therein established a claim to military consideration which even their victories of Koumanovo and the Bregalnitz had failed to win for them. Though they were, as we have already seen, wretchedly equipped, they endured hardships unknown in other armies and triumphed over their disabilities by sheer indomitable pluck and heroism. The unarmed men sheltered themselves in ditches and behind hedges in the rear of the fighting line, and, as their comrades fell, they ran forward, picked up their rifles, and continued the fight. On the other hand, the Austrians possessed a plethora of artillery and ammunition, which they often ex-

THE RÔLE OF SERBIA

pended with prodigal waste ; they were well trained, disciplined, and equipped, and, what is perhaps of supreme importance nowadays, they had at their disposal a practically unlimited number of officers and non-commissioned officers. Numerically, also, the Serbs were inferior. It had been necessary for them to leave a large force to guard the Morava valley, and, in addition, the increasingly hostile attitude of Bulgaria necessitated the maintenance of an establishment of 50,000 picked troops in Macedonia. Finally, the " Battle of the Jadar " was the first victory registered for the Allies, and it had a tremendous repercussion throughout Europe. A few days later Russian troops entered Lemberg in triumph and the neutrality of Bulgaria, so far as concerned the possibility of her entry on the side of the Central Empires, was sealed.

Considering the military and political humiliation to which Austria-Hungary had been subjected, the explanation issued by the Vienna Press Bureau must take rank as one of the most humorous productions of the war. The invasion was blithely described as a " punitive campaign." It was ; but the " punishment " had been surely the portion of Austria, for her casualties comprised some 6000-8000 killed, 30,000 wounded, and 4000 prisoners.

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

Possibly with the idea of ridding herself once and for all of the menace on her southern borders, Austria now brought up reserves together with an additional army corps and, taking advantage of the Serbian expedition into Syrmia, attacked the whole northern sector of the Drina frontier. This offensive was successful over the line Liubovia-Loznitza—from which theatre the troops then in Syrmia had been drawn—and the invaders pushed forward beyond Krupani before they were met and thrown back on to the Guchevo-Borania-Jagodnia mountain range, where, after a further sixteen days of stubborn and sanguinary fighting, the combat ended in a stalemate. Both sides were too fatigued to continue the struggle, and subsequently settled down to a state of siege warfare. Thus the second Austrian invasion failed to attain its object, and an increased number of hostile troops, which were urgently needed both for the German offensive in the Western theatre and to stem the tide of Russian progress in the East, were tied down on the Serbian frontier.

The next event of importance in the Balkans was provided by the entry of Turkey on the side of Germany and Austria. Future historians will doubtless single out Entente diplomacy in the Near East for special treatment, and it may be

76

THE RÔLE OF SERBIA

assumed that their criticism will rise to a crescendo when they consider the manner in which we dallied with our opportunities in Constantinople during six years, to temporize finally before an obvious *fait accompli* and permit our enemies to choose their own moment for the opening of hostilities. One immediate effect of the development was to endow the operations of the Serbian army with a more vital interest. That we should sooner or later take an offensive action against Constantinople with the object of cutting off the Turks from Europe and getting munitions through to Russia was a military fact as self-evident as the natural corollary that Austria would seek to forestall us by breaking through Serbia and Bulgaria and linking up with the Ottoman forces in Thrace. The Austrian Government believed that a demand for the free passage of their army through Bulgaria would be accepted with enthusiasm by Tsar Ferdinand's ministers, and they therefore regarded the Serbian army not only as the unique rampart which blocked their progress to the Golden Horn, but as the slender thread upon which hung our chances of forcing the Straits. To this may be added the further argument that the defeat of Serbia would have effectually destroyed the possibility of our securing the assistance of Greece.

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

This was, indeed, a very correct appreciation of the military situation. Unfortunately, it does not appear to have made a very pressing appeal to the Allies, for whereas a recognition of its potentialities would have led to the strengthening of the Serbian army by every means in our power, the fact is that, while the Serbs were daily dispensing a very moderate amount of shell in their efforts to preserve the inviolability of their frontiers, we failed to make good the deficiency in ammunition thus created. So marked did the Serbian shortage become that towards the end of six weeks of siege warfare—during which almost the entire Serbian force remained day and night in the trenches—the proportion of shell expenditure by Austrians and Serbians was as ten to one. Not even the proved heroism of the Serbian soldier could for ever resist the overpowering supremacy in weight of metal possessed by the enemy, and about mid-November a retirement was ordered from the level of the river valley to the foot-hills of a near-by mountain range. In its first conception, the retreat was an operation planned for purely strategical reasons. It was hoped that the possession of points of vantage on the hill-tops would compensate for the empty caissons. But the withdrawal acted with such effect upon

THE RÔLE OF SERBIA

men whose nervous systems had become enfebled by the unceasing vigil in the trenches, that the *moral* of the army snapped, and the troops failed to hold their mountain positions. Thus encouraged, the Austrians divested their Bosnian fortresses, brought up an additional army corps from the Italian frontier, and swarmed over the Drina in force of six army corps (300,000 men), to which our Allies were able to oppose only 200,000 weary and (let it be admitted) now demoralized soldiers, almost unsupported by artillery. Within a few days the enemy had captured Valievo, a feat which gave rise to such rejoicings in Vienna that the Emperor founded a new order and bestowed its first decoration upon General Potierek, the Austrian commander.

Though the situation had become sufficiently serious to give rise to considerable misgiving, there nevertheless existed some confidence that the Serbs would rally on the "Kolubara positions" and there stem the tide of Austrian invasion. The "Kolubara positions" follow the course of the river of that name from its junction with the Save until it receives the waters of the Lyg. They then adopt the watershed of the Lyg for some miles, until, after cutting across the great Suvobor mountain range, they take a south-

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

westerly course in order to protect the town and rail-head of Uzitzé. The Serbs put up a plucky enough fight, but, out of heart and out of ammunition, they failed to hold the line, and were driven steadily back until the red and black smoke of bursting Austrian shrapnel could be plainly discerned from the suburbs of Kraguiévatz—the arsenal town of Serbia.

