ANGLO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

1689–1943

by

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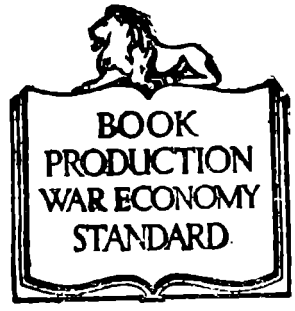

THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED IN
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PREFACE

FOR THE historian who aims at writing objectively, who seeks to subordinate the expression of his own personal sentiments and opinions to the impartial presentation of facts, a preface affords the only opportunity of addressing his readers personally. I have frequently availed myself of this privilege. I do so in reference to this book more eagerly than ever, because I wish to explain the difficult circumstances under which it has been written, since they may extenuate its obvious limitations and defects. No author is entitled to deprecate criticism of his work. But some sympathy may be extended to a writer who believes that he has something to say, but cannot say it in a manner worthy of his subject.

This book has been written by an exile deprived by a German bomb of access to all but a fragment of his own library, and to practically the whole of his carefully collected memoranda, and is also denied by circumstances the use of any great library. Yet, if the book was to be written at all, its publication could not without disadvantage be delayed. The result is that this book is, to an extent for which I apologize, a reshuffle of works already published by me. But the method is perhaps justifiable, because the materials drawn upon are dispersed among many volumes, and it seemed worth while to collect and focus them upon a subject which, though evidently of great importance at the moment, has never as far as I know previously been presented in any similar form or with a similar object.

The object will, I hope, be made clear from the pages that follow. It calls, therefore, for no reiteration in these prefatory paragraphs.

I have attempted to adhere strictly to the subject implied in the title, the relations between England and Russia, excluding, as far as possible, reference to the domestic policy of either country, except in so far as that policy has had a bearing upon the mutual relations of the two Powers

concerned. To this rule Chapters II and III form an exception, made because a brief sketch of the evolution of Russia seemed, down to the reign of Peter the Great, essential to a comprehension of the subsequent narrative, and because it is, I suspect, to many English readers, unfamiliar.

Had circumstances permitted I should like to have included some more maps, but, in any case, no one should read a book like this without a good historical atlas at hand.

October 19, 1943 J. A. R. M.

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CHAPTER I

PRELUDE

There can be no more important question . . . than that of Anglo-Soviet relations. . . . We need to face fairly and squarely the difficulties that beset our relations. . . . To overcome the difficulties which behaviour or outlook has presented in the past there must be better understanding of one another. . . . We still have a long way to go before we can be satisfied on this point, and that is largely due to the history of the past.

SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS (*June* 21, 1943)

THE WORDS of Sir Stafford Cripps, though rapidly becoming a commonplace, may be taken as the text of this book. Englishmen do not easily understand foreigners; still less do foreigners understand Englishmen. This is especially true of Englishmen and Russians. Nor is this remarkable. Russia is not, and has never been, a member of the European family. Ever since the fall of the Roman Empire, and the migrations consequent upon the Norse and Teutonic conquests, there has been a measure of kinship, despite wide diversities of development, between Scandinavians, Englishmen, Germans, Frenchmen, Iberians, and Italians. Even Poland, thanks to its adherence to the Western form of Christianity, had some affinities with Europe. Russia during long centuries had none.

§ ISOLATION OF RUSSIA

Cut off by Poland, East Prussia, and Sweden from the Baltic, and by the Ottoman Turks from the Black Sea, Russia had for a long period no access to European waters save by Archangel, which for a considerable part of the year was blocked by ice.

Another point is in this connexion significant. When Russia did adopt Christianity she adopted it not in the Western but in the Eastern form; she looked for spiritual leadership not to Rome but to Constantinople.

On such topics, however, this book can do no more than touch lightly; nor is it concerned with the political evolution of Russia, nor with Russia's place in the polity of Europe, but solely with the relations which have in the past existed between Russia and Great Britain. If misunderstanding is now and for the future to be avoided it is essential that there should be complete frankness about the past. Yet no prolonged retrospect is called for. Subsequent pages will disclose that except for a certain amount of commercial intercourse, dating from the sixteenth century, Great Britain did not make contact with Russia until the eighteenth century, nor except at rare and brief intervals did contact then make for mutual confidence or friendship.

Moreover, Russia was until recent times primarily an Asiatic Power: while not until the eighteenth century was England concerned—except commercially—with Asia, the Middle or the Far East. As soon, however, as India began to exercise an influence upon English politics, carelessness gave place to concern. Concern for the safety of the nascent British Empire in India gave England for the first time an interest in what came to be known to diplomacy as *the Eastern Question*, and in particular in the conditions prevailing in the Ottoman Empire in Europe.

§ RUSSIA AND TURKEY

After the close of the seventeenth century those conditions became rapidly worse. As the internal government of the Turks deteriorated, their external power waned. As the power of Turkey waned the power and ambition of the Muscovite waxed. From the days of Peter the Great (1689–1725) onwards, access to the Black Sea and a hold upon its waters and navigation became an increasing object of ambition to the rulers of Russia. Until the eighteenth century the Black Sea was, however, a Turkish lake, and only in 1774 was this object or ambition definitely and securely attained.

§ RUSSIA AND CONSTANTINOPLE

But the Black Sea was, after all, an inland sea—Russia was therefore determined not merely to get into it, but to get out of it.

That meant that Russia must either expel the Turks from Constantinople and herself occupy that commanding site, or at the lowest must establish such a stranglehold upon the Porte as to enable her to control the narrow Straits and so obtain egress into European waters. Yet, rapid as was Russian advance under the Empress Catherine II (1762–1796), she had not, when the eighteenth century closed, achieved either alternative.

Before that time a great English minister had sounded the first note of alarm at Russia's progress in south-eastern Europe. But the younger Pitt failed to arouse in the English Parliament or people any sense of the danger to English interests which that progress might portend.

§ RUSSIA AND THE BALTIC

Simultaneously with her advance in the south, Russia was advancing towards supremacy in Northern Europe. Her advance towards the Baltic alarmed France. Sweden and Poland no less than Turkey had formed for many years the pivots on which the diplomacy of France traditionally turned. Consequently it was the policy of France to sustain those countries. Thus it was that the rapid decline of France after the death of Louis XIV (1715) sensibly weakened the resistance which Sweden, Poland, and Turkey could offer to the advance of Russia. From the day when the Northern War ended in the negotiation of the Treaty of Nystadt (1721) Sweden ceased to play a predominant or even an important part in the affairs of Northern Europe. Peter the Great had established Russia firmly on the Baltic by the foundation of Petersburg, while the disintegration of Poland gave Catherine II the opportunity of partitioning (1773–95) Polish territory between herself and her neighbours, and of thus erasing from the map a country which for centuries had been the outpost and bulwark of Western civilization.

§ THE TSAR ALEXANDER AND NAPOLEON

During the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars Russian policy, dictated solely by self-interest, pursued a devious course. In the final overthrow of Napoleon, however, the 'enigmatic Tsar' (Alexander I) played such a conspicuous, and indeed such an indispensable part, that he was able to exercise a decisive influence upon the settlement of 1814–15.

Russia was by that time definitely established—despite her tardy entrance upon the European stage—as a great—at the moment indeed the greatest— continental Power. In natural elation, not unmingled with generosity, Alexander launched his project, *the Holy Alliance*. Even if sincere, the Alliance was a chimera, and however high-minded in its original conception, was speedily diverted to serve the purely reactionary and autocratic designs of its author and of the great Austrian Minister, Prince Metternich.

§ THE REVOLT OF THE GREEKS

To those designs British policy under the firm direction of Castlereagh and Canning (1812–27) was consistently and, on the whole, successfully opposed. The gallant struggle of the Greeks for national independence and the emancipation of their country from the tyranny of the Turkish yoke did, however, bring England and Russia, for the first time, into collaboration, against Turkey. By their action, greatly assisted by the 'untoward accident' of Navarino, the Porte was compelled to acquiesce in the virtual independence of the Hellenic Kingdom. The accord between England and Russia proved to be purely temporary. Under circumstances which will presently demand detailed analysis Russia was able to exploit the weakness of Turkey and, by the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi (1833), to impose a virtual Protectorate upon European Turkey.

§ ANGLO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

That treaty marked the real beginning of acute jealousy between England and Russia in regard to the solution of

the problem of the Near East. Lord Palmerston, who for thirty years was responsible for English foreign policy, was truculently anti-Russian. Of that truculence the Treaties of London (1840 and 1841), not to add the Treaty of Paris (1856) which ended the Crimean War, were in part the outcome. By those treaties and that war Russia was effectually headed off from Constantinople. The mantle of Palmerston fell upon the shoulders of Disraeli: the crisis of 1854 was almost exactly reproduced in 1876, and by the Treaty of Berlin (1878) Russia was again denied supremacy at Constantinople.

Bismarck then took a hand in the game. One of the prime objects of his diplomacy was to keep England and Russia at loggerheads. The rapid advance of Russia in Central Asia served that end. From the 'eighties down to the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 relations between the two great Powers were never really friendly, and more than once an actual explosion appeared to be imminent.

§ THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION

From 1914 to 1917 Russia cordially co-operated with Great Britain and France to resist German aggression. But in 1917 the Tsardom collapsed. The 'constitutional monarchists' and the parliamentary republicans—both in favour of continuing the war against Germany—failed to establish themselves in power, and were in time superseded by a party of out-and-out communists and republicans. Inspired by the gospel of Karl Marx, and led by three of his most ardent disciples—Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin—the Bolsheviks instituted a reign of terror comparable in ferocity with, and modelled on the example of, the French Jacobins. They successfully established throughout Russia a federation of Soviet Republics based on the dictatorship of the proletariat, promptly renounced all 'imperialist' ambitions, called off the war, and concluded with Germany the shameful Peace of Brest-Litovsk (March 1918). The defection of Soviet Russia gravely imperilled the position of the Western

allies, but fortunately the adhesion of the United States turned the scale against Germany, who in November 1918 made an unconditional surrender.

§ THE COMINTERN

The success of the Bolshevik revolution opened a new era in the relations of England and Russia. To question the right of a people to set up for themselves whatever form of Government they may prefer is wholly opposed to English tradition. Pitt had not questioned it in the case of France in 1792. But the Bolsheviks like the French Jacobins were not content with that. In accordance with the gospel of Marx they preached the doctrine of world-revolution. The imperialistic and capitalistic world should be compelled to adopt the Bolshevik creed. To effect this the *Comintern* or *Third International* was founded in March 1919 under the leadership of Zinoviev, one of Lenin's most trusted lieutenants.

The English Government could not view with unconcern this development. The less so since the conclusion of the Armistice with Germany was followed by a rather alarming measure of unrest among certain sections of the wage-earners in England, notably the miners, the railwaymen, and the general transport workers. Among them there was undisguised admiration for the aims, if not the methods, of the Russian Bolsheviks, and in 1920 they attempted by 'direct action' to dictate the policy of the Government towards Poland and Russia. Mr. Lloyd George met this attempt with exemplary and effective firmness, but there were repeated strikes and a great deal of smouldering discontent. In 1924 the Socialist party, having been put into office but not into power by Mr. Asquith, were bent upon establishing more friendly relations with Russia. But their efforts towards that end were not felicitous, and it was mainly their association with Russia that brought them to grief in the General Election of 1924. The collapse of the General Strike in 1926 completed the discomfiture of the British Socialists, and convinced Stalin (upon whom the mantle of Lenin had fallen

in 1924) that England was not ripe for revolution. Stalin promptly repudiated Trotsky, Zinoviev, and the other leaders of the *Comintern*, and those who could not—like Trotsky—escape from Russia, paid dearly for their opposition to the new and exceedingly shrewd dictator of Russia.

§ STALIN

After the discomfiture of Trotsky and the 'internationals' Stalin's position at home was virtually unchallenged. He used it with a twofold purpose: to reorganize the whole economic, industrial, commercial, and agricultural life of Russia, without too nice a regard for Marxian or any other shibboleths, and so, utilizing the vast natural resources of his country and profiting by all the lessons that experts with first-hand knowledge of the latest methods of industry could teach him, to enable his country to speak as an equal with her enemies—or friends—in the gate. That was Stalin's primary object. Hardly second to it in importance was his anxiety to re-establish Russia as a 'Great Power' among the nations of the world. He threw all his weight into the scale of European peace; he attempted to make 'Collective Security', as proclaimed at Geneva, a reality; to preserve the independence of the smaller and weaker Powers, and, above all, to frustrate Hitler's ambition to make Nazi-Germany dominant in the world.

§ STALIN AND HITLER

Stalin was one of the first statesmen in Europe to penetrate and expose Hitler's designs. Not, however, until 1934 did Russia obtain, by her admission to the League of Nations, a platform from which to press upon the attention of Europe her views on the situation. Her representative at Geneva, M. Litvinoff, though unmistakably a statesman of unusual ability, compromised his position by an assumption of buffoonery. Consequently, no one, at the time, took seriously his startling proposal of 'immediate, complete, and general disarmament . . . the disbandment of all land, sea, and air

forces; the destruction of all weapons and military supplies: the scrapping of all warships and military aeroplanes, the destruction of all fortresses, naval and air bases, military plants and factories', etc., etc. It is impossible to say whether the proposal was intended as anything more than a *reductio ad absurdum* of the proceedings of the Disarmament Conference. In any case, as was shrewdly observed, Russia herself had much to gain and little (at that time) to lose by adopting the proposals since the weapons on which she relied were not exclusively nor mainly material.[1]

Russia's diplomatic position was, however, rapidly improving. France had concluded a non-aggression treaty with her in 1932, and after the breakdown of the Disarmament Conference, would gladly, if Germany had not been unwilling, have extended the Locarno principle to Eastern Europe. Great Britain had so far relaxed her suspicions as to conclude a Trade Agreement with Moscow in 1934, but was not prepared to admit the Soviet Government to full confidence nor to diplomatic collaboration.

§ INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA

That attitude unfortunately, but not unintelligibly, persisted down to the day when Hitler suddenly launched his attack upon his Russian ally. Much that was, at that time, imperfectly appreciated by Great Britain, and less excusably by France—is now revealed. We now know that Russia, while adhering to the Soviet form of government, and still theoretically faithful to the gospel of Marx, had, in fact, admitted, in the interest of efficient production, a considerable admixture of individualism in practice. Labour began to be rewarded not according to its need, but to its productivity. Enterprise, though still collective, did not exclude the principle of production for 'profit'. Personal initiative was encouraged and rewarded; the investment of foreign capital was welcomed; the brains of foreign industrialists were picked; and the practice of Henry Ford was preferred to the theory of Karl Marx. But only very gradually did

[1] Temperley: *The Whispering Gallery of Europe*, pp. 77, 81.

the knowledge of this profound change permeate the consciousness of the people of Western Europe. A few individuals realized it, and endeavoured to persuade the Governments and parliaments, and the foreign Press, but for the most part their efforts were in vain. Russia was still regarded as the citadel of Communism, and Hitler's anti-Bolshevik propaganda and his anti-Comintern Pacts, confirmed the suspicions of many Governments whose detestation of Nazism and Fascism was as genuine as their fear of Bolshevism.

§ BOYCOTT OF RUSSIA

Not least did these sentiments prevail in the diplomatic sphere. The consequence was that the friendly advances made by Russia, which could alone have saved Czechoslovakia and Poland, were repelled by Great Britain, and even by France, and that from the Conferences which culminated at Munich Russian representatives were rigidly, and to their natural disgust and humiliation, excluded.

At the eleventh hour France and Great Britain attempted to enlist the help of Russia against Germany, whose perfidy at last stood revealed to their respective Governments. A British trade mission was sent to Moscow in March 1939, and negotiations for an agreement to secure the safety of Poland and Roumania—to whom Great Britain was pledged —were opened. But they hung fire and the dispatch to Moscow of a Foreign Office expert, Mr. William Strang (June 11), failed to expedite them. Mr. Strang had to return to London empty-handed, and his place was taken in Moscow by a Franco-British military mission.

But the sands had run out. Herod and Pilate, if they had not made friends, had concluded a non-aggression Pact (August 23) and England had been completely fooled by Moscow. *Spretae injuria formae.* Russia avenged herself for the rejection of her proffered friendship. Poland was sacrificed to the suspicions which had kept England and Russia apart. England and France did, indeed, inform Germany that they would fulfil their obligations towards Poland. They were powerless to do so. France

herself, to the surprise of all save those who had intimate knowledge of her military obscurantism and domestic disunion, collapsed under the mighty blows delivered by Germany.

§ THE BRITISH EMPIRE ALONE

Hitler was in a few months master of the whole continent outside Russia. The British Empire stood absolutely alone in grim determination to interpose between Hitler and world domination. 'Never in the long course of human history have so many owed so much to so few.' The almost miraculous victory won by British airmen in the 'Battle of Britain' (1940) averted the danger of invasion for that year, and may have decided Hitler to make himself secure on his eastern front before attempting the conquest of England. In June 1941 he treacherously fell upon his not unsuspecting ally, and for a time carried everything before him in the invasion of Russia. Mr. Churchill, who had superseded Mr. Chamberlain as Prime Minister in 1940, declared, without a moment's hesitation, that Great Britain was from that hour the ally of Soviet Russia (June 1941). This alliance was solemnly confirmed by a Treaty, drafted in the most precise terms, to remain in force for twenty years, concluded between the two Powers on May 26, 1942.

Nevertheless, despite the prodigious and self-sacrificing effort made by Great Britain to sustain the Russian effort, it became only too clear that misunderstandings had not been completely removed. It is difficult for a land-power to assess at its true value the contribution made by a 'silent service', or even perhaps to have accurate knowledge of the losses of men and material incurred in the conveyance of supplies and munitions by routes exceedingly hazardous, or lengthy, or both. Stalin was impatient at the delay in opening a 'Second Front' by the invasion of Germany by an Anglo-American force, imperfectly appreciating, maybe, the military significance of the persistent attack of British and American bombers upon German factories, harbours, railways, and so on. Still less was it recognized how much

we had been compelled, at times, to weaken our own 'fronts' in North Africa and elsewhere in order to supply the urgent needs of an ally.

It may be that it will be possible to sound a somewhat different note before we reach the concluding pages of this book. So much inconsistency is the penalty that must be paid by the narrator of contemporary events, but most happily will it be paid by the author, and be forgiven, it is hoped, by the reader.

The appropriate function of an overture is to touch lightly the fugitive themes which subsequent numbers should develop and elaborate. That function has now, if incompletely, been fulfilled.

CHAPTER II

THE EVOLUTION OF RUSSIA TO 1689

The great Russian people were hammered out of peaceful, silent, pacific elements by constant and cruel blows from enemies on all sides, which implanted in the least intelligent of Russians an instinct of national defence and of the value of a national dictatorship. Russia lived in a state of constant war. . . . This necessitated equally constant and regular measures of defence. Everywhere the frontier line was planted with military colonists.

PARES

IN ORDER to understand the historical relations between England and Russia two facts must, throughout the story, be kept constantly in mind. The first is that England, during the last two centuries and a half—ever since the days when she first came into contact with Russia—has ceased to be merely an insular state, but, in increasing measure, has become the centre of an Empire dispersed throughout the world. The second is that Russia has never been exclusively nor mainly a European country. The former truth has long been a commonplace of historical commentators and calls for no further elaboration. The latter demands brief notice in relation to the influence exerted by Russian geography upon Russian history.

§ PHYSICS AND POLITICS

'We remained in the rearguard of Europe; we guarded the rear of European civilization.' So writes the great Russian historian, Kluchevsky. W. H. Chamberlin, who quotes the passage, adds: 'It remained debatable whether Russia was the most eastern of European powers or the most western of Asiatic powers.' In either case the outstanding feature of Russian physiography is the vast area of its territory. Covering about one-sixth of the whole land surface of the globe, Russia is about twice as big as Europe. Of the total area less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ million square miles are in Europe,

over 6¾ millions in Asia, though the population of European is double that of Asiatic Russia. Relatively to its area the external frontiers of Russia are almost insignificant. Still more insignificant are the internal obstacles in a land which extends from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean, from St. Petersburg to Vladivostock.

In its iron, zinc, lead, coal, manganese, cobalt, gold, silver, and platinum, and, above all, in its timber, Russia possesses vast natural resources. The most striking features of the landscape are, indeed, its forests and its superb river system.

§ THE RIVERS

Russian history, as commentators have constantly pointed out, has centred on the great rivers. 'One river after another,' says one of the best of them—Sir Bernard Pares[1]—'would link up into a history of its own, the Dnieper system with its capital at Kiev, the Volga system with Moscow, the Volkhov-Neva road, first with Novgorod the Great, now almost a village, but once the greatest merchant city in Russia, and later, near the end of its course to the sea, with St. Petersburg.' The Kiev period extended from the middle of the ninth century until the middle of the thirteenth; the Moscow period from the thirteenth until the beginning of the eighteenth century; the St. Petersburg period from Peter's time until it was ended by the Bolshevik revolution in 1917. The supremacy of St. Petersburg, however, was always personal rather than national; Peter the Great could make it the administrative capital, and the centre of court life, and fashion naturally followed the court. But the lure of the ancient capital ultimately proved to be irresistible.

§ MOSCOW

'Tucked away,' as Pares picturesquely puts it, 'in the watershed, it could serve as a refuge when the Tartar domination was at its height and later could sally down the various rivers to construct a great empire. Also, it was comparatively

[1] In my rare references to the internal history of Russia, I owe a special debt to the various works (see Appendix, p. 220) of Sir Bernard Pares.

near to the junction of the two great zones of the country, the forest and the plain which are complementary to each other.' Moscow, therefore, was evidently designed by nature to be the capital of Russia. History had confirmed the monitions of nature, and back to Moscow Lenin transferred the capital on March 14, 1918.

§ NATIONAL UNITY

Upon Moscow the unification of Russia centred; but with the unification of this great Nation-state the present narrative can deal only in barest outline.

Many causes contributed to retard unification: the vast extent of the country; the fact that it contains no fewer than one hundred different nationalities; and (not least) the constant interruptions to peaceful development arising from the irruptions of fierce and barbarous invaders. Nor were disruptive elements more than partially counteracted by the gradual establishment of the Moscow autocracy and the influence of the Church.

§ THE CHURCH

Before the end of the tenth century Byzantine influence had begun to manifest itself in Russia, and Christianity in the Eastern or Orthodox form had obtained a foothold which it steadily extended down to the fall of the Monarchy (1917), and has never entirely lost.

For a thousand years the Church gave its sanction and support to the Monarchy, while at the same time, despite its immense accumulation of wealth and the insidious multiplication of abuses, the Church brought consolation and comfort to the great mass of a people who are still essentially susceptible to the influence of religion. At Moscow the Russian Church wisely established its ecclesiastical capital and made it in 1325 the seat of the Metropolitan.

§ RUSSIA AND ITS INVADERS

Apart from the topographical advantages already analysed, and from the prestige attaching to it as the ecclesiastical

capital, Moscow owed its ascendancy to another circumstance. 'From the dim, half-legendary days of the tenth and eleventh centuries,' writes Chamberlin, 'when the princes of Kiev went out to battle against the Pechengi . . . and other nomads, down to the systematic conquest of Central Asia in the nineteenth century, Russia has been in constant contact and intermittent conflict with the Asiatic people of the Steppe, Tartars, Turcomans, Turks, Kirghiz, and others. This struggle with the nomadic tribes of the Steppe is generally recognized as one of the major forces in Russian historical development.'[1]

During the supremacy of Kiev (*circ.* 850–*circ.* 1250), Russia had consisted of a number of republics, independent and democratic, and any attempt at unification was effectually frustrated by a series of invasions, in particular by the great Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century. The whole of south-western Russia up to and beyond the borders of Poland and Hungary was ravaged by these invaders. Fortunately the fabric of the Russian Church survived, nor did the invaders expel the peasants from their holdings, nor supersede the authority of the native princes, though the princes were compelled to adopt the civilization and mode of life of their conquerors, and do homage to the Khan and to accept investiture at his hands. The Tartars did, indeed, actually minister to the pre-eminence of Moscow by entrusting to its Prince Ivan I (1328–40) the responsibility of collecting the tribute due to them, while a certain stability also accrued to it by the gradual growth of the principle of primogeniture as opposed to that of equal division among surviving sons. 'It was,' says Pares, 'on this foundation that the Russian autocracy grew up; not, at the outset, by any theory of government, but by the mere fact that the eldest son could buy up all the rest . . . that the rival princes by their constant subdivisions provided him with a number of separate preys which he could easily absorb piecemeal.'[2]

In respect of the Tartar ascendancy Moscow definitely reversed the policy of Kiev. The princes of Kiev, to their

[1] *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 1–2. [2] *History of Russia*, p. 81.

own undoing, had offered an heroic if vain resistance to the invaders. Moscow, on the contrary, to its immediate humiliation but ultimate advantage, bowed its neck beneath the yoke of the conqueror, looking patiently forward to the day when submission might reap the appropriate reward of the meek.

Nor had the princes of Moscow to wait overlong. Their Tartar overlords rewarded their pliability by confidence, used them as agents (not ill-rewarded) for the collection of tribute from the rest of conquered Russia, and by investing the Grand Prince of Moscow with judicial authority over other Russian princes conceded to the new 'capital city' a species of suzerainty. Nobles and princes found it to their advantage to take service with the influential agents of the Tartar overlords, and, as often happens, the agents found themselves strong enough to challenge the authority of their employers, and, after a protracted struggle, to supersede it, and to stand forth as the champions of an embryonic Russian nationality.

§ IVAN III (1462–1505)

One of the greatest of the earlier rulers of Russia was Ivan III—'the Great', who was roughly contemporary with Louis XI of France, and wrought for Russia a work which, if not precisely parallel with that of the great architect of the absolute monarchy of France, is not unworthy, *mutatis mutandis*, of comparison with his. The Tartars had again invaded Russia and burnt Moscow to the ground in 1381, though that was their last effort on a national scale. But for centuries to come the Tartar lords of this or that small kingdom continued to give trouble even to a more or less consolidated Russia.

Before the close of the fifteenth century, however, the Tartar ascendancy was finally broken by Ivan III, who assumed—not without warrant—the title of Ruler of all Russia, and extended the authority of Moscow over a wide extent of territory. His most striking success was the conquest and annexation of the city-republics and the vast territory of Novgorod. The principal inhabitants he put to the

sword, while of the meaner citizens he deported 8,000 into Eastern Russia. Yet his success, if striking, was ambiguous. Ivan did, indeed, notably contribute to the unification of Russia under the Tsardom of Moscow, but by destroying the commercial pre-eminence of Novgorod and its prestige as a member of the Hanseatic Confederacy he eliminated an element which might well have made valuable contributions to the economic and social life of a community which was conspicuously backward in that respect.

§ BYZANTINE INFLUENCE

Even more immediately significant was Ivan's marriage with Sophia, a niece of Constantine Palaeologus, the last of the Roman Emperors of the East. Ivan adopted the arms of the Byzantine Empire and by his marriage forged a fresh link between Moscow and Constantinople. Moreover, he felt himself entitled to open diplomatic relations with Rome, Venice, Hungary, and the Empire, and was encouraged to employ a famous Milanese architect, Pietro Antonio Salari, to build the great palace-fortress of the Kremlin.

Ivan III died in 1505. Under his son, Vasili III (1505–1533), there was some recrudescence of aristocratic independence, and still more during the interregnum which ensued upon the death of the Tsarina Helen, who until her death in 1538 acted as Regent for her infant son, Ivan IV.

§ IVAN IV (1533–84)

From the moment of his coronation (1547) until his death (1584), Ivan IV, known to history as 'the Terrible', was recognized as an outstanding personality. His conspicuous energy and ability he devoted to the achievement of two objects: the creation of a new administrative system based on the elimination of the old princely nobility, and the territorial expansion of his kingdom. The old nobility, great allodial proprietors, he replaced by a new nobility immediately dependent upon the Tsar, and holding their fiefs not by hereditary tenure, but by services rendered to the Crown.

§ THE 'SOBOR'

In 1550 and again in 1566 Ivan summoned the *Sobor*. If not to be regarded as a rudimentary parliament the *Sobor*, being charged with functions not merely administrative but political, certainly possessed some of the characteristics of such an institution. Originally summoned to devise remedies for the terrible state to which the great nobles had reduced the country, the *Sobor* was evidently intended to form a counterweight to aristocratic turbulence and independence, and, though spasmodic in operation and not perhaps democratic in composition (a point on which information is lacking), the *Sobor* was undeniably of some political significance.

§ TERRITORIAL EXPANSION

More indisputably characteristic of Ivan's policy, and more permanently indicative of the main trend of Russian history was the advance of the territory of the Moscow Tsardom towards the Black Sea, the Caspian, and the Baltic. The final annexation of Kazan (1552) which had arisen upon the ruins of the Tartar Empire was an important step towards the Black Sea; Astrakhan, annexed in 1556, gave Moscow the command of the Volga from its source to its mouth, and secured to the capital city access to the Caspian and some measure of control over the Cossacks of the Don. The Crimea, however, successfully eluded Ivan's grasp, and the Khan of the Crimea turned the tables on the Tsar, invaded Russia, and left Moscow (outside the Kremlin) a mass of burning ruins. Worse still: the Crimea was in 1575 conquered from the Tartars by the Turks, and for centuries to come formed an obstacle to the opening of communications between Russia and Europe.

In the north-west Ivan conquered the greater part of Livonia (1557–60), but he failed to secure election (1572) to the throne of Poland, and his progress towards the Baltic was effectually barred by the prowess of Stephen Bathory, Voivode of Transylvania, who in 1575 was elected King of Poland and wrested Livonia from Ivan's grasp.

§ THE AGE OF DISCOVERY

To Ivan's reign belongs an episode which from the point of view of the present narrative is the most interesting hitherto recorded.

The last years of the fifteenth century had witnessed an awakening of intellectual curiosity which, among many other manifestations, found an outcome in that spirit of adventure, the fruits of which were seen in the so-called 'geographical renaissance'. Vasco da Gama, Columbus, and the Cabots all set out to discover an all-sea route to the East Indies, but da Gama alone succeeded in the immediate quest, and by rounding the Cape of Good Hope actually reached India, and laid the foundations of the Portuguese Empire in the East.

Of greater significance to England, however, were the maritime enterprises of Columbus and the Cabots. Though they rediscovered the great Western Continent, they failed to find a Westward sea-route to the East. These failures served to stimulate imagination and to invite imitators, especially among those Englishmen who had been associated with the Cabots in the discovery of North America. 'It is to be marvelled if there be any prince content to live quiet within his dominions, for surely the people would think he lacketh the noble courage and spirit of all other.' With these words an English merchant resident in Seville—one, Robert Thorne, whose father had joined Hugh Eliot in the discovery of Newfoundland—prefaced a plea which in 1527 he addressed to Henry VIII.[1] Henry VIII may justly be described as 'the father of the English Navy'. But though he encouraged the few oceanic voyages undertaken in his reign, England, on the whole, was singularly backward in respect of maritime adventure. The Papal Bull, issued in 1493 by Pope Alexander VI, gave to Spain and Portugal a monopoly of discovery in the west and south; but there remained open

[1] Sir Stephen Tallents, in a delightful article on 'The Discovery of Russia', contributed to *The Spectator* (September 18, 1942). I have looked hopefully, but so far vainly, for an expansion of the article into book-form.

to England the possibility of discovering a north-eastern passage to the rich spice islands of the Indies, shorter by 2,000 miles than the westward voyages. Thus might Englishmen reach far-famed Cathay, obtain a share in the profits of Far-Eastern trade, and break down the monopoly secured to Portugal by Vasco da Gama's famous discovery of the Cape route to India.[1]

§ THE MUSCOVY COMPANY

Accordingly, in 1551 some London merchants formed the Muscovy Company with a capital of £6,000, under the governorship of Sebastian Cabot 'for the discovery of regions, dominions, islands, and places unknown'. Three ships of 90–160 tons burden were fitted out and placed under the command of Sir Hugh Willoughby as 'General of the Voyage'. Associated with him, in command of one of the ships—the *Edward Bonaventura*—was Richard Chancellor. A great send-off was given to the expedition, which sailed from London in May 1553. In August, two of the ships, the *Bona Esperanza* and the *Bona Confidencia*, were parted in a storm from the *Edward Bonaventura*, and were eventually caught in the ice of Lapland, where Willoughby and all his crew perished. In the following spring the ships, 'their gear and cargo intact but their crews dead', were discovered by some Russian fishermen, and it is pleasant to relate that the Tsar Ivan had 'all their belongings collected and put under seal for return to England'.[2]

After parting from his companions Chancellor proceeded on his voyage and ultimately reached the White Sea. There he landed and thence made the 1,500-mile journey to Moscow. He and his company were cordially welcomed and magnificently entertained by Ivan IV, who received the English sailors 'in a long garment of beaten gold, with an imperial crown upon his head, and a staff of crystal and gold in his right hand'. Of the common folk in Russia Chancellor

[1] For further details see Marriott: *The Evolution of the British Empire and Commonwealth* (Nicholson and Watson, 1939).

[2] Tallents, loc. cit.

formed an opinion amply borne out by their record in the present (1939–) war. 'I believe they be such men for hard living as are not under the sun: for no cold will hurt them. . . . They may not say, as some smudges in England say, I would find the Queen a man to serve in my place, or make his friends tarry at home if money have the upper hand. No, no, it is not so in this country.' Chancellor, having duly made his report to his employers in London, undertook a second journey to Russia, but on the return voyage was wrecked and drowned off the Scottish coast. Yet his enterprise bore fruit.

In 1555 Ivan showed his anxiety to open up permanent communications with Europe by concluding, in terms mutually advantageous, a commercial treaty with England. Some years later (1569) he went further and proposed a comprehensive alliance, offensive and defensive. Queen Elizabeth, however, held back. She had obtained in the commercial treaty all she wanted—trade facilities to permit the transit of goods down the Volga to Persia and elsewhere. Nor did she look favourably (if indeed it was really made) upon a proposal of marriage between herself and the Tsar!

Towards the close of his reign the character of Ivan underwent a change greatly for the worse. Of a régime increasingly cruel, the culminating cruelty was to institute (or follow) the Russian fashion of murdering his eldest son and heir. Ivan was, accordingly, succeeded (1584) by another son, Theodore (Fedor I), whose constitutional weakness precluded the possibility of personal rule. Theodore's duties were actually discharged by his brother-in-law, Boris Godunov. Belonging to the new nobility of service, Godunov, with the best intentions, was powerless to control the forces of social disorder and political disintegration. In the following year the *Sobor* elected Boris himself as Tsar, but his rule was disputed by a pretender who personated Dmitri, the stepbrother of Theodore I. Dmitri had in fact been murdered in 1591, but the 'false Dmitri' who had joined the Roman Catholic Church, gained the not disinterested support of Sigismund, King of Poland, as well as that of the

ever turbulent Cossacks of the Don. On the death of Boris (1605) Dmitri could therefore count upon support against Boris's son and heir, Theodore, sufficient to maintain him on his usurped throne for about a year. In 1606, however, he was himself murdered, and in his place was elected as Tsar Vasili Shuiski—a member of a powerful princely family. Vasili IV had headed the party opposed to the 'False Dmitri' and his election represented a triumph for the old princely aristocracy. But their triumph was brief, and it was the last the princes were fated to enjoy. The reign of Vasili (Basil IV, 1606–10) was ended in 1610, by his compulsory dethronement; he was compelled to become a monk, and presently was carried off as a prisoner to Poland.

§ POLAND AND RUSSIA

King Sigismund of Poland took advantage of the confusion that ensued upon Basil's deposition to get his son Vladimir elected Tsar, but Vladimir never really established his position, and for several years anarchy, accentuated by a series of pretenders, reigned supreme. To the 'Time of Troubles' (as it has been significantly called) the Poles, the Cossacks of the Don, bands of brigands, and embryonic nationalists made their several and incongruous contributions. The chance of uniting the Slavonic world by establishing a Polish Prince on the throne of Moscow was ruined by the greed, narrowness, and self-seeking of the Polish aristocracy. In 1613 something like a truly national assembly was brought together at Moscow, and in January 1613 Michael Romanoff was elected as Tsar. Belonging to a family which had migrated from Prussia, Michael was a grandson of the first wife of Ivan IV, and a cousin of Theodore Ivanovitch. His father, Theodore Romanov (better known as the Patriarch Philaret), had, with all his kinsmen, been banished by Boris Godunov, but after returning from exile in Poland, he was largely responsible for his son's election as Tsar, and for the establishment of the new dynasty. That dynasty continued to occupy the throne until the overthrow of the Tsardom in 1917.