The tragedy of the hour could no longer be denied. There was an absence of panic, but the Serbs seemed to realize that all possibility of serious resistance was at an end. The civil populations, remembering the devastation, massacre, and outrage which had marked the first Austrian penetration into their fair land, trained and trudged to the comparative security of the east. The higher command, their sadness somewhat ameliorated by a conviction that the army had already demonstrated almost superhuman powers of resistance, evacuated the hospitals and commenced to dismantle the arsenal. Everything seemed to go to pieces. Half the transport oxen limped from foot-rot ; food ran scarce, flour rose to famine prices, and many a brave beast that had gallantly served its country during the three campaigns ended its days upon the mess table. The enemy prepared to strike the final blow, and, having fortified the Suvobor

80

THE RÔLE OF SERBIA

mountain, he held it as a pivot and threw out two strong wings, one directed via Lazarevatz-Mladenovatz and down the Morava valley, and the other along the Western Morava. The object was to round up the Serbian army, with Kraguiévatz and its arsenal, when the campaign would have been brought to a triumphant termination. Nothing would have remained but to march on to Nish and thence to Constantinople through Bulgaria.

Little news reached the British public from Serbia during those dark days, for it is not customary nowadays to report defeat. In the event of an unusually great disaster the war correspondent may be permitted to draw attention to a "strategic retirement," but that is all. Yet the public must have learned from Berlin and Vienna and Sofia that the gallant Serbs were broken. In the German and Austrian capitals clanging bells mingled with the rejoicings of the delirious enemy Press, while the Bulgarian newspapers, self-assured of a Hapsburg victory, intermixed their pœans with schemes for the division of Macedonia between themselves and the "ramshackle Empire." In official circles, however, the menace was fully appreciated, and the Entente Powers went so far as to request Greece to step in to the assistance of her ally.

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

M. Venizelos refused, for the quite logical reason that such action would have exposed Greece to a flank attack from Bulgaria and jeopardized the communications of both countries with Salonika. Nothing was left, therefore, but to await the development of events, and it is not too much to assert that the entire world looked for a speedy finale to Serbia's struggle for existence.

The retreat operated by our Ally continued, with but slight intermission, until December 2. Belgrade was reluctantly evacuated, and the Austrians made a joyous but unopposed entry into the capital. In the meantime, however, a small supply of gun ammunition had arrived, and, on the strength of this support, the Serbian Staff determined to order a counter-attack. The counter-attack commenced on the morning of December 3; the first army stormed and recaptured the heights of Suvobor, the whole line then went forward, and, advancing with irresistible *élan*, they never stopped until they had driven the Austrian foe in panic-stricken rout from their country. The very completeness of the victory fairly staggered Europe and spread demoralization and dismay through the ranks of the Hapsburg armies. It had taken the Austrians six weeks to reach the heart of Serbia; it took them but ten days to get back to their own

THE RÔLE OF SERBIA

frontiers. Rarely has history witnessed so complete and tragic a *débâcle*. Of the 300,000 invaders who crossed the Drina and the Save, but 200,000 returned. In round figures, they left behind them a toll of 40,000 prisoners and 60,000 killed and wounded. They abandoned in their flight booty which included 133 cannon, 71 machine guns, 10,000 rifles, 3350 transport wagons, and 3321 transport beasts.

The shortening and consequent strengthening of the front, the arrival of ammunition, the presence of the aged King Peter in the trenches, the stirring appeal of the Crown Prince Alexander—all these contributed in some degree to the wonderful climax, but the great, crowning glory was the manner in which these 200,000 Serbian peasants roused themselves from the very depths of despair and, with renewed courage, transformed themselves from a demoralized horde into a army of conquering heroes.

The political effect of this decisive victory was enormous. Britain, France, and Russia—to say nothing of the friendly neutral States—paid liberal tribute to the little army which had built up so impenetrable a barrier to the Austrian descent southward, and satisfaction was general that the Turk was still left more or less to his own resources. Only one shadow darkened

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

the vista. It was felt that Germany would hardly be likely to submit to a thwarting of her plans, and that the Austrians themselves would not be averse to an attempt to retrieve their shattered reputation. Developments followed thick upon one another. Stories of a combined Austro-German attack on Serbia leaked out, and the presence of Bavarian armies was signalled from within measurable distance of the Save. With a large proportion of the army down with the spotted typhus with which the tainted Austrian had infected the land, a renewed offensive in January might have sorely strained the Serbian powers of resistance, but the memories of the "Jadar" and "Suvobor" had conjured up a wholesome respect for King Peter's soldiers in the minds of the Austro-German commanders, and the threatened fourth invasion was postponed to a more convenient season, which, it is well to bear in mind, has not yet arrived.

Just as the Anglo-French operation against the Dardanelles was rendered possible by the Serbian victory of "Suvobor," so its continued prosecution is entirely dependent upon the ability of our Ally to preserve intact the rampart which lies between the German armies and ammunition factories and Constantinople. Once

THE RÔLE OF SERBIA

permit the Teuton to break through, and our expenditure of blood and treasure in Gallipoli will count for naught, and we shall be unable either to get the needed munitions through to Russia or bring her crops out, while the Kaiser will spread his legions from the North Sea to Baghdad and Turkey will exchange the product of the granaries of Asia Minor for the product of the factories of Essen. It behoves us, then, to strengthen the Serbian arm by every means in our power, and, if possible, to rally hesitating neutrals to her aid in order to be prepared should a further hostile onslaught follow the present Russian retreat. We can accomplish the former duty by the dispatch of additional arms and ammunition, a matter which, it is reasonable to assume, has not escaped our military authorities. The latter presupposes the entry of either Greece, Rumania, or Bulgaria.

The writer has already exposed, in a previous article, the obstacles which block the pathway to Greek intervention. Recent events have increased rather than lessened our difficulties. Small States like Greece cannot afford to take unnecessary risks, however great the prize in store, and with the Germans in Warsaw and a million Huns ready for dispatch to other theatres if need be, the prospect is much less

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

inviting than it was in the spring. Moreover, the outspoken Bulgarian threats of future armed action against Kavalla (and of course Salonika) have caused the Hellenes to presume that, if they enter the war, Bulgaria will maintain strict neutrality and, when the great conflict is over and Greece is too weak to resist and the Powers too weary to bother, overrun Macedonia with her army. There are, in fact, so many possibilities of untoward development that only a bold and courageous statesman, *adequately provided with safeguards*, can succeed in dragging Hellas into the arena.