§ THE 'SOBOR'

Michael's election by the *Sobor*, in which all classes concurred, represented more particularly a triumph for the middle classes. With the assistance of an embryonic bureaucracy the *Sobor* initiated a régime which for the brief space of forty years looked almost as if it might become 'parliamentary' in the English sense. During these years the *Sobor* was called upon to give its assent to taxation, to nominate a Patriarch, and even to advise the Tsar on important points of external policy. But composed of 'Estates' representing the nobles, the higher clergy, and the commonalty, the *Sobor*, alike in its structure and its destiny, resembled the States-General of France more closely than the English bi-cameral Parliament. Save for an isolated meeting in 1698, the *Sobor* met for the last time in 1653, thus surviving the French States-General by only forty years. Except for the futile constitutional experiment (1904–7) under the last and most unhappy of the Tsars, the Russian Government continued to be an autocracy, limited, or rather periodically interrupted, only by assassination.

Michael was succeeded by his son Alexis, whose reign (1645–76) was marked by an attempt to compass by drastic reform a further stage in the unification of the country. More permanent in its effects was the passing of a law (1649) which finally reduced the mass of the Russian peasantry—who have never formed less than four-fifths of the total population—to that condition of serfdom from which they were emancipated only in 1861.

§ SERFDOM

Russian Communism (in one sense) is not a Bolshevik innovation. It has its roots deep down in the traditions of the mass of the Russian people. From very early days Russia consisted of a series of village communities; the land belonged to the village as a whole, and, periodically re-divided among the villagers, was cultivated on a common plan. The growth of population led to excessive subdivision of holdings,

and the 'three field system', rigidly enforced, negatived the possibility of any improvement in farming methods, since no one could go faster than the slowest. Economically wasteful and socially retrograde, the system had a flavour of 'democracy', and a free peasantry was deeply attached to it. But during the 'Time of Trouble' the great nobles found (like the Feudal lords in England after the Black Death of 1348) that they could not cultivate the land for lack of labour. A determined effort was therefore made to tie the peasants —hitherto personally free—to the soil. These efforts culminated in the legislation of 1649. Henceforward the free Russian peasants became serfs, and serfdom soon degenerated into something more akin to slavery. Tied to the soil the serf became the property of a master.

§ NIKON

The reign of Alexis was remarkable also for an attempt at ecclesiastical reform, headed by the Patriarch Nikon. Nikon was a genuine reformer, a man of learning, and an ambitious prelate who sought to establish himself as an Eastern Pope. He hoped to liberalize religion, to enlighten an obscurantist priesthood, and to purify the corrupt text of the Bible. But the actual result of his reforming activity was ecclesiastical schism. The conservatives revolted against the disturbance of tradition; the reformers set up a new form of Church government democratic in character and served by clergy elected by the congregations. Nikon was deposed from the Patriarchate and driven into exile, where he died. But the schism, though thus partially healed, resulted in the multiplication of dissenting sects whose members (Riskolniki) are said still to number fifteen millions.

More pertinent to the present narrative is the fact that despite the persistence of domestic strife, social and ecclesiastical, the reign of Alexis witnessed a renewal of the westward and southward movements which later gained such momentum under Peter the Great. Yet expansion to the south was still obstructed by the hostility of the Tartars of the Crimea and the Kuban, while the Polish and Swedish

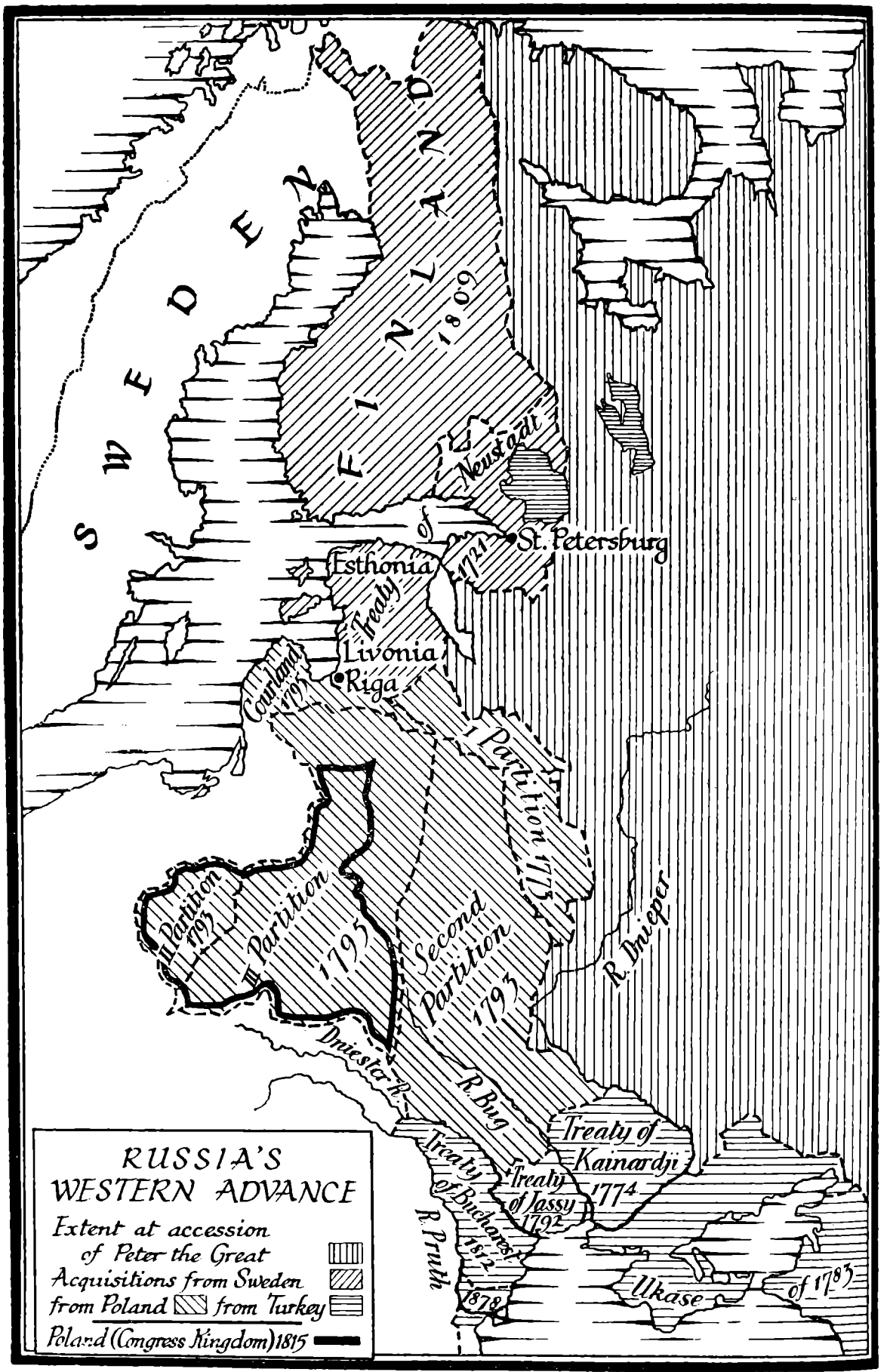
kingdoms could interpose a still effective, if weakening, barrier to Russia's advance towards the Baltic.

In 1676 Alexis died and was succeeded by his eldest son, Theodore III, a hopeless bedridden invalid whose brief reign (1676–82) was nevertheless remembered for the foundation of the Moscow Academy, and for the abolition of the hereditary claim of the nobles to the monopoly of certain offices of State.

The younger sons of Alexis, Ivan and Peter, were children when Theodore died, and power fortunately fell into the hands of their elder sister, the Grand Duchess Sophia, who practically ruled Russia as Regent until Peter took over the reins in 1689.

Theodore had left the throne to Peter, to the exclusion of his brother Ivan, who from birth was a semi-imbecile. But a joint sovereignty better suited the ambitious plans of the Tsarevna Sophia, and accordingly Ivan V (1682–96) nominally shared his half-brother's throne so long as he lived. On his death (1696) Peter justly known as 'the Great', became the sole ruler of Russia.

Under Peter the Great, Russia, at long last, made its entry upon the European stage, as a Nation-State.


SWEDEN
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1809
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1721
St. Petersburg
Esthonia
Treaty
Livonia
Riga
Courland
1795
I Partition 1773
II Partition 1793
III Partition 1795
Second Partition 1793
R. Dnieper
R. Bug
Dniestr R.
Treaty of Kainardji 1774
Treaty of Jassy 1792
Treaty of Bucharest 1812
R. Pruth
1878
Ukase of 1783
RUSSIA'S WESTERN ADVANCE
Extent at accession of Peter the Great
Acquisitions from Sweden
from Poland
from Turkey
Poland (Congress Kingdom) 1815

MORTON 1943

CHAPTER III

THE EMERGENCE OF RUSSIA UNDER PETER THE GREAT

L'introduction de la Russie sur la scène européenne dérangait aussi le système politique du Nord et de l'Orient tel que l'avait composé la prudence de nos rois et de nos ministres.

VANDAL

THE REIGN of Peter the Great not only marked the opening of a new phase in the history of Russia, but fundamentally upset the political system of Northern Europe, of the Near East, and indeed of the whole of Europe. Above all (though not at the time perceived) it opened the way to the prolonged rivalry between Russia and England, destined, for nearly two centuries, to constitute an important factor in the international problem.

§ THE CONDITION OF EUROPE

Among European Powers England had been the first to attain national unity and to realize her national identity. France and Spain had reached the same stage of development in the sixteenth century, and had at once begun to play—always as rivals—the leading part in international affairs. The Habsburg Empire was still, in 1689, playing a great part in European politics, though since 1648 the primacy among the Powers had definitely passed, after the long duel between the Habsburgs and the French monarchy, to France. Poland was still, as it had been for centuries, the great outpost of Catholicism in Eastern Europe, though supremacy in the Baltic had passed to Sweden. The Hohenzollern were establishing a firm position in Brandenburg-Prussia. The Dutch Republic, with its half-way house at the Cape of Good Hope, was still foremost among the European Powers which—like England and France—had established commercial 'factories' in the Far East, but it

could no longer play a leading part in the European drama. The Ottoman Empire had already passed its zenith, and even before Russia came upon the scene, was evidently decadent.

§ PETER THE GREAT

Like most men who have impressed their personality upon human history, Peter the Great had a remarkable mother. The Tsar Alexis had married as his second wife (1671) Natalia Naryshkina, the favourite pupil and adopted daughter of his Foreign Secretary and wisest counsellor, Artemon Matvieev, who had proved his wisdom and his emancipation from national prejudices by marrying a Scottish woman. To her mother's training Natalia owed much. On the death of Alexis, Matvieev was banished and subsequently (1672) died by violence at the hands of the *Streltsy*. This *corps d'élite* of Household Guards, champions of ecclesiastical orthodoxy and of political reaction, had systematically abused their privileges and had more than once endeavoured to impose their will upon the Government.

After the death of her husband, Natalia had been excluded by her stepdaughter—the masterful Sophia, from any part in public affairs, and Peter had hardly got into his 'teens before he threw off his mother's tutelage and began to manifest an eager curiosity in all matters military and naval. Nevertheless, it was under his mother's pressure that in 1689, at the age of seventeen, the boy married Eudoxia Lopukhina, a pious and beautiful girl, two years younger than himself. The premature union was from the first a complete fiasco, and after the extirpation of the *Streltsy*, carried out with the utmost barbarity (1698), the Tsaritza, unjustly suspected of being implicated in the revolt of the *Streltsy*, was immured in a convent, and disappeared from the troubled scene, only momentarily to reappear in 1718 to be tried and condemned for adultery, and to witness the cruelties perpetrated upon her friends. Not until 1727—at the beginning of the reign of her grandson, Peter II—was the Tsaritza, a prematurely aged woman of over fifty, at last released from an imprisonment which had lasted for thirty years.

The story is significant: it throws light upon one side of Peter's contradictory character, and also illustrates the stage in social evolution that Russia had reached. Although the Tsar and his kingdom were alike half-barbaric, the country, despite periodical relapses, was steadily moving towards a higher stage of political and social development. Its Tsar mingled with the instincts of a savage an eager intellectual curiosity and a genuine anxiety to raise his country to the standards prevailing in Western Europe.

Russia, having attained some degree of national unity under the Moscow Tsardom, was now nearly ready to take its place in European society. To play his part politically and socially in that society was the leading ambition of Peter the Great, and to that end he wrought ceaselessly to break down the barriers interposed between his own country and the civilization of Western Europe. An essential preliminary step was to obtain direct access to the Baltic and the Black Sea.

§ RUSSIA AND TURKEY

Diplomatic relations had been first opened between Moscow and Constantinople as far back as the reign of Ivan III (1492). That Tsar had assumed, in right of his Byzantine wife, the cognizance of the two-headed eagle, the symbol of the Eastern Empire—an indication that Muscovite ambitions were already directed towards the city and empire of Constantine. In the reign of Ivan IV (1533–84) occurred the first armed conflict between Turks and Russians. The Turks sought to strengthen their strategical position against Persia by cutting a canal to unite the Don and the Volga, but the Russian garrison of Astrakhan, the occupation of which was an essential preliminary to the accomplishment of the Turkish enterprise, not only successfully resisted the attempt of the Turks to seize the city, but inflicted a serious defeat upon another Turkish army near Azov (1575).

Not for another century did the two Powers again come into direct conflict. In 1677, however, the disturbed relations between Poland and the Cossacks of the Ukraine involved

the Turks and the Russians in direct hostilities. A peace was patched up in 1681, but in 1686 Russia joined the Holy League formed by Venice, Poland, and the Knights of Malta, against the infidel, and from that time until the conclusion of the Treaty of Carlowitz (1699) Russia and Turkey were intermittently at war. Peter himself led an army of 60,000 men against the fortress of Azov in 1695. Failing to take it, he employed 25,000 labourers who worked day and night during the winter of 1695–6 under his personal direction on the building of a vast flotilla of ships of light draft. With the aid of large reinforcements and the newly built fleet, the fortress of Azov was captured in 1696, and by the Treaty of Carlowitz was, together with a district some eighty miles in extent to the north of the Sea of Azov, ceded to Russia.

§ RUSSIA AND SWEDEN

Thus a window to the south was opened. Before attempting to open a window to the west Peter carried out his project of making personal contact with the chief countries of Europe. In the course of his tour he visited not only England but Germany, Denmark, Holland, France, and Austria. Not disdaining to work as an ordinary shipwright in dockyards, Peter eagerly absorbed all that the more advanced countries could teach him, and enlisted in his service whole battalions of experts in their several callings (especially shipbuilding). But unfortunately he was prematurely recalled to his own capital to quell an insurrection of the *Streltsy*. Not only were the *Streltsy* wiped out, but a lesson, never to be forgotten, was taught to all those who were disposed to obstruct Peter's reforming activity.

The way was at last cleared for the enterprise to which the rest of the reign was mostly devoted—the duel with Sweden for supremacy in Northern Europe.

§ CHARLES XII

Charles XII, the young King of Sweden, had just entered upon his brilliant, if chequered, career (1697–1718), and his kingdom was approaching the zenith of its power, giving it

a position in Northern Europe parallel with and complementary to the ascendancy of France in the west. But Sweden's dominating position aroused the apprehension and jealousy of its neighbours. Accordingly, a coalition was formed in 1699 between Frederick IV of Denmark-Norway, Augustus II of Saxony-Poland, and Peter the Great. The latter's share of the booty was to be the Baltic provinces of Esthonia and Ingria. The key of the province of Ingria was Narva, at the mouth of the Narova, and Peter promptly proceeded to besiege it, but by the brilliant and daring tactics of Charles XII that important key-point was relieved (November 20, 1700) and the Muscovites, mostly raw troops, fled in disorder.

Peter, however, refused to accept defeat, reorganized his army, renewed his pact with Augustus II, and in the course of 1702 and 1703 inflicted a series of defeats upon the redoubtable Swedes. Finally, in 1704, the Russians again besieged Narva, and on August 20 took it by assault.

§ ST. PETERSBURG

Meanwhile, in 1703 a village was beginning to arise amid the thickly wooded marshes on the northern bank of the Neva, and for the nucleus of a fleet which Peter was already building up on the Baltic a harbour was constructed at Kronstadt. The building of the city destined for his new capital was pushed on by the Tsar with feverish impatience: human life counted for nothing, so long as the work progressed; with incredible rapidity an imposing city stone-built and finely laid out was erected to supersede the old wooden village; foreigners invited to behold Peter's handiwork saw with amazement the transformation he had wrought, and with particular admiration looked out upon the superb Nevsky Prospekt. In June 1712 Peter transferred the capital from Moscow to his own creation, Petersburg.

§ RUSSIA AND SWEDEN

The building of Petersburg was an act of faith. Charles XII of Sweden was going from success to success: the

coalition against him was crumbling; in 1702 Charles occupied Warsaw and Cracow; in January 1704 Augustus II of Poland was deposed, and in July Charles put his nominee Stanislaus Leczinski on the vacant throne. In battle after battle the Swedes proved themselves invincible. Yet Peter still refused to surrender his hold on the Baltic, and at last, in 1709, the tide turned. Perhaps persuaded by the skilful and subtle diplomacy of Marlborough to deal a final blow at the Muscovite instead of coming to the succour of Sweden's old ally Louis XIV, certainly lured by the Cossack chieftain Mazeppa to embroil himself in Mazeppa's quarrel with the Tsar, Charles led the Swedish army to its destruction on the fateful field of Pultawa in the Ukraine. In the battle Charles was wounded, and after the defeat of his army at Pultawa (1709) the Swedish king took refuge in Turkey, and the Sultan firmly refused to surrender him to the Tsar. On the contrary, urged to attempt the recovery of Azov from the Muscovite by the Swedish king, and with even greater persistence by his own vassal, the Khan of the Crimean Tartars, Sultan Ahmed, rather reluctantly consented to declare war upon Peter in November 1710.

§ RUSSIA AND TURKEY

The Tsar's victories at Azov and Pultawa had created among the Christian subjects of the Sultan great excitement, which was intensified when in the summer of 1711 the Russian army crossed the Pruth. The Slavs, the Greeks, and even the Roumanians began to look upon the Tsar as a possible liberator, but Peter, pushing on too far and too fast, found himself surrounded by a vastly superior force of Turks on the Pruth and was compelled to sue ignominiously for peace. By the Treaty of the Pruth (July 21, 1711) the Tsar undertook to restore to the Sultan Azov and the adjacent territory, to raze to the ground the fortress of Taganrog, lately built on the Sea of Azov, and other fortifications in the neighbourhood; to withdraw his troops from the Cossack country; not to interfere in the affairs of Poland and the Ukraine; to secure Charles XII, the Sultan's guest, a safe

passage to Sweden; and not to keep a fleet in the Black Sea or claim diplomatic representation at Constantinople. Peter's capitulation was as humiliating as it was complete. Most effectually was the window to the south, for the time being, closed.

Charles XII was, however, dismayed. The Tsar had been, as he thought, let off too lightly by the Turks, and refusing a safe conduct to Sweden, Charles declared war again upon Russia and persuaded the Sultan to do the same. But, though Charles himself was still full of fight, Pultawa was in reality the grave of Swedish greatness. From that moment Sweden's power rapidly deteriorated. Escaping from Turkey, where the detention of so inconvenient a prisoner-guest was by no means desired, Charles, after many adventures, at length reached Stalsund (1714), the one stronghold on the German coast which still remained to Sweden.

Peter had, meanwhile, formed a new coalition, including not only his old allies, Poland and Denmark, but Prussia and Hanover. To that combination Stralsund, at last, after an heroic resistance, surrendered in 1715.

The Swedish possessions in North Germany were to be partitioned. Hanover was to receive the principalities of Bremen and Verden; Prussia was to get the town and district of Stettin; and Denmark was to be compensated by part of Swedish Pomerania and a round sum of money from Hanover for the abandoned hope of Bremen and Verden. Charles then decided to give up his Baltic provinces to Russia, to concentrate his attack on Norway, and, having conquered it, descend upon Scotland, and help a western coalition to restore the Stuarts to the throne of Great Britain. Such was his counter-stroke to the Elector of Hanover for joining the coalition against him. In the event, Charles neither conquered Norway nor invaded Scotland. On December 12, 1718, he was accidentally killed in the trenches before Friedrichshall, the little Norwegian fortress which the Swedes were besieging.

§ THE TREATY OF NYSTADT

The career thus abruptly ended, though, in a purely military sense, among the most brilliant in modern history, was entirely fatal to the great soldier's country. Sweden never recovered from the successes of her adventurous monarch. She had lost Bremen and Verden to Hanover, Stettin to Prussia, and by the Treaty of Nystadt, which at last brought the great Northern War to a conclusion in 1721, she surrendered her primacy in the Baltic to Russia. Peter the Great obtained Livonia, Esthonia, Ingria, Karelia, and the fortress of Viborg. Sweden, however, received a money indemnity, recovered part of Finland, and retained freedom of trade in the Baltic.

For the resounding triumphs achieved by the Tsar in the Treaty of Nystadt a solemn service of thanksgiving was celebrated in the Troitsa Cathedral of St. Petersburg, and immediately afterwards the Tsar presented himself to his new Senate, by whom he was acclaimed 'Father of the Fatherland, Peter the Great and Emperor of All Russia'. There was in some quarters disappointment that Peter was not proclaimed Emperor of the East, but he preferred a title less provocative and more patriotic.

From the point of view of Anglo-Russian relations the results of the Northern War were far from insignificant: for the first time Great Britain (through Hanover) was brought into political contact with Russia, and Russia began to exhibit hostility against the British Maritime Code. An incidental result was that Great Britain for the first time began to entertain some suspicions of the advance of Russia in south-eastern Europe.

§ PETER AND THE ENGLISH JACOBITES

A more immediate result of the Treaty of Nystadt was to free Peter's hands for the execution of a project which for some time he had been contemplating—the restoration of the Stuarts to the English throne. After the failure of the '15, and the death of Charles XII the British Jacobites had begun to pin their hopes on Russia. Between the Tsar

and the Elector of Hanover no love was lost; in April 1722 a Jacobite agent assured Peter that Great Britain was ready for a Jacobite restoration, and asked him to co-operate in an invasion of England. Peter, however, was ready to undertake this enterprise only in conjunction with France. But after the death of Louis XIV the French Regent was anxious for an accommodation with Hanoverian England. The project of a Jacobite restoration to be effected by Russian assistance was, therefore, still-born.

§ RUSSIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

The Tsar's attention was, in fact, already turning in another direction. He had sent several expeditions from 1715 onwards to explore the country and to investigate political and economic conditions in the district between the Black Sea and the Caspian. He had also opened commercial communications with Persia which he was anxious to bring within the sphere of Russian influence, if not to annex it to his Empire. An invasion of Persia by the Afghans in 1721, and the defeat and deposition of the reigning Shah offered Peter his opportunity. A large army under the Tsar's personal command made an expedition into the Caspian province in 1722, and, though fortune did not uniformly smile upon Russian enterprise, the Persians were forced to conclude a peace by which the important trade centres of Baku and Derbent with the provinces of Gilyan, Mazandevan, and Astrabad were ceded to Russia.

Turkey was naturally perturbed by the advance of Russia and (what is more remarkable) England was prompted to stir up the Turks to attack the Russians, and frustrate the Tsar's ambition. But by a treaty concluded at Constantinople in June 1724 it was agreed that Shemak should be held by a vassal of the Sultan, while the country between that city and the Caspian was divided into three parts: two of them, adjacent to the Caspian, passed to Russia, and the third was divided between Russia and Persia.

Peter's race was now nearly run. The problem of the succession to the throne accordingly became acute. Peter's

only son Alexis had ended his miserable and tortured life in a Russian fortress in 1718. In 1724 the Emperor had crowned as Empress the Tsarina Catherine—formerly his mistress, and taken measures to secure her succession to his throne. His designs succeeded. The crown was offered to Catherine on Peter's death in 1725, and until her own death, two years later, she wore it to the general satisfaction of her subjects.

Peter the Great was the maker of modern Russia. The greater part of the work achieved by one who has been happily described by H. A. L. Fisher as 'a barbaric technician of genius' belongs to the sphere of domestic administration. It lies, therefore, outside the scope of this narrative. But Peter's acquisition of the Baltic littoral, his thrust towards the Black Sea, and his absorption of the Caspian provinces, were ultimately of momentous consequence to the relations between the British and the Russian Empires. Hanover, with its own recent acquisition of Bremen and Verden, was more immediately menaced by the opening of a Russian window to the west. If William IV had been succeeded in England by a king, it is possible that Bismarck might not have been permitted to expel the Danish dynasty from the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, and that all that followed upon that initial act of brigandage—the expulsion of Austria from Germany, the transference of hegemony from Vienna to Berlin, the formation of the Northern German Confederation under the presidency of the Hohenzollern kings of Prussia, the defeat inflicted upon France in 1870, and the creation of the German Empire—might have been long postponed, if not finally averted.

But these things lay in the womb of time. Nevertheless the emergence of Russia under Peter the Great was the first step towards an entirely new orientation of European politics, and, in particular, initiated a new phase in the relations of Russia and Great Britain.

CHAPTER IV

RUSSIA AND THE DIPLOMATIC REVOLUTION

Tout contribue à développer entre ces deux pays l'antagonisme et la haine. Les Russes ont reçu leur foi de Byzance, c'est leur métropole, et les Turcs la souillent de leur présence. Les Turcs oppriment les co-religionnaires des Russes, et chaque Russe considère comme une œuvre de foi la délivrance de ses frères. . . . Les tsars ont cette rare fortune que l'instinct national soutient leurs calculs d'ambition.

ALBERT SOREL

A NEW Russia had come into being under the fashioning hand of Peter the Great. The structure of the State erected by him was destined to endure, in essential outline, until the fall of the Russian monarchy in 1917.

New in its internal structure, Russia was beginning also to occupy a new position in the European polity, and not least as regards its relations with England.

§ GERMAN INFLUENCES

By a curious coincidence, under the half-dozen sovereigns who (1725–62) so rapidly succeeded each other on the Russian throne and during the reigns of the contemporary rulers of England, German Courts held a dominating position.

Anne, Peter's step-niece (1730–40), was married to the Duke of Courland; another Anne, who, though Peter's own daughter of his second marriage, never reigned, was married to the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp; their son reigned for a few months (1762), until he was murdered by his wife, the famous Empress Catherine II, who was herself Princess Sophia of Anhalt-Zerbst, the daughter of a Prussian officer and of Johanna Elizabeth, a princess of Holstein-Gottorp; the Tsarina Elizabeth (1741–63)—by far the most remarkable of Peter's children—was betrothed to Prince Carl August of Holstein-Gottorp, uncle of Catherine II, but owing to her destined bridegroom's premature death was never married.

§ THE HANOVERIANS IN ENGLAND

The Germanization of the Court of St. Petersburg was matched by that of the English Court. The accession of the Elector of Hanover to the English throne (1714), quickly followed by the death of Louis XIV (1715), caused a dramatic change in the diplomatic relations of the recent belligerents. England and France were brought together in a common desire to maintain the settlement embodied in the *Treaty of Utrecht*, and in particular to prevent the union of the French and Spanish Crowns; Spain and Austria were for different reasons at one in desiring to upset the settlement.

Russian policy was, after Peter's death, directed by Count Osterman, a German of humble birth, but an astute diplomatist who, as Foreign Minister, served with honesty, skill, and devotion the interests of his adopted country. Profoundly mistrustful of France, and resentful, in particular, of French influence in Poland, Osterman pinned his faith to an alliance with Austria. With the help of Austria he defeated the attempt of Louis XV of France to establish his father-in-law, Stanislaus Leczinski, on the throne of Poland and secured the election of Augustus III of Saxony (1735).

§ RUSSO-TURKISH WAR (1735–9)

Against this rebuff France attempted to retaliate by stirring up another satellite state, Turkey, to attack Russia. The Sultan Ahmed III was reminded by France that he was by treaty bound to safeguard the independence of Poland now menaced by the interference of Russia and Austria. He was urged, therefore, to divert their attention by a declaration of war. In the event the attack came from the side of Russia.

Ever since 1711 Russia had been chafing under the humiliation imposed upon Peter the Great by the Treaty of the Pruth, and the consequent closing of the 'window to the south', opened by his capture of Azov. During the so-called War of the Polish Succession (1733–8) the moment for revenge seemed to have arrived, as the Turks were suffering from a crushing defeat inflicted upon them in a war against

Persia by the redoubtable warrior Nádir Shah (Kuli Khan), who had usurped the Persian throne.

The recovery of Azov had meant that Turkey could once more command the Delta of the Don, not to add the whole river system of Southern Russia—the Dniester, the Bug, the Dnieper, the Don, and the Kuban. Russian trade was thereby throttled. Peter's instinct had been prompted not merely by a desire for military glory, but by concern for the vital interests of his country—political and commercial.

Count Osterman showed himself an apt pupil of Peter when in 1735 he declared war upon the Porte. The triumph of Russian arms, though purchased at a heavy cost, was complete. The great fortress of Azov was recaptured in 1738; the whole of the Crimea was overrun by Russian troops, and Bakhchi-sarai the capital of the Tartar Khan of the Crimea, was destroyed. Austria then offered her mediation, but the terms on which alone Russia was prepared to agree to peace were so extravagant that the Porte preferred to continue the war, though it meant that Turkey must fight not Russia only, but Austria. Against Austria, the Turks took the offensive and with such success that they were able to impose upon her (thanks largely to the diplomatic support of France) the humiliating Treaty of Belgrade (1739).

§ THE TREATY OF BELGRADE

The news of the Austrian surrender came as a surprise, as unexpected as it was embarrassing to Russia, whose part in the campaign had been as consistently successful as that of Austria had been the reverse. The Russians had captured the great fortress of Oczakov in 1738, that of Choczim on the Dniester in 1739, and ten days after Austria had signed the Treaty of Belgrade (September 1, 1739) the Russians had actually crossed the Pruth and occupied the Moldavian capital. But deserted by their ally, they had no option but to conclude with the triumphant Turks a peace on the best terms they could obtain. They did indeed recover Azov, but only on condition that its fortifications and all works in the surrounding country should be destroyed. They obtained

leave to trade on the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea, provided, however, that all their goods were carried in Turkish ships.

Humiliating for Austria, disappointing for Russia, the treaties of 1739 represented a notable triumph for the arms of Turkey, and still more for the diplomacy of France. France had taken a signal revenge upon the Habsburg Emperor, had obtained for Turkey—now almost a vassal state—a respite on the side of Russia, and for herself a reaffirmation and extension of the privileged position—commercial and diplomatic—enjoyed by her ever since the *Capitulations* conceded to Francis I by Suleiman the Magnificent in 1535. After the Treaty of Belgrade the *Capitulations* were re-enacted and extended, and special rights were also conferred upon Latin monks in the Holy Land, upon French pilgrims, and in general upon Roman Catholics throughout the Turkish Empire.

To these *Capitulations* Napoleon III appealed when, on the eve of the Crimean War he attempted to reinstate Latin monks in the guardianship of the Holy Places in Palestine.[1]

§ THE DIPLOMATIC REVOLUTION

For at least two centuries European politics had centred on the rivalry of the French monarchy and the Austro-Spanish-Burgundian Empire of the Habsburgs. During the next period of European history (1740–89) the centre of interest shifted from Western to Central Europe, while the duel between England and France was fought out mainly in India and North America. Apart from that duel the outstanding feature of European affairs was the prolonged contest for supremacy in Germany between the upstart House of Hohenzollern and the ancient Empire of the Habsburgs. These changes powerfully affected both England and Russia, and their mutual relations.

§ ENGLAND AND RUSSIA

On the death of the Tsarina Anne (1740) the throne passed

[1] For text of *Capitulations* cf. Albin: *Les Grandes Traités Politiques* (pp. 128 f.).

to her grand-nephew, John VI, an infant less than twelve months old, whose reign was ended in 1741 by a *coup d'état* effected at the expense of the Tsar, unconscious of his loss, by Elizabeth, the brilliant daughter of Peter the Great. 'From her father, Peter the Great,' writes her latest biographer, '[Elizabeth] had inherited her brightness, her quick temper, her energy; from her mother Catherine I her looks, kindliness, and good spirits; from both her stamina and sensuality —the inexhaustible, heroic vitality of Peter Romanov, the broad, peasant vigour of Martha Skovronskaya.'[1]

George II wisely left the conduct of domestic affairs in the capable hands of his wife and his great minister, Sir Robert Walpole. In Foreign Policy his interests, like those of his father, were primarily Hanoverian. In 1743 he concluded with the Tsarina Elizabeth a defensive treaty which marked, if unostentatiously, the entrance of Russia into the hitherto restricted circle of the 'Great Powers'. The entrance of Brandenburg-Prussia was practically simultaneous with that of Russia, and thus a new orientation was given to European politics.

§ FRANCE, ENGLAND, AND RUSSIA

Louis XV could not fill the role so long played by Louis XIV, nor could he any longer rely upon the support of his satellites, Sweden, Poland, and Turkey, whose decline coincided with that of their powerful patron and protector. Sweden had, in August 1743, declared war on Russia, at the instance of France, and had invaded Finland, but had only brought disaster upon herself. France attempted to extricate Sweden from her misfortunes. But Elizabeth contemptuously declined the offer of French mediation, and in January 1743 concluded, by direct negotiation, the Treaty of Äbo, which further strengthened the position of Russia in the Baltic.

The War of the Austrian Succession does not concern this narrative. It must suffice to say that when it was ended by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748), there remained two fixed points in the diplomatic situation: one was

[1] Marsden: *Palmyra of the North* (1942).

the persistent hostility of Austria and Prussia; the other was the rivalry of England and France. Alarmed lest the French should endeavour to engage England in a continental campaign by attacking Hanover, George II concluded a treaty (September 1755) with the Tsarina Elizabeth, by which in return for an annual subsidy of £100,000 Russia undertook, if Hanover were attacked, to send 55,000 men to its defence.

Frederick the Great did not want to see either a Russian or a French army coming into the heart of Germany to defend Hanover. Accordingly he concluded with England the Convention of Westminster (January 15, 1756). The essence of the compact was to keep both Russia and France out of Germany by an undertaking on Frederick's part to defend Hanover should France attack it. Apart from that, Frederick, in the Anglo-French quarrel, was neutral.

The Convention of Westminster, however, finally decided France, moved in that direction by other considerations, to accept the friendly advances of Austria. Elizabeth of Russia, deeply offended by the conduct of George II in concluding the Convention of Westminster, also joined Austria. Sweden, Poland, and Saxony likewise came into the anti-Prussian combination. On December 31, 1756, Russia adhered to the Treaty of Versailles: she undertook to go to the help of France if attacked in Europe by England; France undertook to succour Russia if attacked by Turkey. Thus was the stage set for the next act of the drama—the Seven Years War. The old friendship of England and Russia, and the persistent enmity of France and Austria were interrupted in order to recover from the upstart Hohenzollern goods stolen from Austria, and to assist France in her critical struggle with England for supremacy in India and North America.

The coalition against Prussia was sustained mainly by the persistent refusal of the Tsarina to contemplate peace until 'the essential and permanent crippling of the King of Prussia' had been definitely accomplished. The campaigns of 1759, 1760, and 1761 went so badly against Prussia that an Austro-Russian force was able to occupy Berlin and Frederick more

than once contemplated suicide. Pressure upon Frederick was, however, relieved by the death (January 5, 1763) of the Tsarina Elizabeth and the accession of her nephew, Peter III, the son of her sister Anne, Duchess of Holstein, and the grandson and heir-male of Peter the Great. Elizabeth, though her memory is overshadowed by that of Catherine the Great, must be counted among the greatest occupants of the Russian throne. With many of her father's weaknesses she had inherited not a few of his great qualities and, not less than her father, was devoted to the interests of her country. Her successor, Peter III, was a person of feeble intellect and dissolute habits. His one diversion was to play with toy soldiers; his sole claim to remembrance is that he saved Prussia from annihilation. For Frederick the Great, in whose army his own father-in-law served as a Field-Marshal, Peter had conceived a fanatical admiration. On his accession he accordingly withdrew from the Austrian alliance, concluded an alliance with Frederick, and directed the Russian army to take its orders from him. In this sense the poor creature may claim to be indirectly among the 'makers' of modern Germany and thus to have diverted the whole future course of European history. The result of the Tsar's action was that Frederick emerged from his terrible ordeal without the loss of an inch of territory and with prestige immensely enhanced by his resistance to the powerful coalition arrayed against him.

§ CATHERINE THE GREAT (1762–96)

The reign of Peter III lasted less than a year, being ended by his murder, a crime in which his wife, Catherine, undoubtedly connived. 'I came to Russia a poor girl,' said the Empress Catherine shortly before her death. It was literally true. Born in 1729, Sophia Augusta Frederica of Anhalt-Zerbst belonged on both sides to the humbler and poorer princely caste of Germany. Though a cousin to Peter III through her mother, Catherine (as she became on her reception into the Orthodox Church) had no claim whatever to the Russian throne, save such as she owed to a

strong character and a brilliant brain. Instigated by Frederick the Great, who was gravely perturbed by the growing strength and influence of Russia, the Tsarina Elizabeth invited the Princess Sophia to St. Petersburg, with a view to her selection as a bride for the Tsarina's nephew and heir.