Rumania presents a somewhat complex problem. For years she has manifested a more than friendly interest in the Rumanes of Transylvania. Her ruler is, or was until quite recently, ever in close communion with the Austrian and German ministers, but the people are more sympathetically inclined towards our allies of Latin race. Between the two lies the Government, reasonably sure of obtaining Transylvania whatever be the outcome of the struggle, and determined to materialize the schemes of natural expansion as far as is possible by diplomatic negotiation. Rumania could have participated in the war in the spring with comparatively little risk to herself, and, had she

86

THE RÔLE OF SERBIA

then moved, it is probable that the military history of the Eastern campaign would have undergone an important transformation. But her demands have consistently grown until they now overreach national boundaries and include such territory as the Banat of Hungary—a district thoroughly Serbian in population. On the whole, Rumania has chosen to play for safety, and there seems no great probability of her entry until Russia has re-established the position in Galicia, or until some new development forces her hand.

One cannot proceed far into the study of the Balkan situation without falling foul of Bulgaria. To some, she holds the key to the situation ; to others, she is the fount of all our difficulties. Concerning her intentions, however, we are left in little doubt. Her diplomacy has utilized the Press in an unprecedented manner both for the presentation of her case and in an effort to influence the decisions of the rival groups. True, the ministerial declarations have, as the excellent Budapest correspondent of the *Morning Post* recently reminded us, demonstrated no small inconsistency, but, with a little outside assistance, it is not difficult to reach a correct estimate of her attitude and demands. According to M. Ghenadiff, Bulgaria claims “ the

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

Greek and Serbian Macedonia in whole, the Turkish Thrace, and the Rumanian Dobrudja." The actual Premier, M. Radoslavoff, has confirmed this exposition, in adding the admission, which is likely to become historic, that he is negotiating simultaneously with both sets of combatants. He tells us that the Bulgarian army is in better condition and better equipped than ever (a statement with which many military authorities entirely disagree) and has now incorporated in it the best to be found everywhere. "Give us back Serbian Macedonia" (the omission of Greek possessions is presumably an error of the reporter), "and then we will fight in the way we can serve you best." The guarantees for this recession must be "real and absolute—no mere paper ones can be accepted"—by which we may understand that "occupation in advance" is requested.

From the writings of British Bulgarophiles we learn that Bulgaria has no concern with the sentimental expediency of exterminating Prussian militarism. It is immaterial to her whether Britain, France, and Russia win or not. She realizes that her assistance would be valuable to either alliance and particularly so to our own. In short, they stamp the transaction as

88

THE RÔLE OF SERBIA

a sordid deal at an epoch when we are being spurred on to renewed effort by a conviction that the conflict is no mere war of conquest, no fight for territorial expansion, but a gigantic struggle against a mighty Antichrist which has arisen to blight the peace of Europe, and which must be crushed out of existence before we dare again talk of liberty, freedom, humanity, civilization, or religion in any other voice but one of hollow mockery.

Finally, Signor Magrini, a shrewd and practised observer, whose opinions are deserving of attention from all students of the Balkan situation, contributes to his journal, the Milan *Secolo*,* by far the most lucid analysis of contemporary opinions in Sofia that has yet been received. "Bulgaria," he writes, "is filled with resentment and rancour against the Serbians, against the Greeks, against the Triple Entente, against the Tsar of Russia. The racial sentiment is forgotten in a joyous salutation of the Austrian attack on Serbia as a deserved punishment; the last Russian defeats have been hailed by a section of the Press and by the Vice-President of the Sobranje with satisfaction. The axis of Bulgarian politics is, and continues to be,

* A translation appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* of July 27, 1915.

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

Macedonia and the Treaty of Bukarest. Drive the Turks from Thrace! Why, the Turkish deputies from the new territories determine the Government majority, and, as I know from a reliable source, Bulgaria is bound by a treaty of alliance to cede the whole of Thrace to Turkey in exchange for Macedonia in the event of war against the Greeks and Serbians. Bulgaria has never ceased supplying Turkey with munitions, cement, and petrol, and has allowed free course for contraband across its territory." Continuing, he reports that a diplomatist of the Quadruple Entente considers the political situation there to be formed of three elements: "Hatred of Serbia, a lack of grasp of the actual historical position, and a failure to perceive the vast horizon opening out in the East, due to a narrow view of supposed immediate material advantages. Bulgarian politicians are obstinately preoccupied with the Treaty of Bukarest, and Macedonia, and they cannot see farther. They do not grasp the fact that, if Austria and Germany were to win, Macedonia, so generously promised them by the Central Empires, would be an Austrian and not a Bulgarian Macedonia."

The writer has already analysed the question of Central Macedonia in relation to the inter-

90

THE RÔLE OF SERBIA

vention of Bulgaria, but as the satisfaction of Bulgarian claims is dependent upon the willingness and ability of Serbia to surrender territory which is hers by a double right of conquest, it is necessary to consider her attitude towards the proposal. Little has been heard thus far of the Serbian point of view. It would, perhaps, be too much to say that there has been an organized conspiracy to stifle the advertisement of Serbian opinions, but it is the fact that both telegrams and articles calculated to throw much needed light upon the situation have been suppressed, and that most writers on Balkan politics are either entirely ignorant of recent history or have deliberately ignored certain vital developments in order to present a more attractive case for Bulgaria.

The situation which confronts Entente diplomacy may be briefly stated as follows: The furtive attitude hitherto adopted by Bulgaria has contributed in a limited degree to the continued neutrality of Rumania, and has been almost wholly the cause of Greece's refusal to join in the fray. She now declares that she is prepared to intervene—or, as Dr. Radoslavoff rather brutally puts it, “to go to the rescue of the Allies in the Dardanelles”—on condition that she is first conceded Serbian Macedonia and

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

the Kavalla district of Greece. The value of this assistance to us is that, although the resistance which we are encountering in Gallipoli suggests that Bulgaria would find progress towards Constantinople a slow and costly operation, her offensive would seriously harass the Turks and would undoubtedly enable us to pass the Dardanelles more quickly than if we remain dependent upon our own resources. Moreover, it would speed up Greek and Rumanian intervention. We hope and believe we shall emerge victorious from this greatest of all wars, and, such being the case, we shall be able to provide fitting compensation for anything which Greece and Serbia may cede to Bulgaria. Therefore, we fail to understand why the necessary concessions should not be made, and we are inclined to be more than a little annoyed that Serbia, in particular, does not view the possibilities from our standpoint, but continues to emulate our example and give prior consideration to her own national interests.

It is highly desirable that we should endeavour to understand why Serbia declines to cede all that Bulgaria demands. The only Bulgarian claim to Central Macedonia which is worthy of serious discussion is that based upon the Treaty of 1912, for no argument has been

92

THE RÔLE OF SERBIA

produced with a view to imposing a Bulgarian nationality upon the Macedonian Slavs which cannot be refuted in its entirety or countered with an equally sound claim from the Serbian side. The Serbians have never admitted the Bulgarian pretensions to the Macedonians. In the Treaty of 1912 they only recognized as Bulgarian the section of territory lying *east of the Struma River*, and their consent to the annexation of the line Mount Golem-Ochrida was given on grounds of political expediency and in return for promised military support which, it may be added, the Bulgarians subsequently failed to provide. For this latter and other equally logical reasons, they requested a revision of the treaty. Bulgaria ultimately refused all proposals of arbitration, ignored Russia's official warning that, "in the case of an armed conflict, the Treaty of 1912—the *very treaty on which the Bulgars establish their claims to territory in Macedonia*—would be rendered null and void," and, when once their military preparations were complete, fell upon their quondam allies. Then followed the disastrous conflict of 1913.

Had Bulgaria accepted the Tsar's arbitration in 1913, Serbia would undoubtedly have been awarded an extension of territory south and

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

east of the 1912 Treaty line, but the Balkan League would have been preserved. It may be argued that, as Serbia is destined in all probability to secure considerable territorial extension in Bosnia, she would now be justified in ceding the old line to Bulgaria in exchange for her assistance. But, in common fairness to our Ally, it must be accorded that the Bulgarian attack of June 1913 did more than destroy the Treaty of 1912—it caused her to be regarded henceforth rather as an enemy than a friend. It means that the Macedonian Slavs and the Salonika Railway (a vital possession to Serbia) would pass under the control of a hostile Power, and the mind instinctively recalls the oft-declared Bulgarian ambition to secure a military hegemony in the Balkans and establish an empire which shall debouch on three seas. Therefore there arise for Serbia strategical considerations which would have possessed only a minor value had Bulgaria not wrecked the Balkan League, and the retention of the Vardar Valley becomes of outstanding importance.

The reconstruction of the Balkan *bloc* is outside the scope of practical politics. A Balkan *entente*, under which all the nations of the peninsula will be found fighting on the same side, is not impossible, but it involves the

THE RÔLE OF SERBIA

acceptance of the principle of give-and-take by both sides. Serbia is prepared to make concessions, but Bulgaria must moderate her claims and her method of imposing them. Any attempt to demand compensation on the ground that the Macedonians are of Bulgarian race merely renders the problem more difficult of solution. Serbia cannot admit this contention. She may be persuaded to give up certain territory in order to assist the general cause of the Allies, but to her it will entail the surrender of a part of Serbia and a population of Serbs, and she will make the sacrifice now, as in 1912, *only for reasons of political expediency*. She offers much, but not that vital artery whence flows her wealth to Ægean seas or those hills and dales where fathers and brothers lie crumbling next the long-dead heroes of Dushan's glory.

The rôle of Serbia ! Twice to confound the Austrian hosts and prevent the German Empires from linking up with their misguided Allies in Constantinople. Valiantly to guard the flank of Allied operations in the Dardanelles, and then to be the sorry carcass upon which neutrals would fain batten as the price of concourse.

V

THE SERBO-BULGARIAN SITUATION *

By A. H. E. TAYLOR

IT is now known that negotiations are on foot between the Triple Entente and Bulgaria, having for their object the conclusion of terms on which Bulgaria will enter into the war. The value of the help which Bulgaria could bring to the cause of the Allies in the Near East is obvious, and would be decisive of the fate of Constantinople if it were not too long delayed. Moreover, the action of Bulgaria would have its effect on the still wavering counsels of Rumania. The point of the negotiations turns upon the extent and nature of the "compensations" to be offered to Bulgaria to induce her to abandon her present dubious attitude. The negotiations are so largely concerned with Serbo-Bulgarian differences and the difficulty of reconciling the points of view of the two States on the subject of a final and definite settlement of national

* Reprinted from the *British Review*, September 1915.]

THE SERBO-BULGARIAN SITUATION

territorial boundaries in the Balkans, that the question of their relations has again become a matter of the first importance. It is natural that many should be urging upon our gallant Balkan Ally the necessity of meeting Bulgarian demands in the general interest, yet the essential questions at issue are largely misunderstood, partly owing, perhaps, to the prevalence of a strong pro-Bulgar sentiment and partly to a misapprehension of the circumstances attending both the conclusion and rupture of the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty of 1912, on the provisions of which a demand is made for diplomatic action. The Bulgarian Government itself is said to have demanded a return to the written terms of the Treaty, and it has the backing of those who have always held by the Bulgarian legend. At any rate the choice of the 1912 Treaty as the basis of argument renders necessary, if we are to have a clear perspective of events, a brief examination of the Treaty in its origin and aims, and of the events leading up to the Second Balkan War, as a preliminary to present discussion. As the writer is in a position to throw new light on some points which have hitherto been doubtful, and to adduce facts which have not hitherto been generally available, he proposes such a consideration as may result,

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

perhaps, in a better understanding of the past and, consequently, of the possibilities of the present.

A commonly received view is that the first real, as apart from formal, breach of the Treaty was made when Serbia demanded a redistribution of the spheres allotted to the two States by the set terms of the Treaty, and this view necessitates the consideration of the motives that underlay that distribution. The Bulgarians have long laid claim to practically the whole of Macedonia and of what the Serbs call Skopljan Old Serbia, *i.e.* the districts of Skoplje, Koumanovo, etc. The general history of those claims need not be repeated here. A note, however, must be made of the great influence of the Exarchist Church in promoting them. Up to 1870 the Orthodox inhabitants of European Turkey were forced to submit to the ministrations of priests who were Greek by race, and a general confusion was made between Greeks (Hellenes) and "Greeks" by religion. The Slavs demanded priests of their own; the Patriarch refused the request. Then in 1870 was formed the Exarchist Church by an act of formal, though not material, schism, rendered necessary by that refusal. The Serbs, it must be remembered, took an active part at Constantinople in

THE SERBO-BULGARIAN SITUATION

forwarding the movement and even brought diplomatic pressure to bear at the Porte in its favour. The original sphere of the operations of this body, which, it must be remembered always, differs in no matter of doctrine, ritual, or religious observance from the Patriarchist Church, was in Bulgaria proper. Its operations were gradually extended to Macedonia, where it became a Bulgarizing agency. The Serbs of the Principality had their own autocephalous Church in communion with the Patriarch, and this body was unable to send a mission into Macedonia without committing an act of schism. The result was that the Exarchist Church had matters all its own way, since the only method by which the Slavs could obtain the services of a Slav clergy was by adhesion to the Exarchist body. It was not till 1897 that the Serbs were able to obtain the appointment of one of their own race as Patriarchist Metropolitan of Skoplje, and only in 1900 that the Serbs of Turkey were recognized as a separate "millet" or politico-religious community. From the Serb point of view, therefore, action against the Exarchist clergy is purely political, since an Exarchist church in Serb territory can have only, in present circumstances, a political *raison d'être*; namely, to teach the inhabitants of Macedonia

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

that they are Bulgars, and therefore, if they want a Slav clergy, should have Bulgar and not Serb priests.