Married to him in 1744, Catherine was from the first treated with neglect and brutality by the crazy husband with whom her union was merely nominal. Peter III was quickly set aside by his strong-willed wife, and was shortly afterwards murdered by the Orlov brothers. To their devotion (accentuated in the case of Gregori Orlov by his position as her lover) she (Catherine) owed primarily the bloodless and comparatively easy *coup d'état* by which the German princess became the autocrat of the Russians.

§ RUSSIA, POLAND, TURKEY, AND FRANCE

The first object of Catherine's foreign policy was the domination, and—if it might be—the absorption of Poland. To this end she did not disdain to draw upon the heavy obligations incurred by Frederick the Great towards the husband she had disposed of. On the death of Augustus III King of Poland, in 1763, the Tsarina combined with Frederick of Prussia to secure the election to the throne of a Polish nobleman of tarnished reputation and weak character, Stanislaus Poniatowsky—one of Catherine's discarded lovers. One result of this election was the perpetuation of the ridiculous Constitution which rendered certain the doom of Poland.

Of the European Powers France was always the one most vitally interested in Polish independence and integrity. In the days of her greatness, France would have intervened directly in Poland on behalf of the patriots, who were anxious to save their country from the clutches of Russia; but, crippled by her disastrous duel with England, she was now compelled to rely solely upon diplomatic finesse.

Choiseul, the great Foreign Minister of France, had returned to power in 1766, eager to re-establish his country's position in Europe by cementing the recent alliance with

Austria, and by forging anew the ancient ties which bound France to Sweden, Poland and, above all, to the Ottoman Empire. To Vergennes, the French Ambassador at Constantinople, he wrote: 'We must at once break the chain fastened upon the world by Russia. . . . The Ottoman Empire is the best instrument for doing it. . . . True, the Turks are hopelessly degenerate, and the attempt will probably be fatal to them, but that does not concern us so long as we attain our object.'

With rare acumen Catherine had diagnosed the situation, and was ready with a prescription for dealing with it. The Porte was to be kept busy at home by fomenting unrest among the subject population of the Balkans. On this task Russian agents were regularly employed throughout the years 1765–7, in Greece, Crete, Bosnia, and Montenegro. Greeks and Slavs were encouraged to hope that the fulfilment was at hand of the ancient prophecy that 'the Turkish Empire would one day be destroyed by a fair-haired people'. Vergennes, on his part, lost no opportunity of emphasizing the danger by which the Ottoman Empire was threatened, and of urging upon the Sultan the necessity of a counter-attack.

A pretext was found in the violation of Turkish territory by Russian troops who had pursued some fugitive Poles into Tartary. The Porte presented a demand to Catherine that her troops should immediately evacuate Poland. As Catherine hesitated to comply the Porte declared war (October 6, 1768), and, on the advice of Vergennes, issued to the Powers a justification of its action. The Sultan, it declared, had taken action in defence of the liberties of Poland, grievously compromised by the high-handed action of the Tsarina. Catherine, the Sultan averred, had forced upon the Poles a king who was neither of royal blood nor the elect of the people; she had put to the sword all who had opposed her will and had pillaged and laid waste their possessions. Turkey stood forth as the guardian of international morality, and the champion of small nationalities. For the action of the Porte Vergennes was primarily responsible: 'La France,'

as Sorel pithily puts it, 'essaya de soutenir les confédérés catholiques avec les armes des Musulmans.'[1]

The tactics of France did not save Poland, and they brought disaster upon Turkey. No one was more anxious to avert the doom of the Ottoman Empire than Catherine's future partner in crime, Frederick of Prussia. Turkey, he thought, might well prove a useful counter-poise to the designs either of Russia or of Austria.[2] But how frustrate them? Frederick soon found the solution in the Partition of Poland, and the first slices of that doomed country were accordingly distributed in 1772 to Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Meanwhile, the Turks were faring badly in their war against Russia.

In 1769 a Turkish army was surprised on the Dniester and fled in panic before the Russians, who then occupied Jassy and Bucharest. In the following year Catherine made a determined effort to encourage the Greeks to rise against their Turkish oppressors. A Russian fleet under the command of Admiral Elphinstone, formerly in the English service, sailed from the Baltic to the Mediterranean and made a descent upon the coasts of the Morea. France would certainly have attempted to intercept its progress but for a firm intimation from England that she would treat intervention as a *casus belli*.

The signal service thus rendered by England to Russia did not, however, suffice to secure success for Catherine's plans. Though great excitement was aroused among the Greeks in the Morea and extended to the Serbs and to the peoples of Moldavia and Wallachia, the Russian scheme miscarried. The Turks took a terrible revenge upon the Greeks for listening to the voice of the Russian temptress. In their disillusionment, the Greeks cursed her as a faithless friend who, having stirred them up to insurrection, abandoned them in their misfortunes. Alexis Orlov (the actual murderer of Peter III), having assumed the command of the Russian fleet, did, however, attack the Turkish fleet off

[1] *La Question d'Orient au 18me Siécle*, ch. ii.
[2] Frederick II: *Mémoires*, VI, p. 25.

Chios (July 5, 1770) and inflict heavy loss upon the enemy. At Elphinstone's suggestion, Orlov then attacked the whole Turkish fleet cooped up in harbour, and destroyed it by a fireship almost without firing a shot. Elphinstone would have followed up this brilliant manœuvre by an immediate attack upon Constantinople, but Orlov missed his chance by delay and contented himself with seizing some of the islands in the Levant.

None the less the appearance of a Russian fleet in the Mediterranean and the success of the operations off Chios created an immense sensation throughout the whole Moslem world and seemed to presage the doom of the Ottoman Empire. Nor was the excitement confined to the Moslems. Austria was gravely perturbed and threatened to intervene on behalf of Turkey. Frederick of Prussia, however, cleverly diverted the attention of Austria to Poland, and Joseph II, who had become Emperor in 1765, was persuaded to take his share in the first partition of Poland. The attraction of Poland served also to induce Catherine to forgo the conquests she had made on the Pruth and on the Danube.

Nevertheless the Russo-Turkish war still dragged on. But although Catherine's armies continued to win victories in the field she was disposed by the outbreak of a formidable insurrection among the Cossacks of the Don towards the conclusion of peace with the new Sultan. Consequently, in July 1774, the Tsarina concluded with the Porte the famous Treaty of Kutschuk-Kainardji.

CHAPTER V

THE PROBLEM OF THE NEAR EAST, 1774–96

RUSSIA, TURKEY, AND ENGLAND

The antagonism between Russia and Turkey was, and remains to this day, partially due to the fact that the Turks are the successors of the Tartars. This antagonism is deep-rooted and quite exceptionally widespread among the Russians and explains the sympathy inspired in them by an enduring sense of community of race and faith for the Christian subjects of Turkey.

OTTO HÖTZSCH (1909)

EUROPE HAS, from time immemorial, been confronted with 'that shifting, intractable, and interwoven tangle of conflicting interests, rival peoples, and antagonistic faiths that is veiled,' as John Morley once said, 'under the easy name of the Eastern Question'. The problem has, however, assumed different aspects at different periods. During the eighteenth century, and particularly during the reign of the Empress Catherine II (1762–96), the core of the problem consisted in the antagonism between Russia and Turkey. But before the end of the century, the interests of England also seemed likely to conflict with those of Russia.

The antagonism between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, though fundamentally arising from the causes enumerated by Mr. Hötzsch, was, in the eighteenth century, due more directly to the obstacles presented by Turkey to the realization of Russia's ambitions. Those ambitions, as summarized in an 'Instruction' of 1737, were 'the incorporation of the region of the South Russian steppe, the conquest of the Crimea, the acquisition of the left bank of the Danube as Russia's southern frontier, and the liberation of the Danubian Principalities (Moldavia and Wallachia) which were to be brought under Russian domination'.

§ THE TREATY OF KUTSCHUK-KAINARDJI

These objects were to a large extent achieved by the Treaty of Kutschuk-Kainardji, concluded in 1774 between the Empress Catherine II and Sultan Abdul Hamid I (1773–89). Thugut, who was then the Austrian Minister at Constantinople, briefly described that treaty as 'un modèle d'habileté de la part des diplomates russes, et un rare exemple d'imbécillité de la part des négociateurs turcs'. So far-reaching, indeed, were the terms of this famous treaty that a distinguished English jurist once declared that all the great treaties concluded between the two Powers during the next half-century were only commentaries upon the text of Kutschuk-Kainardji.

By its territorial provisions Russia was to restore to the Porte most of the country she had recently occupied: Bessarabia, Moldavia, and Wallachia, the islands of the Archipelago, together with the provinces of Georgia and Mingrelia. But they were restored only on condition of better government in general and the concession of particular privileges in regard to taxation, diplomatic representation, and, above all, to religion. The Porte undertook not to obstruct the free exercise of the Christian religion nor the erection of new churches. Not less significant was the diplomatic footing which Russia obtained in Constantinople. She was henceforward to have a permanent embassy in that city, and her ambassador was to enjoy special privileges there. The Porte also agreed to allow pilgrimages to Jerusalem and other holy places, and generally to 'protect the Christian religion, its churches and ministers, and in particular the new church at Constantinople'. From these stipulations Russian publicists have deduced a general right of interference in the domestic concerns of the Ottoman Empire. In particular they relied upon them to sustain the claim to a formal protectorate over the Christian subjects of the Sultan, put forward on the eve of the Crimean War, and then declared by the British Government to be inadmissible.

Nor did these exhaust the concessions to Russia. Not less important were the territorial clauses. Russia was to retain Azov, Yenikale, and Kertsch, with the districts adjacent thereto; also Kinburn, at the mouth of the Dnieper, and, provided the assent of the Khan of Tartary could be obtained, the two Kabardas. Russia thus obtained for the first time a firm grip upon the northern shore of the Black Sea; the Kabardas would give her a footing on the eastern shore, and she also controlled the straits between the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. The Tartars to the east of the River Bug were declared (except in ecclesiastical matters) to be independent of the Porte. Thus Turkish territory instead of encircling the Black Sea was on the north-east to be bounded by the Bug.

Finally, in order to develop her trade, Russia was to be allowed to establish consuls wherever she pleased, to have the right of free commercial navigation in the Black Sea, and to enjoy 'the same privileges as are enjoyed by the nations whom the Porte favours most in trade, such as the French and English'. Reciprocal advantages were granted to subjects of the Sultan in Russia.

Soon after the conclusion of the Treaty of Kainardji Austria, not to be outdone by Russia, helped herself to the Bukovina; thus obtaining, simply by an act of brigandage in which the Sultan was obliged to acquiesce, as much territory as Russia had obtained by six years of strenuous fighting.

§ ENGLAND AND RUSSIA

The service rendered to Russia by England in 1770 was no isolated act. The relations of the two Powers ever since the entrance of Russia upon the European stage had been in the main friendly, although, as in 1756, they sometimes adhered to opposing political combinations. The friendship of the two Powers was firmly based on identity of interests, commercial and political. Russia's trade interests were, on the whole, complementary to, rather than competitive with, those of England, and more than once, as already indicated, commercial agreements were made between them. The most

recent was that of 1766 when the elder Pitt attempted also to form a Northern Alliance between his own country, Russia, and Prussia. The attempt, directed primarily against France, was unsuccessful. Nevertheless in Russia's war against Turkey (1768–74) English sympathies were entirely with the former. But those sympathies were again inspired largely by antipathy to France. Thus, in 1773, Lord Chatham (as Pitt had now become) wrote to Lord Shelburne, 'Your lordship knows well that I am quite a Russ; I trust the Ottoman Empire [which he was convinced England would never befriend] will pull down the House of Bourbon in its fall.'

In the opening phase of the American War of Independence the sympathies of the northern Powers, especially of Russia, were on the side of England. But in 1778 Vergennes endeavoured to persuade the Empress Catherine to head a combination of northern Powers to take the opportunity of getting England to make such an alteration in her maritime code as would mitigate the grievances of neutrals. Catherine made no secret of her anxiety to remain on friendly terms with England, but did go so far as to beg the mistress of the seas 'to show a little more circumspection in her mode of proceeding against the ships of neutral states'.

Then, as always, however, England adhered to her traditional policy with unbending rigidity. Consequently in 1780 Catherine, perhaps reluctantly, headed the Armed Neutrality in protest against England's treatment of neutral shipping. In conjunction with Sweden, Denmark, Austria, and Portugal she demanded that neutral trade with belligerents should be free from interference; that a neutral flag should cover all enemy goods except contraband of war; that only arms and munitions should be held to be contraband; and that the decisions of prize-courts should be based upon the acceptance of these principles. England refused to give way; the difficulties were not adjusted in 1780; they recurred during the Napoleonic Wars; and in 1915 they imperilled very gravely the friendly relations between Great Britain and the United States.

England was deeply offended by the action of the Empress Catherine, and hardly less when in 1781 she declined to accept, with characteristic prudence, the dangerous bribe offered to her by England in the shape of the cession of Minorca. Nevertheless, friendly relations were so far restored that in 1783 England strongly supported Catherine, who was as strongly opposed by France, in the final annexation of the Crimea.

This was only part of a much more ambitious project conceived by Catherine. Since the death of Maria Theresa in 1780 the Emperor Joseph II had succumbed more completely than ever to the seductive and dominating personality of the Tsarina. The ties between the two autocrats were cemented by more than one personal interview, and in 1782 the Tsarina laid before her ally a grandiose scheme for the complete reconstruction of the map of the Balkan Peninsula and the lands, seas, and islands adjacent thereto.

The Ottoman Turk was to be driven out of Europe. The Greek Empire, with its capital at Constantinople, was to be revived in favour of Catherine's second grandson, who with sagacious prescience had been christened Constantine and brought up entirely after the Greek mode. The revived Greek Empire was to include Thrace, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Albania, and Northern Greece. The direct acquisitions of Russia were conceived on a moderate scale: the great fortress of Oczakov and the territory, known as Lesser Tartary, which lay between the Bug and the Dniester, with a couple of the Aegean islands for naval bases. Russia's indirect share was much more imposing. Moldavia, Wallachia, and Bessarabia were to be erected into the independent kingdom of Dacia, which was to provide a throne for Catherine's favourite, Potemkin. Austria was to get a great southern Slav province made up of Serbia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Dalmatia, while Venice, in compensation for the loss of Dalmatia, was to have the Morea, Cyprus, and Crete. The acquiescence of France was to be assured by the cession of Egypt and Syria.

This extravagant plan was not entirely to the Emperor's liking. He deemed his share in the partition inadequate, nor did he wish to see the Danubian Principalities pass under the control of Russia.

The scheme was, however, only on paper. All that actually happened was that Catherine took the opportunity to define more precisely the position of the Crimea under the treaty of Kainardji. Turkey had been deprived of its suzerainty over the Tartars in political affairs, though the Khalifal authority of the Sultan remained inviolate. In 1783 Catherine resolved any remaining ambiguity by formal annexation of the Crimea. Thanks to the energy and skill of Potemkin, to whom its administration was confided, the Crimea began not only to bristle with fortresses and arsenals, but to yield a rich harvest of agricultural produce.

In the company of her devoted disciple, the Emperor Joseph, the Tsarina made a spectacular progress through her new dominions (in 1787), witnessed the launching of three battleships from the newly constructed dockyard at Kherson, and thence went on to inspect the new naval arsenal of Sebastopol.

These striking manifestations of the progress of Russia towards the domination of the Black Sea, and Catherine's ostentatious patronage of the Christian subjects of the Porte caused grave disquietude at Constantinople. Worse was to follow. The Sultan was peremptorily required to renounce his sovereignty over Georgia, surrender Bessarabia to Russia, and permit the establishment of hereditary governors in the Principalities. Abdul Hamid's patience was exhausted, and he followed up a demand for the immediate restoration of the Crimea by a declaration of war against Russia (August 1787).

Catherine, surprised and chagrined, attributed the bold action of the Sultan to encouragement received from Pitt. For this suspicion there was no scintilla of justification. Nor was England any more responsible for the advance of Gustavus III of Sweden upon St. Petersburg. Yet this also was attributed to English meddlesomeness. 'As Mr.

Pitt,' said the Tsarina, 'wishes to chase me from St. Petersburg, I hope he will allow me to take refuge at Constantinople.' Innocent as Pitt was in the whole matter, this was the very last thing in which he would willingly have acquiesced. Yet it is undeniable that the intervention of Gustavus was from the Turkish point of view exceedingly opportune, and probably saved the Ottoman Empire from immediate annihilation.

Meanwhile, after some initial but temporary successes on the part of Turkey, Suvarov took the great fortress of Oczakov, and in conjunction with the troops of Joseph II, faithful to his engagements to the Tsarina, repeated his success in a campaign in the Balkans.

In 1788 Pitt so far justified Catherine's suspicions as to join a Triple Alliance with Prussia and the United Provinces. True, he joined it with the object of saving Belgium from France and thus preserving the peace of Europe—always his primary concern. Moreover, so late as 1790, he warned the Prussian minister Herzberg that the armed mediation which Prussia desired to offer in the interests of the Porte was outside the scope of the Triple Alliance. None the less, the young Pitt, unlike his father and unlike Charles James Fox, who cordially approved Catherine's annexation of the Crimea, did perceive that the steady advance of Russia in south-eastern Europe jeopardized the interests of Great Britain. He was indeed the first English statesman to appreciate the truth that the growth of the British dominion in India gave her a real and intimate concern in the affairs of the Near East, and that the decadence of the Ottoman Empire and the approach of Russia to Constantinople might have serious reactions upon English policy in Asia. Only gradually however, did this truth dawn even upon Pitt.

Things were, however, moving fast in the Near East. In April 1789 Abdul Hamid I died and was succeeded by Selim III, a ruler of very different temper and quality. In February 1790 the death of Joseph II and the accession of his brother, Leopold II, one of the most sagacious rulers of the century, gave a new direction to Austrian policy. Alarmed

by the progress of the Revolution in France, and deeply concerned for the safety of his sister, Queen Marie Antoinette, Leopold wished to have his hands free and concluded peace with the Turks at Sistova on the basis of the *status quo ante* (August 1791).