In these pretensions of the Bulgars the Serbs never acquiesced, even though prior to 1878 they concerned themselves more immediately with their prospects in Bosnia and the Hertze-govina.* They claimed that the inhabitants of Central and Southern Macedonia were at least as much Serb as Bulgar, and that their own historic claims were as good as those of their rivals. It is, in fact, agreed by impartial investigators that the Slavs of these regions are neither pure Serbs nor pure Bulgars. The exhaustive inquiries of Professor Cvijitch may be regarded as suspect owing to his nationality, but there is other testimony. Sir Charles Eliot calls them an "intermediate" type, and Mr. Brailsford, a bitter enemy of the Serbs, states that they represent a primitive Slav stock which has affinities with both races in speech and customs without any marked national consciousness, and has in the past submitted with equal facility to Serb and Bulgar rule. He found no native traditions of the old Bulgarian

* Prior to 1878, however, they had many schools in Macedonia, but they were dissolved by the Turks, who were afraid of their vigorous spirit of nationalism after the Russo-Turkish War.

THE SERBO-BULGARIAN SITUATION

Empire, such traditions as they possess being rather of the days of Serb rule.* Bulgarians themselves have admitted it. It is this that has so embittered the Serbo-Bulgarian struggle for Macedonia. The Macedonian speaks a patois which is identical with the literary language of neither Serb nor Bulgar, but is mutually intelligible with both. When he is educated he learns either the one or the other literary language, and becomes, as the case may be, Serb or Bulgar. If the Bulgars have made great progress in the past, that is due largely to political causes and the methods of the Macedonian Committee, and whichever State could hold Macedonia for a generation would succeed in converting its inhabitants to its own nationality. Neither side could rest secure in the belief that eventually the people would remain in its fold in spite of a passing foreign domination.† It is a testimony to the correctness of this view that most ethnologists are agreed that prior to 1878 the population of the country between Nish and Sofia was of the

* Mr. Brailsford, I need hardly say, claims the Macedonians for the Bulgarians on the ground of political allegiance and decisively rejects Serb claims.

† The Serbs, for example, have no fears of an eventual Italianization of Dalmatia. They are conscious here of their racial strength.

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

same intermediate character, and it is a fact that villages on what is now the Bulgarian side of the line asked to be included in Serbia. Yet at the present day the political boundary has become a genuinely national one. At one time, if the Bulgars claimed Nish, the Serbs claimed Sofia. All this explains, if it does not excuse, the bitter struggles for the Macedonian heritage. In reply to Bulgarian efforts the Serbs in later years pushed a vigorous propaganda in Macedonia not only in ecclesiastical matters, which, as we have seen, were themselves political, but by the foundation of schools, etc. Unless, then, it is recognized that the Serbs never acknowledged Bulgarian claims to Macedonia on ethnological grounds, we shall fail to understand the reasons which led them at a later date to reassert their own claims by the demand for a revision of the 1912 Treaty.

The main object of Serbia in concluding the Treaty was to secure an outlet to the Adriatic under her own control. It is unnecessary to deal with the conditions, economic and political, which pressed heavily on the State and made this desire imperative, as it is not the object of this article to traverse again the well-worn

102

THE SERBO-BULGARIAN SITUATION

ground of the past except in so far as it is now possible to furnish a juster appreciation of the events in question. Under the terms of the Treaty Bulgaria was to furnish 100,000 men for operations in Macedonia and 200,000 against Austria if Serbia were to be attacked by that Power. There was also a territorial delimitation of the future acquisitions to be made in Macedonia, assigning by far the greater part of Macedonia to Bulgaria.

The reason why Serbia made these large concessions was, as has been said above, the need of a port on the Adriatic, for the possession of which she was willing to pay a high price; and this was perfectly understood by the Bulgarian statesmen with whom the Treaty was concluded. The Macedonian concessions to Bulgaria were made to her in return for her support in the matter of an Adriatic outlet, which for Serbia was the governing motive throughout for entering upon the Treaty at all. "Why, under these circumstances," I asked a well-known Serb in a position to know the facts, "was not the question of a port definitely included in the terms of the Treaty? Your attitude then could not have been liable to misinterpretation." "We made a mistake in

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

not doing so," was the reply, "a great mistake which we bitterly regret. But we did not want to alarm Europe." Forced by the jealousies of the Powers to conceal their plans under the usual guise of a demand for Macedonian reform, the Balkan States desired no disclosure of the fact that in reality they intended a root-and-branch settlement of the Balkan question. "The extent of the concessions," it was added, "was due to the fact that we, like the Bulgarians, did not think that we were so strong as we were." When, therefore, at a later date the Bulgarians argued that there was no mention of Albania, *i.e.* of the Adriatic outlet, in the Treaty, they were literally accurate, but at the same time they knew that, though not mentioned in terms, the matter was fundamental—was, in fact, virtually a suppressed clause.

It is this that gives real importance to a visit paid in November 1912 to Budapest by M. Daneff, an ex-Premier and at the time President of the Bulgarian Sobranje. He went avowedly as the representative of his Government. On November 10 he was received by Count Berchtold (the Delegations were sitting at Budapest at the time), and in Hungarian official quarters he is stated to have intimated that Bulgaria

THE SERBO-BULGARIAN SITUATION

was not bound unconditionally to support Serb claims in controverted territorial questions. Yet on the day following the Bulgarian semi-official *Mir* itself acknowledged that the question of a Serb outlet was a *sine qua non*. For Serbia this action of Dr. Daneff, the first of an ill-fated series connected with the name of that unhappy statesman, constituted nothing less than a breach of the Treaty. If Austria had attacked Serbia in arms Bulgaria was bound to come to her aid with 200,000 men, and *a fortiori*, if the attack took a diplomatic form, she was bound to aid her diplomatically. It cannot be argued that, though bound to military aid if required, she was free to withhold her diplomatic assistance. Yet here Bulgaria, far from doing diplomatic service, actually did her Ally a disservice, and so far as the diplomatic field was concerned abandoned her. To Austria the information was important. It must be remembered that at this date—early November 1912—the decision as to the Adriatic outlet had not yet been given definitely against Serbia, though Austria was loudly declaring the impossibility of conceding it. She knew, after Dr. Daneff's declarations, that on this point the Allies were divided and that she had nothing to fear from Bulgaria, which would certainly not support her Ally in

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

arms in a question which she had already declared was no affair of hers. It is true that in any event the military situation was such as to preclude any help from Bulgaria reaching Serbia, since the former State had some 50,000 men locked up around Adrianople, while the rest of her army was before the lines of Tchatalja. This, however, really means that the terms of the Treaty had become impossible of fulfilment on the military side as they had already been repudiated on the diplomatic. Doubtless the position of Bulgaria was a difficult one, but at the same time Serbia was entitled to urge that by default, apart from stress of circumstances, her Ally had failed to give her the *quid pro quo* for the Macedonian partition boundary, and was consequently in no position to demand those concessions the return for which she had failed to render.

The next point that calls for consideration is the position of affairs at the time when the first peace negotiations between the Allies and Turkey were broken off. The question of the Adriatic outlet had been settled against Serbia; the whole of Macedonia and Southern Epirus were in the hands of the Allies; the Bulgarians were before Adrianople and Tchatalja. The negotiations had been broken off on the question

THE SERBO-BULGARIAN SITUATION

of Adrianople at the demand of Bulgaria, though in fact the Great Powers had signified that they would themselves see to it that the town should pass into Bulgarian hands. The other Allies had obtained all that they required, and there was no mention in the Treaty, implicit or explicit, of Adrianople or Thrace, both of which by race are predominantly Greco-Turkish, yet they loyally continued the war. The action of Bulgaria appears to be the more self-willed as she now declares that Thrace is of only secondary interest to her and not worth bothering about. If that attitude represents her real opinion, then her action in 1913 becomes almost incredibly foolish. It has been a matter of dispute as to when Serbia first made known her desire for the modification of the Treaty. So far as Russia was concerned she was informed in December 1912, as appears from a dispatch of M. Sazonoff to M. Hartwig, Russian Minister at Belgrade, under date December 16, 1912, in which the former states :

“ Dans la conversation qu'il a eue avec notre ambassadeur à Paris, M. Novakovitch lui a dit qu'en cas d'un refus des grandes puissances de lui laisser en propriété souveraine un port de l'Adriatique, la Serbie sera contrainte de

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

demander des compensations en Macédoine, au delà des frontières fixées dans le traité serbo-bulgaire.”*

He added that he could give no support. At Paris also M. Daneff learnt that Serbia would ask for a rectification of the Macedonian delimitation. The Bulgarians, unable to make sufficient progress in front of Adrianople, asked Serbia for help. It has been suggested† that Serbia did not at this juncture demand an alteration in the Macedonian terms of the Treaty. I am in a position to set that right. Serbia replied that she was sending forward two divisions, 50,000 men, with practically the whole of her siege artillery, but in view of the altered circumstances must demand compensation. This compensation, of course, could only be had in Macedonia. Bulgaria tacitly accepted the aid, but *made no reply to the note.*

The last point for consideration is the situation that immediately preceded the outbreak of war between the former Allies, and the attendant negotiations. Bulgaria claimed prac-

* *Vide* Russian Red Book, *Recueil de documents diplomatiques concernant les événements des Balkans.*

† Mr. Frank Fox, “Bulgaria’s Attitude,” *Fortnightly Review*, March 1915, p. 488.

THE SERBO-BULGARIAN SITUATION

tically the whole of Macedonia in virtue of the Treaty with Serbia; Thrace she claimed in virtue of conquest; Kavalla by occupation and as a commercial outlet; and finally Salonika, which was not hers by treaty or nationality or conquest, because she wanted it. To the last-named port she had early asserted her claims. On December 15, 1912, M. Isvolski reported from Paris to M. Sazonoff, *inter alia* :

“A une question que je lui posais sur les difficultés à prévoir à ce sujet [division of territory] M. Daneff répondit que la Bulgarie en aucun cas et à aucun prix n’abandonnera la ville de Salonique et me pria de porter à votre connaissance que c’était une question de vie ou de mort pour la Bulgarie et que le gouvernement bulgare ne pouvait consentir à la soumettre à l’arbitrage.”*

Easily recognizable here is the inflexible temperament and *brusquerie* of the minister who—in so far as he was not the agent of others—has to bear so large a responsibility for the misfortunes of his country. Bulgaria had not conquered Salonika, her troops were only there

* *Vide* Russian Red Book *ut supra*.

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

en droit d'alliés, and yet before any negotiations have been entered upon she demands the town, while asserting in advance that she will not submit the matter to arbitration. Later on Bulgaria refused a general arbitration on the matters in dispute with Serbia on the ground that the Treaty provided only for specific arbitration on a particular point, but this predetermined refusal of arbitration on a point not covered by any Treaty throws doubt on the *bona fides* of her plea in the other case : evidently she preferred to "hack her way through." Wherever, then, Bulgaria could advance a plea of treaty or nationality or conquest, that particular plea was advanced, and where such pleas were wanting she fell back upon her desires backed by force. When to this general attitude is added the oft-repeated boast that the Bulgars were the Prussians of the Balkans (a boast not without elements of justification), it is no wonder that Serbia and Greece took alarm, and asked themselves whether they were cast for the parts of Bavaria and Würtemberg. Evidently they were face to face with the design of a Bulgarian Balkan Empire.

Serbia was willing to submit the whole Treaty to the arbitration of the Tsar, not the delimita-

THE SERBO-BULGARIAN SITUATION

tion clause only. Her plea was that the reciprocal obligations should be examined and the degree in which they had been fulfilled. Thus the non-fulfilment of Bulgarian aid in the Adriatic affair would carry with it a reconsideration of the delimitation agreed upon as consideration. Bulgaria, dominated by Austrian counsels, claimed her price though the consideration had not been forthcoming. Two methods of easing the crisis commended themselves to Russia: a partial demobilization and a meeting of the Balkan Premiers. On May 20, 1913, M. Sazonoff proposed a reduction of forces to a third or a quarter—a proposition which a little later, on the initiative of Russia, was adopted by the conference of Ambassadors in London, and on May 31 Petrograd was able to announce that the proposal had been accepted. Bulgaria, however, adopted an equivocal attitude, and on June 7 M. Sazonoff instructed M. Nekliudoff to put the pointed question to Bulgaria :

“d’où vient maintenant le retard de la Bulgarie à procéder à cette mesure simultanément avec les alliés. Cette proposition nous a été formulée par la Bulgarie, qui, à ce qu’il paraît, évite maintenant de la remplir, ainsi que de prendre

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

part à l'entrevue des quatre présidents du conseil à Salonique."