Meantime, Pitt had assumed a firmer tone towards the Tsarina Catherine. In November 1790 he had demanded that she should hand back Oczakov to the Porte. The Cabinet supported him, but a very strong feeling was manifested in both Houses of Parliament against a sudden reversal of the policy which had hitherto governed the relations of England and Russia. The King, on March 28, 1791, sent a message to Parliament recommending some further augmentation of his naval forces 'in view of the failure of his ministers to effect a pacification between Russia and the Porte'. Ministers carried their reply to the King's message in the Lords by 97 to 34, and in the Commons by 228 to 135. But substantial as were the ministerial majorities, the votes did not in either House reflect either the temper of Parliament or the tone of the debates. Hardly a voice was raised, either by the peers or by members of the House of Commons in favour of Pitt's proposed demonstration against Russia. Lord Fitzwilliam, the leader of the Whig peers, opposed Pitt's demand on the ground that 'no ill consequence was likely to arise from Russia's retention of Oczakov and Akkerman'. Burke, anticipating the sort of language Parliament was wont to hear a century later from Mr. Gladstone, vehemently protested against a demonstration of friendship for 'a cruel and wasteful empire' and 'a nation of destructive savages'. Fox insisted that Russia was England's 'natural ally', that we had always looked to her to counterbalance the Bourbons, that we had 'encouraged her plans for raising her aggrandizement upon the ruins of the Turkish Empire', that to oppose her progress in the Black Sea would be sheer madness, and that it would not hurt us if she actually emerged into the Mediterranean. Pitt, on the contrary, argued that 'the interests which this country had in not suffering the Russians to make conquests on the coast of the Black Sea were of the

utmost importance'. Pitt's reply was, however, on the whole singularly unconvincing, and even perfunctory. In the matter of the proposed naval demonstration Pitt wisely deferred to an unmistakable public sentiment as represented in Parliament, and promptly effected a rather humiliating but eminently prudent retreat. Catherine II had her way about Oczakov without any interference from the English fleet.

The Treaty of Sistova concluded between Austria and the Ottoman Empire was within six months followed by a 'treaty of perpetual peace', signed by Russia and Turkey at Jassy on January 9, 1792. The terms of the Treaty of Kainardji, of the *Convention Explicative* of 1779 and of the Commercial Treaty of 1783 were confirmed; the Porte recovered the Principalities, but again on the specific condition that the stipulations contained in the preceding treaties were fulfilled. The Russian frontier was advanced to the Dniester (Oczakov being thus transferred), and the Porte agreed to recognize Russia's complete acquisition of the Crimea.

The Treaty of Jassy closes one of the most important chapters in the modern history of the Eastern Question. That chapter opens with the death of Peter the Great and closes with that of Catherine the Great (November 17, 1796). When it opened Russia had barely emerged as a European Power: a window had indeed been opened towards the Baltic, but the prospect therefrom was confined; the keys of the Baltic were not in Russian hands; the Black Sea was a Turkish lake. When it closed Russia was firmly entrenched on the shores both of the Baltic and the Euxine, her western frontier extended uninterruptedly from the Neva to the Dniester, from St. Petersburg to Oczakov. Reval, Riga, Memel guard one bastion, Kherson and Sebastopol, Kinburn and Oczakov guard the other. It was estimated that Catherine had acquired nearly 220,000 square miles of territory and some 7,000,000 additional subjects. And the quality of her acquisitions were not less remarkable than their extent. The last three years of her reign witnessed the second and third partitions of Poland, which brought her a vast amount

of territory and many new subjects; but unlike the first partition they did not, even indirectly, affect the relations of England and Russia, and further reference to them is not necessary. It should, nevertheless, be said that Catherine very cleverly availed herself of the preoccupation of the German Powers with the affairs of France to carry out her plans in Poland with a minimum of interference from them, and also that Prussia soon showed herself to be more interested in Eastern than in Western Europe. At the first opportunity Prussia made peace—a very advantageous one for her—with the French Republic (1795).

Soon after the third and final partition of Poland was effected Catherine's long reign came to an end (1796).

Preceding paragraphs should have made it clear that her reign was not merely long but splendid. Catherine has been frequently compared with Elizabeth Tudor. They were perhaps the two ablest women that ever occupied an important throne. Neither was a model of virtue or even of decorum. Both were vain and susceptible to flattery; neither hesitated, if policy required, to prevaricate or deceive; but both had this supreme virtue: each according to her lights sought to safeguard the security and promote the greatness of her country. But between the two great Queens there was this difference. Elizabeth, in a measure denied to Catherine, enjoyed not merely the respect, but the affection of her people; for their sake she remained a virgin; to them she was married; to have contracted marriage with any of her many suitors would, therefore, have been to commit political adultery.

No such scruples troubled Catherine's conscience: she yielded readily to every amorous temptation, and many of her amours involved also political favouritism. None the less could she proudly and truthfully boast: 'I came to Russia a poor girl; Russia has dowered me richly, but I have paid her back with Azov, the Crimea, and the Ukraine.' Truly her debt was discharged in full.

CHAPTER VI

ENGLAND, RUSSIA, AND NAPOLEON

Egypt is the keystone of English ascendancy in the Indian Ocean.

PAUL ROHRBACH (1912)

Really to ruin England we must make ourselves masters of Egypt.

GENERAL BUONAPARTE TO THE DIRECTORY
(*August* 16, 1797)

A MORE remarkable item of political analysis could hardly have come from the lips or pen of the most experienced and long-sighted of diplomatists in 1797. Much more remarkable then that it should have formed the pith of the official report made to his masters in Paris by the young General who had just brought to a brilliant conclusion his first campaign in Italy. From the conviction thus announced Napoleon never wavered. It was based upon two propositions. The first was that England was *the* enemy to be fought and overcome. Austria he might caress to-day and crush to-morrow; Prussia he might treat with the contempt her conduct deserved; Russia might be the useful ally or the slippery friend to be brought to heel by drastic treatment; but England was the enemy who had deprived France of one empire in the Far West, and of another in the Far East, who must therefore, at all costs, be conquered, humiliated, and despoiled.

Napoleon's imagination was inflamed much more by the wealth and glamour of the East than by the potentialities—as yet unrealized—of empire in the West. To the fulfilment of his dreams one thing was essential—the possession of Egypt. The irony of the situation was that to its possession England had hitherto been entirely indifferent. It was Napoleon himself who first called her attention to its importance: it was his approach to it by way of the Ionian Isles, and his attempt to conquer it from Turkey, that led to

the great victories at sea which first established the fame of Horatio Nelson.

§ ANGLO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

But this is to anticipate. The relations between Russia and England during the years immediately following upon the death of Catherine the Great depended mainly upon personal factors. Paul I, who in 1796 succeeded, at the age of forty-four, his mother Catherine (his paternity was doubtful), was even more of an autocrat, albeit a half-crazy one, than his predecessor. Obsessed by admiration for Napoleon, he was the determined opponent of the French Revolution. Consequently, although Russia adhered to the great coalition formed by Pitt to restrain the aggressions of France in 1798–9, and despite Suvarov's brilliant campaign in North Italy (April–June 1799), the second coalition quickly broke up. The fruits of Suvarov's victories were dissipated by Masséna's crushing defeat inflicted upon General Korsakov at Zurich (September 26); and a Russian force sent to Holland to co-operate with an English army under the incompetent command of the Duke of York was defeated and compelled to surrender. After Napoleon's successful *coup d'état* of 18th Brumaire (November 9, 1799) the First Consul had, therefore, no difficulty in detaching his devoted disciple, the Tsar Paul, from a distasteful coalition.

Instigated by Napoleon, the Tsar revived the Armed Neutrality, consisting of Russia, Prussia, Sweden, and Denmark, to frustrate England's command of the sea. This sinister combination was, however, soon broken up: the assassination of the Tsar (March 1801) was quickly followed by Nelson's brilliant victory at Copenhagen (April 2).

§ THE 'ENIGMATIC' TSAR

Paul's successor on the throne was his eldest son, Alexander, christened by the most discerning of his biographers the 'Enigmatic Tsar', and by Napoleon, who rightly regarded him as a consummate actor, 'the northern Talma', or 'the

northern Sphinx'. An enigma, not to say a complex of combinations, the character of Alexander undeniably was. Privy to the murder of his father, he was haunted throughout life by the memory of the crime. A sentimental Liberal, Alexander remained in effect an autocrat; a genuine believer in education, he diverted the funds set apart to promote it to the requirements of his army. Keenly anxious to win fame as a soldier, he was not only the author of a famous project for the abolition of war, but was at pains to secure the adhesion of Pitt to a plan for securing world-peace on the basis of a rectification of political frontiers which should respect the principle of nationality. Though he favoured the restoration of Polish independence he meant from the first that its sovereign should be none other than the Tsar Alexander. The seed sown in the impressionable mind of Alexander by tutors, confidants, and favourites, was, in truth, singularly mixed. His Swiss tutor, Frederic César de la Harpe, a disciple of Rousseau, had planted in the mind of Alexander the seeds of communism. The Baron von Stein, Prussian reformer and German nationalist, had impressed upon him the significance of nationality as a factor in politics. Prince Adam Czartoryski, his Polish aide-de-camp, must share with the Baroness von Krudener, Alexander's Egeria, the credit of persuading the conscience-stricken young man to apply the precepts of Christianity to the conduct of politics. No wonder that the wheat and the tares grew together until the harvest, and that the reapers—Napoleon to-day, Metternich and Castlereagh to-morrow—found it difficult to separate them, or to predict the course which the variable Tsar would decide to follow.

§ THE THIRD COALITION

Outraged by Napoleon's treacherous murder of the Duc d'Enghien (1804), offended by the assumption of the Imperial Crown by a military adventurer, the Tsar joined the Third Coalition formed by Pitt in 1805. That coalition was, however, broken up by Napoleon's striking victory at Austerlitz, and though Russia escaped the humiliations

heaped by Napoleon upon Austria and Prussia, and though she continued the fight against Napoleon behind the Vistula, the Tsar accepted the armistice offered by Napoleon (1807).

The way was thus prepared for Tilsit. With characteristic rapidity Napoleon had determined on a new move. The relations between Russia and England, though so far improved as to permit their temporary co-operation in the Second and Third Coalitions, were none too good. England's Maritime Code still constituted a rock of offence for Russia, nor were there lacking other points of friction. Why, then, should not Napoleon woo the susceptible Tsar and so add another to England's enemies? To effect this object Napoleon arranged his romantic interview with the Tsar at Tilsit.

§ THE TREATY OF TILSIT

To preserve the utmost secrecy the two Emperors met in a floating pavilion moored in the middle of the Niemen. All witnesses were rigidly excluded. The bargain was soon struck. Prussia was to be dismembered; England to be reduced to ruin by the boycott of her commerce; Napoleon and Alexander were to divide the world between them. Russia was to recognize all the Napoleonic kingdoms; the Confederation of the Rhine; the Grand Duchy of Warsaw (Poland) under the King of Saxony. Danzig was to be a free city. The Vistula was to be the western boundary of Russia, and Russia agreed to mediate between Napoleon and England. Prussia was stripped of all her provinces west of the Elbe and all her acquisitions from Poland; she had to pay a crushing indemnity, to reduce her army to 42,000 men, to recognize all the Napoleonic kingdoms, and to close her ports against English trade. But for the tardy scruples of the Tsar, Brandenburg-Prussia would have been completely wiped off the map of Europe. As it was, she was severely mutilated.

Finally, by a secret treaty Russia agreed to restore the Ionian Isles to France, and make common cause with Napoleon against England, if the latter did not accept Napoleon's terms by November 1. In return Russia was to

get Finland from Sweden, Moldavia and Wallachia from Turkey, while Sweden, Denmark, and Portugal were to be forced into war with England, and to close their ports against English trade.

Of the Tilsit Agreement Canning and Castlereagh, the two most eminent of Pitt's disciples, somehow got wind. They acted promptly. Within a fortnight after the bargain was sealed at Tilsit a powerful fleet under Admiral Gambier, with an army of 27,000 men under Lord Cathcart, left the Solent for the Baltic. Denmark was required to hand over her fleet to England on safe deposit for the duration of the war. Denmark naturally declined, and England in consequence was regretfully obliged to bombard Copenhagen and take the Danish fleet into her keeping. These proceedings, admittedly highhanded, were severely criticized in Parliament, and abroad were universally condemned. The dilemma presented to the Danes was undeniably painful. Yet the stark truth was that they had to surrender their fleet either to England or to Napoleon. England could offer the better security both for the safe-keeping of the ships during the war, and for their return at the close of it. The Danes might, therefore, have been wise to prefer that alternative and to spare their beautiful capital from partial destruction. The bombardment not only outraged Danish feeling, but led also to a complete rupture between England and Russia. As a result England had to maintain in the Baltic a naval squadron which kept watch on the Russian fleet until 1812.

Another secret stipulation made at Tilsit concerned the Eastern Question. Napoleon was to strengthen his position in the Adriatic by the acquisition of the Bocche di Cattaro and it was agreed that failing the conclusion of a peace between Russia and Turkey within three months Napoleon should join the Tsar in expelling the Turks from the whole of their European dominions except the city of Constantinople and the province of Roumelia. Yet the aims of the conspirators of Tilsit were essentially divergent. Napoleon intended to make Constantinople the base for an expedition directed

against India. For the Tsar Constantinople itself, giving him the control of the narrow Straits and access to the Mediterranean, was the goal of his ambition. But behind and above everything was Napoleon's passionate desire for the humiliation of England.

The two Emperors met again at Erfurt in October 1808, but though Napoleon entertained his august ally with magnificent hospitality the relations between host and guest were perceptibly cooling. Russia made repeated attempts to secure the Danubian Principalities but in vain, while Napoleon was already making overtures to the new Sultan Madmud II (1808–39), in view of eventualities which he already foresaw.

§ THE MOSCOW EXPEDITION

Between the Tsar and the French Emperor relations became steadily worse. The burden imposed upon Napoleon's allies by the Continental System became intolerable. Yet Napoleon could not afford to mitigate in the least degree its severity: 'Choose between cannon-shot against the English vessels which approach your shores . . . and immediate war with France.' Such was the ultimatum addressed by Napoleon to the client-states of France. The policy was forced upon him: after Trafalgar he had no other shot in his locker; only by a Continental blockade maintained without the smallest puncture could he hope to bring England to her knees. But apart from the Continental System the Tsar had several causes of complaint against Napoleon.[1] Most of all was he disgusted by Napoleon's failure to deliver the goods in the Near East, and in 1812 a treaty of peace was actually concluded between Russia and Turkey at Bucharest. Russia obtained Bessarabia and advanced her frontier up to the Pruth, and the Turks undertook to carry out the undertakings contained in the Treaties of Kainardji and Jassy for the good government of the Principalities. But although Alexander anticipated the action of Napoleon at Constantinople, the latter made his right and left flanks secure by

[1] Marriott: *Short History of France*, pp. 177 f.

treaties with Austria and Prussia respectively and having secured his flanks he crossed the Niemen on June 24, 1812.

With Napoleon's expedition to Russia, the disastrous retreat from Moscow, the ensuing War of German Liberation, Napoleon's first abdication and his final defeat at Waterloo this narrative is not concerned. Nor with the settlement effected by the Treaties of Paris and Vienna. It is, however, pertinent to observe that the part played by the Tsar Alexander in the concluding passages of the war and in the negotiations for peace gave him a pre-eminent position among the statesmen of Europe and enabled Russia to exercise upon continental affairs an influence such as she had never hitherto enjoyed.

§ THE HOLY ALLIANCE

Alexander's ambitious project of *The Holy Alliance* lamentably failed, indeed, to fulfil the lofty ideals set forth in its Articles; it was quickly perverted to serve the reactionary policy to the pursuit of which Metternich without difficulty persuaded the impressionable Tsar, and thus came into inevitable conflict with the liberal policy of which Castlereagh and Canning were the foremost champions.

But despite that championship Europe plunged into a perfect orgy of reaction. Notably was this the case in the two Bourbon kingdoms of Spain and the Two Sicilies. It was almost equally true of the States in Germany and Italy dominated by Metternich, and not least of France after the fanatical Charles X had succeeded (1824) to the throne of his more prudent and broad-minded brother Louis XVIII.

Paradoxically it happened that it was one of the peoples so long subject to the tyranny of the Ottoman Turks that first called a definite halt to the progress of reaction.

CHAPTER VII

ENGLAND, RUSSIA, AND GREECE

> England . . . sees that her true interests are inseparably connected with the independence of those nations who have shown themselves worthy of emancipation, and such is the case of Greece.
>
> LORD BYRON

IN MARCH 1821 a bolt from the blue fell upon the diplomatic world. At that moment many of the most illustrious diplomatists of Europe, including the Tsar Alexander, were sitting in conference at Laibach, summoned thither by Prince Metternich to discuss the best means of combating the spirit of revolution lately manifested so disturbingly in Spain and Southern Italy.

§ THE PROTOCOL OF TROPPAU

The Laibach Conference was a continuation of an earlier one which had met at Troppau in October 1820, whence the three Eastern autocrats promulgated the Protocol of Troppau (November 19, 1820). This famous document set forth with startling explicitness the revised doctrines of the Holy Alliance. 'States,' it declared, 'which have undergone a change of government due to revolution, the result of which threatens other States, *ipso facto* cease to be members of the European alliance, and remain excluded from it until their situation gives guarantees for legal order and stability. . . . If, owing to such alterations, immediate danger threatens other States, the Powers bind themselves, by peaceful means or if need be by arms, to bring back the guilty State into the bosom of the Great Alliance.'

§ ENGLAND AND THE HOLY ALLIES

In the proceedings of the Troppau Conference Great Britain took no formal part, and though Lord Castlereagh sent his brother Lord Stewart to Troppau with a watching

brief he strongly disapproved of the resolution it promulgated. Castlereagh's position was from first to last unequivocal and consistent. He held that Austria was entitled to intervene if and in so far as her interests in Italy were threatened, but to anything in the nature of concerted action on behalf of absolutism on the part of the allied Powers he was strongly opposed. Not that in any sense he approved of revolution. His primary, if not his sole, concern, was to preserve the peace of Europe, and that peace was, in his judgment, less likely to be jeopardized by domestic revolution than by the armed intervention of the Great Powers. In a circular dispatch (January 19, 1821), while admitting the right of Austria to interfere in Naples, Castlereagh vigorously denounced the principles enunciated at Troppau on the ground that they would 'inevitably sanction . . . a much more extensive interference in the internal transactions of States than . . . can be reconciled either with the general interest or with the efficient authority and dignity of independent Sovereigns'.

Castlereagh's dispatch created a profound sensation in the Continental Chancelleries, but nevertheless the Troppau Powers gave a mandate to Austria to crush the Neapolitan revolt. With less excuse Russia was as keen to march an army into Spain in the interests of absolutism, as was Austria to march into Naples.