The Bulgarians made conditions of a joint occupation of Macedonia, and the proposal fell through, although again directly advanced by Serbia.

The second measure proposed by Russia was a meeting of the Premiers. It is incorrect to represent Russia as stiffening the attitude of Serbia or as lukewarm in the cause of peace. While Count Tisza was championing the right of the Balkan States to engage in internecine war, Russia strove for peace in every way and was ready to approve of anything that would tend towards securing it. In April M. Nekliudoff reported the warlike feeling in Sofia, and added that M. Gueshoff was evidently powerless to control events. On the 22nd of that month the Russian Foreign Minister proposed a meeting of the Balkan Premiers, but was informed from Sofia that the idea found no sympathy there. Throughout Bulgaria was opposed to a round-table conference, since her object was, after obtaining a settlement of the dispute with Serbia, to be left face to face with Greece. Russia, while advocating a general reliance on the Treaty, was in favour of reasonable concessions by

THE SERBO-BULGARIAN SITUATION

Bulgaria as being likely to contribute to the solidity of the alliance. She naturally had no liking for the invidious task of arbitration which M. Sazonoff confessed would be *très pénible* for her, and she therefore welcomed the meeting between the Serb and Bulgar Premiers and counselled a meeting with M. Venizelos also. In the event of these meetings proving fruitless, she would welcome the Premiers to Petrograd. Time pressed, and the idea of a general preliminary meeting was abandoned, and Russia asked for a meeting in her capital, which M. Pashitch considered more likely to lead to the desired end. Bulgaria again adopted an equivocal attitude : she was willing to accede to the idea if her point of view were adopted previously, to which the Russian Minister replied that if all the matters in dispute were cleared up beforehand there would obviously be no need for the meeting itself. On June 17, ten days after the Tsar's telegram, he wrote to M. Nekliudoff :

“ Nous insistons donc pour obtenir de M. Daneff la réponse la plus prompte : désire-t-il, oui ou non, venir à S. Pétersbourg ? ”

Finally M. Daneff caused M. Sazonoff to be informed that the Bulgarian condition that the arbitration should be confined to the specific

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

territorial stipulations of the Treaty was his last word. This was on June 25, and early on June 30 the Bulgarian attack was made.

There has been printed * a private letter from the Bulgarian Minister to Russia, M. Bobtcheff, to M. Theodoroff, the Bulgarian Finance Minister, which throws a vivid light on how the situation was regarded by the former. It is dated June 20, and in it occur the following words :

“ . . . Le refus de notre premier ministre de se rendre ici à la conférence produira le plus terrible, le pire effet. On le prendra comme une offense à l'Empereur lui-même. Que la guerre doive avoir lieu ou non, j'estime que nous ne pouvons pas nous refuser à prendre part à la conférence. . . . L'Empereur et la gouvernement sont décidés à l'arbitrage conformément au traité et dans son cadre. . . . Que le premier ministre vienne ici et qu'il dise sa pensée ; mais qu'il vienne . . . M. Delcassé . . . m'a dit, ' Gardez-vous des conseils secrets qu'on vous donne, car ils ne visent que les intérêts de leurs auteurs ' ” . . .

It was not for want of good advice that Bulgaria fell ; she had been warned by Russia of the

* M. Yakchitch, “ La seconde guerre Balkanique,” *La Revue Politique Internationale*, April 1914. This article gives extracts from the Russian Red Book (so called in the article), for which I am indebted.

THE SERBO-BULGARIAN SITUATION

Turkish and Rumanian dangers, and the result bore out the words of M. Sazonoff that it was clear to him that Bulgaria was acting on the suggestion of others who were holding out hopes which would only lead to bitter disillusionment. The poignant words of the Bulgarian Minister passed unheeded.

The nature of the Bulgarian attack is well known, as also General Savoff's truly extraordinary reasons, that it was necessary to raise the *moral* of the troops and make them consider their ex-allies as enemies, to make the allies more conciliatory as a result of the "violent blows" that would be dealt to them, and to put Russian policy in face of the *danger of a commencement of war!* The Bulgarians subsequently explained that they did not regard the attack as a beginning of war and were apparently astonished that their violent blows had failed in their conciliatory object.

Even Serb forbearance was distorted into a confession of weakness by the Bulgarian command, which paid an unconscious tribute to their enemy's desire for peace. General Kovatcheff, commanding the Fourth Bulgarian Army, in an order, No. 29, dated June 17, said :

" Our men must be told that the Greek and Serb soldiers, so courageous against defenceless

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

populations, are only cowards whom our approach alone has terrified. . . . By allowing the various échelons of our army, at the moment of concentration, to pass before the front of the Serb troops without acting against them, our enemies have clearly shown their moral state, and the fear they have of measuring themselves against us. If it were otherwise, they would never have allowed our concentration to be effected without hindrance in conditions altogether unknown hitherto in history."

It has been no pleasure to rake over the embers of this miserable controversy, and no one at this time would wish to make Bulgaria's position more difficult; but since the present military and diplomatic situation has forced the subject of Serbo-Bulgarian relations into pressing actuality, it has been necessary to consider the subject in the light of the fuller knowledge now available. It is useless and harmful talk to hark back to the Treaty of 1912 as a basis of proposals. The Treaty is as dead as Jacob Marley, it belongs to conditions that are past, and was entered upon by Serbia for a consideration not received and for motives no longer operative. It is true that as a result of the war she will obtain an Adriatic coast-line, but that will not be thanks to Bulgaria,

116

THE SERBO-BULGARIAN SITUATION

and the former concessions can therefore no longer be in question. Serbia holds what she had previously claimed on national grounds, and has paid for also by the blood shed in the Second Balkan War. The more indiscreet friends of Bulgaria are doing her bad service by exciting hopes which can find no realization, and the temper which scoffed at the proposals of M. Venizelos when they were made known is not one that augurs reasonableness in the Bulgarians at the present time. The danger lies precisely in the attitude that declares that Bulgaria cannot "permit" a greater Greece. What is required is a sense of realities and an honest attempt to arrive at a practicable agreement. The dangers to Bulgarian aspirations of an intransigent attitude should be manifest, and it is false friendship not to point them out. At the moment of writing, Bulgarian arrogance is increasing to a point that would be ludicrous did it not contain the seeds of tragedy.

What, then, can Bulgaria hope to get from Serbia? The answer to that question has undoubtedly been modified by the Dalmatian agreement with Italy. That agreement, which was signed on May 26, was concluded with Italy by the Powers of the Triple Entente over the head of Serbia, which was not even consulted as to the

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

destinies of the maritime Serbo-Croats. It is difficult not to condemn this clandestine method of procedure by which the national rights of the Dalmatians (one in race and speech with their inland brethren) were bartered away in the good old Metternichian way. The delimitation follows generally the lines indicated by Sir Arthur Evans in his letter of May 10 to the *Manchester Guardian*. Of continental Dalmatia Italy receives all north of a line drawn from a short distance to the north of Spalato to the Dinaric Alps, the line itself being dangerously close to Spalato, after the model of the existing Spizza-Antivari line between Austria and Montenegro. Traù goes to the Serbs. Of insular Dalmatia she gets Lissa to the south of the latitude of Spalato, the islands along the northern portion of the coast-line, and also the outermost islands running between Dalmatia and Istria, Lussin, etc., but not the inner islands, Veglia, etc., nor the part of Istria east of the river Arsa. The Triple Entente guarantees, so I am informed, these possessions to Italy for a term of fifteen years. Not only will she thus include in her dominions some half-million Serbo-Croats, but she will be in a position to dominate the remaining coast-line, for Lussin closes the Quarnero and the approaches to Fiume (which Italy does not obtain), as Lissa commands the

THE SERBO-BULGARIAN SITUATION

approaches to Spalato and the Narenta river. When it is remembered that in addition to these acquisitions Italy will also hold (apparently) Valona, it will be seen that her command of the Adriatic will be absolute, and Serb commerce and maritime activity will exist only on sufferance. This agreement has aroused among Serbo-Croats an intensity of feeling of which the public has little idea—far stronger than I feel justified in setting forth at this present juncture. It is quite as strong among the Croats as among the Serbs.* For the Triple Entente this agreement connotes an abandonment *pro tanto* of the principle of nationality and a return to the ideas of the Congress of Vienna, containing the seeds of future war and, after the war, a possible, and in certain circumstances probable, regrouping of the States which have a score to settle against Italy. Nor is the division of the remaining

* The hopes in which certain Italian organs have indulged as to the possibility of exploiting, in the general settlement, differences between Croats and Serbs are doomed to sterility. In Croatia, so I have been told by Dr. Hinkovic, the well-known advocate of the Serbs in the Agram High Treason Trial and one of the leaders of the Croato-Serb coalition, the old bitter Catholic Croat anti-Serb feeling is dead except among a few politicians and their followers of the older generation. The younger generation will have none of such ideas.

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

coast-line between Serbia and Montenegro so simple as it might appear. There are here elements of ambiguity, and when, if ever, the diplomatic history of this war is written, there will be revealed here the story of a treacherous intrigue directed against Serbia by a Power hostile to her expansion.

The result of the Dalmatian agreement is that Salonika remains for Serbia of practically undiminished importance, as giving her a back-door free of Italian domination. The line of the Vardar which connects her with Salonika will assume an even greater importance if certain canalization schemes mature. English engineers are already studying the project of making the Vardar and Morava rivers navigable and connecting them by a canal through the relatively easy water parting which divides their head streams. Such a canal system would unite Salonika by water carriage with the Danube and the central European canals connected with it. The great importance of such a project is obvious. There is little doubt that Bulgaria can obtain the cession of the districts of Kotchana and Ishtip up to the hills forming the eastern boundary of the Vardar Valley and also of the town of Doiran, to which last concession, however, Greece would probably be opposed. Be-

THE SERBO-BULGARIAN SITUATION

yond that I believe that any demands will be met by an absolute *non possumus*. Not only will Serbia maintain the ethnic claims which have been discussed above, but she will plead alternatively that, even if the southern Macedonians were Bulgars (which she denies), just as her own claims based on nationality have been set aside in Dalmatia in favour of the alleged strategical necessities of Italy, so must Bulgarian claims in Macedonia yield to Serb strategical necessities, themselves largely the creation of the Dalmatian agreement. The concession of Bulgarian claims would bring Bulgaria into contact with the future sphere (apparently) of Italy in Albania, and Serbia would be held in an Italo-Bulgarian vice, a prospect which Serbia cannot view lightly, since Italy seems disposed to adopt the former rôle of Austria *vis-à-vis* the South Slavs. The Entente can hardly force Serbia to recede from this position, or secretly promise part of its ally's territory to another State. It is easy for the partisans of Bulgaria to demand that the Entente should "dictate" terms. But how can the dictation be carried into effect, especially if the State refusing dictation be an ally in arms? Should the future European Congress assign to Bulgaria territory to the west of the Vardar, Serbia, so it is said, will refuse to execute such

LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS

provisions and will prefer to face her third Bulgarian war. M. Pashitch has a deserved reputation as a moderate statesman, but there are limits even to his enormous authority with his fellow-countrymen, and were he to sign away the Macedonian heritage he would fall, and even the dynasty might be involved. Serbia does not see why her possessions, actual and potential, should be used as a common stock from which portions can be cut away with which to bribe first this State and then that.

The adjustments outlined above would fall short of Bulgarian ambitions, but if accompanied by a restoration of the Enos-Midia line, and, if possible, by a Greek concession in regard to Kavalla, they would form no slight gain of territory and would put Bulgaria in an infinitely better position, economic, commercial, and strategic, than at present. But Bulgaria must seize the opportunities that present themselves while there is yet time, or her disillusionment will be great and may be final. The language recently held to Serbia by several writers is altogether deplorable, and the idea of coercing a superbly brave ally in our own interests is little less than iniquitous. To requite her services by forcing her to yield in matters vitally affecting her future and even her real independence in

THE SERBO-BULGARIAN SITUATION

response to the blackmailing demands of Bulgaria—who would doubtless be as false and hostile in the future as in the past—would be an act worthy of our foes. No such reward should be given to the cynical *realismus* openly avowed by the Bulgarian Premier.

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