Here, then, we see England and Russia in conflict on an ideological issue. The Tsar Alexander, increasingly under the influence of Prince Metternich, stood out as the champion of absolute monarchy. Castlereagh and Canning, loyal to the principles of Pitt, tenaciously upheld the view that so long as domestic convulsions, however violent, did not threaten the independence of other States, nor tend to endanger the peace of Europe, it was not permissible for foreigners to interfere. Bitterly as the majority of his countrymen deplored the excesses of the French Revolution, and in particular the murder of the weak but blameless Louis XVI, Pitt studiously refrained from interference. As soon, however, as the French republicans began to indulge

in propaganda, when they presumed to violate international engagements by opening the Scheldt, above all when they threatened the independence of the Austrian Netherlands (Belgium), Pitt proceeded to measures which provoked France to declare war on England.

Almost precisely parallel was the situation after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Intensely as Conservative opinion might disapprove of the course taken by the Russian revolution; perturbed, as they might well be, at seeing the theories of Karl Marx exemplified in practice, there could have been no valid ground for interfering in the domestic affairs of Russia had not the Bolsheviks announced their intention to stir up revolution abroad, and had not Bolshevik propaganda actually promoted unrest among certain sections of society in other lands.

Castlereagh, then, was not only faithful to an inherited tradition, but anticipated the operation of a principle upon which Mr. Churchill and those who acted with him in 1920 sought to justify their support of the counter-revolutionary movement in Russia.

§ THE STRUGGLE FOR HELLENIC INDEPENDENCE

To resume the broken sequence of events. The situation which confronted the Powers when the Greeks, in 1821, raised an insurrection was far from simple. Yet sudden as seemed the shock administered to the diplomatists at Laibach, unexpected as was the rising of the despised Greeks, forces had long been operating which portended a national revival among the Greek subjects of the Porte.

Foremost among these was the deliberate policy of their Turkish conquerors. The Turk is a great fighter, but an indifferent administrator: the dull details of routine government he had always preferred to leave in the hands of the 'inferior races' he had conquered. Largely as a result of Turkish indifference the Greeks were permitted to enjoy a large measure of local autonomy. More particularly was this the case in the islands of the Adriatic and the Aegean. These islands were inhabited by a race of shrewd traders

and skilful mariners, among whom the national movement found its most devoted and capable adherents.

The Turkish navy had always been manned to a large extent by Greeks; most of the commerce of the Empire was also in their hands and, owing to the rapid development of the joint-stock principle, the Greeks in the eighteenth century had amassed large fortunes.

A still more important contribution to the revival of Greek nationalism and one which was particularly embarrassing to the Tsar, was the policy of the Moslem Turks towards the Byzantine Church. The Sultan not only respected the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople as the representative of the Orthodox Church but utilized him as the official channel of communication between the conquerors and their 'Greek subjects'—a term which included all except Jews and Armenians who were not Moslems. Even more important than the influence of the Patriarch with the Government in Constantinople was that of the parish priests with the peasantry. To their devotion it was mainly owing that, through the long night of darkness, a flicker of the national spirit was maintained among the Greeks of the Morea and the Aegean islands.

Another element in the national uprising was supplied by the marked literary revival among the Greeks in the eighteenth century.

Among the external forces which stimulated the Greeks to insurrection the most important was the example of revolutionary France. To this were due a number of secret societies, the most famous of which was the *Philike Hetairia*, or 'Association of Friends', which was said to have enrolled by 1820 200,000 members pledged to work for the expulsion of the Turks from Europe and the re-establishment of the Greek Empire.

§ RUSSIA AND THE GREEK INSURRECTION

The initial rising took place in Moldavia. Its leader was Prince Alexander Hypsilanti, the son of a Phanariot Greek who had been Governor of Moldavia—himself the aide-de-camp of Count Giovanni Antonio Capo d'Istria, the Foreign

Minister of the Tsar Alexander, and himself a Greek by birth and a member of the *Philike Hetairia.* Moldavia was selected as the theatre of insurrection in confident anticipation that the Tsar would give his active assistance to the movement.

The Tsar's position was, however, one of peculiar embarrassment. Nemesis had long lain in wait for that double-minded man: he could no longer evade it. As the founder of the Holy Alliance, as the partner, if not the slave, of Prince Metternich, as largely responsible for the Troppau Protocol, he was the sworn foe of revolution; as the Protector of the Greek Church, and the traditional friend of Turkey's enemies, he was impelled to intervention on behalf of the Greeks.

The course of events almost compelled the Tsar to intervene. The rising in Moldavia was a complete fiasco. The Tsar, rapidly discarding the slough of liberalism, was easily persuaded by Metternich that the Greek insurrection supplied only one more manifestation of the dangerous spirit already at work in Madrid, Lisbon, and Naples—the spirit which the Holy Allies were pledged to resist. He accordingly disavowed all sympathy with Hypsilanti, and ordered the rebels to return at once to their allegiance to the Sultan. The attitude of the Tsar was fatal to the rising in the Principalities.

§ THE WAR IN THE MOREA

Very different was the fate of the rising in the Morea and the Aegean islands. How this movement which displayed, it is true, a confused medley of nobility and brutality, of conspicuous heroism and consummate cowardice, of sordid self-seeking and pure-minded patriotism, of superb loyalty and time-serving treachery, would have ended but for the intervention of England, Russia, and France it is difficult to say. When it did at last end in 1829 a new nation, definitely based upon the idea of nationality, had taken its place in the European polity.[1]

[1] I have told the story in some detail in my *Eastern Question,* ch. viii (4th ed., Oxford, 1940).

But the importance, in the present connexion, of the Greek insurrection lies in the fact that it revealed for the first time a latent rivalry, not to say hostility, between England and Russia in regard to the Near East.

On both sides the war was waged with the utmost ferocity. In April 1821 a general massacre of Moslems began in the Morea as a result of which hardly one Turk out of 25,000 was suffered to survive outside the walled towns into which the rest of the terrified Turks had fled for refuge. On the other side the Turks had recourse to cruel reprisals wherever Christians could be taken at a disadvantage. The murder in Constantinople of the Greek Patriarch and three archbishops gave the signal for a general massacre of Christians throughout Macedonia and Asia Minor.

§ ATTITUDE OF THE POWERS

The Powers could not look on at these events unmoved. The Tsar might hesitate, but his subjects were deeply moved by the insult to their faith and the unhappy plight of their co-religionists. Moreover, apart from the insult to the highest ecclesiastics of the Church, of which he was the Protector, the Tsar had his own grievances against the Porte. The Turks had insulted Russian ships in the Bosphorus and, contrary to treaty obligations, had continued to administer the Principalities by martial law. Accordingly, the Tsar presented a series of demands to the Porte, and as no answer was received within the specified time the Russian ambassador was withdrawn from Constantinople (July 27, 1821).

General war seemed imminent, but the Powers were anxious to avert the renewal of war, and Castlereagh joined Metternich in putting pressure upon the Sultan to evacuate the Principalities. For the moment the struggle between Turkey and Greece was localized.

Not, however, for long. In April 1822 Christendom was again shocked by Turkish atrocities in Chios, and the tide of Philhellenist sentiment was, especially in England, rising rapidly. Canning, who succeeded to the Foreign Office on

Castlereagh's death in August 1822, was compelled, by the injuries inflicted by the war upon English commerce, to recognize the Greeks as belligerents in March 1823. In July Lord Byron, the most eloquent and most enthusiastic of English Philhellenists, went out to Greece and in January 1824 landed at Missolonghi.

The Greeks, though distracted by internal feuds and hampered by lack of money, were just managing to hold their own when in January 1824 the Sultan Mahmud took the desperate step of summoning to his aid his powerful vassal, Mehemet Ali of Egypt. In 1824 Mehemet equipped a great expedition under his son Ibrahim, who conquered and devastated Crete, and in February 1825 landed in the Morea where he 'harried, slaughtered, and devastated in all directions'. Tidings of his cruel deeds and still more of his intention to carry off into bondage in Egypt all the Greeks who were spared by his ferocious troops roused Philhellenist sentiment in England to the highest pitch. Joined by a powerful Turkish force, Ibrahim then proceeded to invest Missolonghi which, after a year's heroic defence and one last desperate sortie, was compelled by starvation to surrender (April 22, 1826). From Missolonghi the victors marched on Athens which, despite the assistance of Lord Cochrane, General Church, and many English volunteers, could not hold out. The Greek cause seemed desperate and in their despair the Greeks placed themselves formally under British protection and begged Great Britain to send them a king. England, however, though deeply sympathetic could not depart from her attitude of strict though benevolent neutrality.

§ RUSSIA, ENGLAND, AND THE GREEKS

Help, however, came from another quarter. In December 1825 the Tsar Alexander died suddenly and was succeeded by his brother Nicholas. Nicholas had none of his brother's sentimentality nor of his Western veneer: a Muscovite to the core he cared little for the Greeks but he was not disposed to allow the Turks to play fast and loose with Russia.

On the accession of the new Tsar, Canning sent to St.

Petersburg a special mission headed by the Duke of Wellington. By the Protocol of St. Petersburg, negotiated by him, England and Russia, while renouncing any exclusive advantages for themselves, were to offer their joint mediation to the Porte; Greece was to continue to pay tribute to the Sultan but to become virtually independent (April 1826).

A month earlier the Tsar Nicholas had sent on his own account an ultimatum to the Sultan who, after deferring his acceptance to the last minute, signed with Russia the Convention of Akkerman (October 7, 1826). The Sultan agreed to evacuate the Principalities, to make large concessions to Serbia, and to submit in all things to the will of the Tsar.

§ THE TREATY OF LONDON (JULY 1827)

Nothing was said about Greece, and, intoxicated by the successes achieved by his Egyptian ally in the Morea, the Sultan Mahmud II showed no disposition to accept mediation unless backed by force. For mediation Greece had already formally applied. Accordingly, in September 1826, Canning proposed to combine with the Tsar to enforce mediation and intimated to the Sultan that if he remained obdurate England and Russia would 'look to Greece with an eye of favour and with a disposition to seize the first occasion of recognizing as an independent State such portion of Greek territory as should have freed itself from Turkish dominion'.

This attitude fluttered the dove-cotes of the late Tsar's Holy Allies. Metternich, in particular, spared no effort to frustrate the policy of Canning. But in July 1827 France concluded with England and Russia the Treaty of London. The three contracting Powers agreed to intimate to the belligerents that they intended to enforce an armistice 'by preventing all collision between the contending parties . . . without however taking any part in the hostilities between them'. Instructions to that effect were then sent to the admirals commanding the English and French fleets in the Levant.

The Treaty of London, though justly regarded as the

crown of Canning's Near Eastern policy, placed him in a dilemma destined to recur in subsequent phases of the problem. So intolerable were the excesses of the Turco-Egyptian forces that civilized Powers were constrained to intervene, but clearly the intervention must be disinterested. Suspicions of the Tsar's motives were beginning to enter the mind of the English ministers. The Tsar Nicholas must not be permitted to utilize the Greek struggles, for which he obviously cared little, to compel Turkey to make concessions on matters about which he cared much, But the obduracy of the Porte might well play into the Tsar's hands. Moreover, it was difficult to know how the 'high contracting parties' were to prevent collisions between the combatants 'without taking any part in the hostilities'? That Canning did himself contemplate the use of force is clear from the Duke of Wellington's condemnation of the Treaty of London on the ground that 'it specified means of compulsion which were neither more nor less than measures of war'.

§ NAVARINO

Large reinforcements, naval and military, were meanwhile reaching Ibrahim in the Morea from Egypt, and a squadron of Turkish and Egyptian ships was lying in Navarino bay. An Anglo-French squadron was on the watch outside it. Foiled by the firmness of the allied admirals in more than one attempt to put to sea, Ibrahim retorted by redoubling his atrocities—almost under the eyes of the allied fleets—on land. To make their personal remonstrances to Ibrahim, the admirals sailed into the bay but reiterated their intention not to provoke hostilities unless attacked.

The Turks, however, fired on one of the *Dartmouth's* boats; *Dartmouth* and the French flagship replied; the battle became general and before the sun went down on October 20 the Turco-Egyptian fleet had entirely disappeared. 'The Bay of Navarino was covered with their wrecks.'

The simple truth was that Sir Edward Codrington, who commanded the British fleet in the Levant, had cut the

Gordian knot tied by the diplomatists, and had virtually decided the struggle for Hellenic independence. But the fruits of his decisive action were not immediately gathered. The news of Navarino was received with amazement throughout Europe and with something like consternation by the new Tory Government in England. Canning had died two months before Navarino, and, after a five months' interval, was succeeded as Prime Minister by the Duke of Wellington. Codrington got no thanks from the Duke, who made no secret of his dislike of Canning's policy. With consummate impudence the Sultan demanded an apology and compensation for the 'revolting outrage' of Navarino. Even the Duke was not prepared to go that length, but King George IV was made to 'lament deeply' that this conflict should have occurred with the naval forces of an ancient ally, and to express a 'confident hope that this "untoward event" would not be followed by further hostilities'.

But, from the point of view of the present narrative, the main significance of these events lay in their reaction upon the relations of England and Russia. The attitude taken up by the Wellington Ministry inevitably encouraged the Sultan to persist in his resistance to the Greeks and to renew his quarrel with Russia. Russia was consequently permitted and even compelled to play her own hand against the Turk. Thus all the fruits of the prudent diplomacy of Castlereagh and Canning were carelessly dissipated in a few months by their successors.

§ RUSSO-TURKISH WAR (1828–9)

In December 1827 Sultan Mahmud declared a Holy War against the infidel; the Tsar accepted the challenge; and in May 1828 took the field in person, crossed the Pruth at the head of an army of 150,000 men, and again occupied the Principalities. About the same time a Russian fleet entered the Dardanelles.

Although Nicholas professed complete disinterestedness neither England nor France was willing to see Russia the sole arbiter of the destinies of the Near East. Accordingly,

they opened negotiations with Mehemet Ali and Ibrahim for the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces from the Morea, which was presently occupied by a French army. By the autumn of 1828 not a Turk nor an Egyptian remained in the Morea.

The campaign of 1828 was, meanwhile, going badly for the Russians in Europe, though in the Caucasus they carried all before them. In 1829, however, Russia put forth her strength. Diebitsch was entrusted with the command, and in July a Russian army, by a masterly march, for the first time crossed the Balkans, and on August 14 its advance was supported by the navy in the Black Sea. Adrianople surrendered, Constantinople was at the mercy of the Russians, Kars and Erzerum had already fallen, and the Sultan had no alternative but to accept the terms embodied in the Treaty of Adrianople, September 14.

§ THE TREATY OF ADRIANOPLE

This treaty is one of the landmarks in the history of the Eastern Question. Russia restored her conquests, except the 'Great Islands of the Danube', but her title to Georgia and the other provinces of the Caucasus was acknowledged; all neutral vessels were to enjoy free navigation in the Black Sea and on the Danube; practical autonomy was granted to Moldavia and Wallachia under Russian protection; Russian traders in Turkey were to be under the exclusive protection of their own consuls.

As regards Greece, it had been agreed by a Protocol signed in London (November 1828) that the Morea and the Greek islands should be placed under the protection of the Powers. A second Protocol (March 22, 1829) provided that Greece should be an autonomous but tributary State under a Prince selected by the Powers and that its frontier should extend from the Gulf of Arta on the West Coast to the Gulf of Volo on the east. By the Treaty of Adrianople the Sultan accepted these arrangements, thus virtually acknowledging Greek independence.

§ THE KINGDOM OF THE HELLENES

The settlement of the affairs of Greece was relegated to a Conference which met in London. A Protocol issuing therefrom declared Greece to be an independent and monarchical State under the guarantee of the three Protecting Powers Russia, Great Britain, and France, who, later on, jointly guaranteed a loan of 60,000,000 francs to the young kingdom.

It was understood that the Greek monarchy should be 'constitutional', but apart from the difficulty of defining a 'constitutional monarchy', it was not easy to find a 'constitutional monarch'. The choice was virtually limited by a self-denying ordinance of the Great Powers to that nursery of princelings, the Germanic Confederation, and eventually, after the refusal of the throne by Prince John of Saxony and Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg (Queen Victoria's 'Uncle Leopold'), who preferred Belgium, the Protecting Powers secured for their ward the services of Prince Otto of Bavaria. Capo d'Istria, who in March 1827 had been recalled from voluntary exile in Switzerland to become President of the embryonic Greek State, was assassinated in 1831. The way was thus cleared for the German princeling who, in 1833, at the age of seventeen, ascended the throne of the Hellenes.

The choice of Otto proved by no means a happy one, and after a troubled reign of nearly twenty years he was dethroned by a military revolt.

The story, not to be followed further, has, up to this point, both a general and a particular significance. Generally, the Greek revolt was the first successful manifestation of a force or idea destined to give a differentiating character to European politics in the nineteenth century. The force of nationalism was by no means uniform in operation: if it tended to the unification of Germany and Italy it was definitely disruptive in the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires. But whether integrating or disintegrating, nationalism was indisputably a powerful force which had its repercussions in countries remote from those mentioned above.

It is, however, with the particular significance of the Greek revolt that we are here concerned. The Greek insurrection did not create any actual rupture in the good relations of Great Britain and Russia. The motives which inspired the policy of the Tsar Nicholas were not, indeed, congruous with those which animated Castlereagh and Canning. The latter were sincerely anxious to see a people with so splendid a tradition as that of the Greeks emancipate itself from the blasting tyranny of an Asiatic conqueror. Tsar Nicholas, on the contrary, followed the path first explored by Peter the Great and along which Catherine the Great advanced with such brilliant success. The Treaty of Adrianople was the natural sequel to the Treaties of Kainardji and Jassy. Not, however, until the accession of Nicholas I is it possible to discern any real uneasiness among Englishmen about the designs of Russia. The younger Pitt, as we have seen, felt it, but failed to arouse it in Parliament or in the country.

Yet within a few months after the accession of Otto to the Greek throne, the eyes of the English people were opened: the danger anticipated by Pitt was seen to be far from illusory, and jealousies were aroused which determined Anglo-Russian relations until the conclusion of the Agreement of 1907.

CHAPTER VIII

RUSSIA AND CONSTANTINOPLE

THE TREATY OF UNKIAR-SKELESSI

Pour la Russie toute la fameuse question d'Orient se résume dans ces mots: de quelle autorité dépendent les détroits du Bosphore et des Dardanelles? Qui en est le détenteur? SERGE GORIANOV

IN REFERENCE to Anglo-Russian relations, the War of Greek Independence, waged to some extent concurrently and confused with the Russo-Turkish War (1828–9), was in the strict sense critical. Until that time the relations of England and Russia had been almost without interruption friendly. In the Near East their interests had never really clashed. If Russia was heading for Constantinople, Great Britain had either ignored the tendency, or at least had taken no active steps to thwart the designs of Russia. But the attitude taken by the Russian Tsars, Alexander I and Nicholas I, if it had not caused a breach of friendship between the two Powers, had certainly planted the seeds of suspicion in the minds of English statesmen. The Duke of Wellington declared the Treaty of Adrianople to be 'the death-blow to the independence of the Ottoman Porte, and the forerunner of the dissolution and extinction of its power'. Unlike the Duke, Canning was essentially a liberal in his outlook upon international affairs. He held tenaciously to the view that it was England's mission to thwart the reactionary policy to which Metternich committed the Holy Allies, and of which the Tsar Alexander became, under Metternich's influence, the ardent champion.

Canning's mantle descended, in even ampler folds, upon the shoulders of Viscount Palmerston. During the last thirty years of the oligarchical régime, initiated in 1688, Palmerston played a leading part and, thanks to the fact that his peerage was an Irish one, he was able to remain in the House of Commons for nearly half a century.

As Foreign Minister in Lord Grey's famous ministry of 1830, Palmerston got the chance of exhibiting his liberal sympathies. A devoted friend of oppressed or struggling nationalities, he is known to history as the creator of the modern Kingdom of Belgium, the patron of Greece, the friend of Italy. Like Canning, he was an intense believer in the might and majesty of England, and in her obligation as well as her power to succour oppressed peoples and to maintain the cause of justice among nations, as well as to assert the rights—not always too carefully discriminated—of his fellow-countrymen. *Civis Romanus sum.* The mere assertion often sufficed to justify Palmerston's interference.

He took up the reins of the Foreign Office at a moment critical in the development of the Eastern Question, when the Tsar Nicholas had dictated to the Ottoman Porte the terms of the Treaty of Adrianople, by which the Porte virtually acknowledged the independence of Greece.

§ MEHEMET ALI

In the next acts of the Near Eastern drama, covering the decade 1830–40, the leading part was played neither by the Tsar Nicholas nor by Great Britain, but by a *diabolus ex machina* in the person of Mehemet Ali, the Pasha of Egypt.[1]

Having made Egypt itself virtually independent, Mehemet Ali hoped to make it a stepping-stone for the conquest of Syria, perhaps of Asia Minor, and possibly of the whole Ottoman Empire.

Meanwhile, the Sultan had invoked the assistance of his ambitious vassal to subdue the insurgent Greeks. Mehemet Ali gladly responded; he equipped an Egyptian army and fleet and dispatched it under the command of his son Ibrahim to Europe. In recompense the Pasha was to receive Crete, the Morea, and the pashaliks of Syria and Damascus. The allies had made the fulfilment of the Sultan Mahmud's

[1] The story of Mehemet Ali is summarized by Professor Alison Philips in *Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. X, ch. xvii, and in Marriott: *The Eastern Question*, ch. ix; and see op. cit. Marriott for authorities.

promises, not to his regret, impossible. But Syria, at least, Mehemet Ali was determined to get.

In 1831 he dispatched into Palestine a great army under Ibrahim whose military skill carried everything before it. To check Ibrahim's triumphant progress was beyond the power of the Sultan unaided, and in the summer of 1832 he appealed for help to the Powers.

§ THE SULTAN AND THE POWERS

Only the Tsar Nicholas was, at the moment, willing to afford it. But to accept the offer of Russia, acting alone, was to incur obligations dangerous to the independence of the Ottoman Empire. Yet from what other quarter could help be expected? France was not only traditionally interested in Egypt, but had deep respect for Mehemet Ali, who was regarded, particularly by the Bonapartists, as the disciple, if not the apostolic successor of Napoleon in Egypt. The Sultan accordingly made a desperate attempt to secure the help of England. England was, however, in the throes of the Reform revolution of 1832, and, apart from that, Palmerston was in an unusually cautious mood. Stratford Canning, the British Ambassador to the Porte, urged his Government to send a naval expedition to the Sultan's assistance. But Palmerston, though generally in complete accord with the ambassador's views, was unwilling to risk the breach with France and Russia likely to arise from isolated action in the Levant.

The Tsar, however, almost as much alarmed as the Sultan himself by Ibrahim's spectacular success in Asia Minor, reiterated, with added *empressement*, his offer of assistance to Turkey. He even sent General Mouraviev to Constantinople to urge the Sultan to admit to the Bosphorus a Russian squadron for the protection of his capital. About the Tsar's motives there was no obscurity.[1] Ibrahim's advance threatened the interests of Russia only less than those of

[1] They are fully explained in the instructions to Mouraviev, for which see Gorianov's valuable monograph, *Le Bosphore et les Dardanelles*, pp. 28–9.

Turkey. The last thing desired by the Tsar was the supersession of the effete Osmanlis by a virile Albanian dynasty which could effectively obstruct Russia's entry into the Mediterranean through the narrow Straits. Still the Sultan, very intelligibly, hesitated to accept the offer of Nicholas, and Moureviev, accordingly, went off to Alexandria in the hope of intimidating Mehemet Ali and arresting the further advance of Ibrahim.

Mehemet Ali was not to be frightened. All that Mouraviev could get was a promise that Ibrahim should not, for the time, advance beyond Kutaya, a place some eighty miles short of Brusa, the ancient Ottoman capital. Meanwhile, the Sultan had convinced himself that no help was coming to him from any quarter except Russia, and, accordingly, he begged the Tsar to send not only a naval squadron, but an army of not less than 30,000 men.

On February 20, 1833, a powerful Russian squadron anchored before Constantinople, to be followed, before long, by a second squadron and by a Russian force which landed at Scutari.

England and France, seriously alarmed lest Russia should permanently establish herself at Constantinople, brought pressure to bear upon the Sultan to buy off Mehemet Ali, even at the heavy price demanded by the latter. To buy off an open enemy was one thing: to discharge the debt owing to an obtrusive friend was another. As further security for payment, Russia (April 1833) sent a third contingent of troops, mainly engineers, who proceeded to strengthen the defences of the narrow Straits. On the heels of this contingent came Count Alexis Orlov to take up the appointment of 'Ambassador Extraordinary to the Porte and Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army in the Ottoman Empire'. Orlov's instructions were precise and copious. He was to induce the Sultan to trust to Russia as the one hope of preserving his throne; to comb out French influence at Constantinople; to conciliate the support of Austria; to neutralize the 'perpetual ill-will of England' by making it clear that the sole object of Russian intervention was to

preserve the Ottoman Empire; and, above all, to resist any proposal for collective intervention. Orlov was further instructed to reserve complete independence of action to Russia and to maintain the Russian forces in Turkey until the conclusion of a definitive peace between the Porte and Mehemet Ali.

At the end of April Count Orlov made a state entry into his new kingdom, and after two months of tiresome negotiation received the title deeds under the form of the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi (July 8, 1833).

§ THE TREATY OF UNKIAR-SKELESSI

This important treaty marked the zenith of Russian influence at Constantinople. In effect Turkey became a Russian Protectorate. The friendly relations of Russia and Turkey were reaffirmed in a series of innocuous public articles, though the Tsar pledged himself, should circumstances compel the Sultan to invoke his assistance, to provide such military and naval assistance as the contracting parties might deem necessary. The Sultan promised reciprocal assistance. The real significance of the treaty was conceded in a secret article which relieved the Sultan from giving any assistance to Russia save by closing the Dardanelles to the warships of all nations *au besoin*—a phrase which was subsequently admitted to mean 'on the demand of Russia'.

Lord Palmerston at once formally denounced the treaty, a course which was simultaneously taken by France, and the two Western Powers instructed their Admirals in the Levant to keep a sharp look-out for any intervention on the part of the Russian fleet in the war between the Sultan and his powerful Egyptian vassal.

In September 1832 the Tsar met the Emperor of Austria and the Crown Prince of Prussia at Münchengrätz, where, in a new Holy Alliance, the three Eastern autocrats agreed to act in concert to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, or, that failing, to settle between themselves the reversion of the sick man's inheritance. The terms of the

Convention of Münchengrätz were not communicated to Great Britain or to France.

§ LORD PALMERSTON'S POLICY

The brief interlude of Tory rule under the leadership of Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington (December 1834–5) sensibly relieved the tension between London and St. Petersburg, where the Duke, who took the Foreign Office under Peel, was *persona grata*. But in April 1835 the Whigs returned to power, and with Palmerston at his old post, relations between Great Britain and Russia again became difficult. Nor was it only in the Near East that the two Powers came into conflict, but as subsequent chapters will disclose, in the Middle East as well.[1] It was, however, with the European situation that Lord Palmerston was chiefly concerned. He was firmly resolved that the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi should not merely be put in cold storage, as the Tsar suggested, but should be torn up. The course of events helped him to put his resolution into effect. On the one hand, the restless ambition of Mehemet Ali was scotched, not killed. On the other, the hatred of the old Sultan for his rebellious vassal was unquestionable, and he was resolved, before he died, to recover what he had lost both in prestige and territory. He borrowed from Prussia the services of a young officer destined to win fame as the conqueror of Austria and France, Helmuth von Moltke, and by him the Turkish army was reorganized. Sultan Mahmud also concluded commercial treaties with Great Britain and other Powers, and made an effort, seemingly serious, to introduce Western methods into the conduct of business in Turkey. Other factors in the situation were the dislike felt by the Russian autocrat for the citizen monarchy (1830–48) of Louis Philippe in France, and the increasing suspicion and tension between Palmerston and the Citizen King's parliamentary ministers—particularly M. Thiers.

In 1838 matters came to a crisis. Mehemet Ali refused the payment of tribute to the Porte and proposed to make

[1] See *infra*, Chapters x and xii.

Egypt completely independent under his dynasty. The Sultan, ignoring the advice of friendly Powers, massed troops on the Euphrates, and on April 21, 1839, invaded Syria. Ibrahim confronted him at Aleppo, and on June 24 inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Turks near Nessib. The news of the disaster never reached the Sultan, who, with curses on his lips against the rebel, passed away on June 30, leaving as his successor his son Abdul Mejdid, a youth of sixteen. The whole Ottoman Empire seemed to lie at the mercy of the Egyptian 'Viceroy'. Not for the first time, however, nor the last, the weakness of Turkey proved to be its strength. The Government of Louis Philippe was encouraging Mehemet Ali in his most ambitious designs. But the rest of the Powers had no mind either to see the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, or to have installed at Constantinople, in place of a feeble youth, the mighty Mehemet Ali.

Lord Palmerston took from the first a strong line. He was equally averse to seeing Egypt under the sole protection of France, and Turkey under the exclusive protection of Russia. With neither protector, however, did he desire a rupture. Like his Whig colleagues, Palmerston was strongly opposed to a quarrel with the Citizen Monarchy in France; but, deeply resentful of French policy towards Egypt, he was determined not tamely to acquiesce in it.

At once mistrustful and contemptuous of the Government of Louis Philippe, he was resolved to compel France either to desist from the encouragement of Mehemet Ali or to take the consequences of flouting the will of the Quadruple Allies. Less concerned than Palmerston about the relations of France and Egypt, the Tsar Nicholas was equally determined that the integrity of the Ottoman Empire should be maintained at any rate as against Mehemet Ali.

About the future of Turkey Lord Palmerston was, moreover, far from pessimistic. 'All that we hear,' he said, 'about the decay of the Turkish Empire and its being a dead body or a sapless trunk, and so forth, is pure and unadulterated nonsense.' Given ten years of peace under European protection, combined with much-needed internal reform, there

seemed to Palmerston no reason why Turkey 'should not become again a respectable Power'. The chance was, in fact, given to Turkey between 1856 and 1876, but the results failed to justify Palmerston's optimistic forecast.

§ THE TREATIES OF LONDON

For the moment two things were essential: Mehemet Ali must be compelled 'to withdraw into his original shell of Egypt', and the protection afforded to Turkey must be European, not exclusively Russian. These were the keynotes of Palmerston's policy for the Near East. Some of his most important colleagues, notably Lord Melbourne and Lord John Russell, were against him; they had greater mistrust of Turkey and less of Mehemet Ali; but a threat of resignation from the Foreign Minister brought them into line with him, and on July 15, 1840, he had the satisfaction of concluding the Treaty of London.

By the terms of that treaty the Sultan agreed to confer upon Mehemet Ali the hereditary Pashalik of Egypt, and to commit to him for his life the administration of Southern Syria with the title of Pasha of Acre. Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia agreed to force these terms upon Mehemet Ali, to prevent sea communication between Alexandria and Acre, to defend Constantinople against any external attack, and to guarantee the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Two questions remained: would Mehemet Ali accept the Treaty of London? If not, could he count upon the active assistance of France?

The Quadruple Treaty of London aroused bitter indignation in France, who found herself bowed out of the European concert by Palmerston's diplomacy. The will of Europe was to be imposed explicitly upon Mehemet Ali, implicitly upon Louis Philippe. Thiers, then Prime Minister, was all for defying the will of Europe, and active preparations for war were pushed on. Palmerston was quite unmoved. He had formed a just estimate of Louis Philippe and was not afraid of the explosive Thiers. He did not believe that the Citizen King was 'the man to run amuck, especially without any

adequate motive'. As for Thiers, Lord Bulwer, the British Ambassador at Paris, was instructed to tell him 'in the most friendly and inoffensive manner, that if France throws down the gauntlet we shall not refuse to pick it up'. The tactics succeeded. Palmerston's diagnosis of the situation was not at fault. Louis Philippe was aware that a European war would certainly complicate the domestic situation and might well imperil his dynasty. The fiery Thiers was permitted to resign and was replaced by the pacific Anglophil Guizot.

In the Near East matters were not so easily adjusted. Mehemet Ali refused to abate his pretensions. Consequently England and Russia, together with their German allies, proceeded to impose their will upon him. An English fleet, supported by some Austrian frigates, bombarded Sidon and Beyrout and compelled Ibrahim to withdraw from Syria. The capture by Sir Charles Napier of the great fortress of St. John of Acre, hitherto deemed impregnable, completed Ibrahim's discomfiture. Napier sailed on to Alexandria and compelled Mehemet Ali to restore to the Sultan the Turkish fleet, traitorously surrendered to him in 1839 by the Turkish Admiral, Ahmed Pasha, and to accept the terms dictated by the Quadruple Allies.

France, completely isolated by Palmerston's diplomacy, at last agreed to adhere to the general settlement embodied in a second Treaty of London, signed by all five Powers on July 13, 1841. The Porte recovered Syria and Arabia; Mehemet Ali was confirmed in the hereditary Pashalik of Egypt under the suzerainty of the Sultan; and it was agreed that the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus should be closed to all foreign ships of war so long as the Turkish Empire was at peace.

Palmerston's triumph was complete: the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi was torn into shreds; Turkey was rescued from the hostility of Mehemet Ali, and from the exclusive friendship of Russia. Henceforward the Porte must look for protection not to Russia alone, nor to England alone, nor to France alone, but to the Concert of Europe.

CHAPTER IX

NICHOLAS I AND LORD PALMERSTON THE CRIMEAN WAR

The Turkish Empire is a thing to be tolerated, but not to be reconstructed; in such a cause . . . I will not allow a pistol to be fired.

THE TSAR NICHOLAS

Russia had formed the design to extort from Turkey, in one form or another, a right of protection over the Christians. . . . She thought she could enforce it. The Western Powers interposed, and the strife began.

HENRY REEVE in an article (*Edinburgh Review, April* 1863)—revised by LORD CLARENDON

§ NICHOLAS I AND ENGLAND

KINDLY AND peaceably disposed, the Tsar Nicholas I was, above all else, a realist. Possessing all the personal charm of his brother and predecessor, Alexander I, he was entirely devoid of the vein of sentimentality which enabled Napoleon to dazzle the eyes of his fellow-conspirator at Tilsit, and helped Madame de Krudener to plant in the susceptible heart of Alexander the seeds of the Holy Alliance. Nicholas acted in his foreign policy on certain clear convictions. He was convinced that the mission of Russia could be fulfilled only by persistence in the policy initiated by Peter the Great and Catherine II, and by obtaining for Russian ships free egress from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean; and that egress could be secured only if Russia controlled, even if she did not actually possess, Constantinople. He was, moreover, convinced that the Turk was a 'sick man', that his rule over European peoples would not last much longer, but that, unless confusion or perhaps prolonged conflict was not to ensue upon the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in Europe, the Powers mainly interested in the disposal of the bankrupt estate must agree betimes on the terms of

settlement. Those Powers were, he held, first and foremost, Russia, and next to Russia, Great Britain.

For England, Nicholas had more admiration than English statesmen had for Russia, already the oppressor of the Poles, and soon to be the willing assistant of Austria in suppressing nationalist aspirations in Hungary. But English suspicions did not deter Nicholas from making an effort to cultivate good relations with England, and to reach an agreement with her about the liquidation of the Turkish inheritance. His first step in that direction was to send his son, the Tsarevich, afterwards Alexander II, to England in 1839 to prepare the way for a more formal diplomatic mission. Alexander's handsome person and charming manners won him a warm welcome from English society, and fulfilled his father's highest hopes.

The friendly visit of the young Tsarevich was followed by the formal mission of Baron Brunnow, and in 1844 by a visit from the Tsar himself. Queen Victoria invited the Tsar to Windsor, and, though somewhat alarmed by the presence of one whom she had been taught to regard as more or less a barbarian, was captivated by the charming person and manners of a man whom she 'found extraordinarily polite'. To the Prince Consort he opened his mind freely, and with English statesmen, especially with Lord Aberdeen and Sir Robert Peel, the Tsar established something like intimacy. He exchanged views with them, and frankly expounded his own. The views expressed in conversation the Tsar was at pains to amplify and embody in a written memorandum. According to the account of it given by the Duke of Argyll, this interesting document contained the following leading propositions:

> 'That the maintenance of Turkey in its existing territory and degree of independence is a great object of European policy. That in order to preserve that maintenance the Powers of Europe should abstain from making on the Porte demands conceived in a selfish interest or from assuming towards it an attitude of exclusive dictation.

That in the event of the Porte giving to any one of the Powers just cause of complaint, that Power should be aided by the rest in its endeavours to have that cause removed. That all the Powers should urge on the Porte the duty of conciliating its Christian subjects and should use all their influence, on the other hand, to keep those subjects in their allegiance. That, in the event of any unforeseen calamity befalling the Turkish Empire, Russia and England should agree together as to the course that should be pursued.'[1]

This memorandum was, according to the same authority, preserved in the archives of the Foreign Office and 'was handed on by each minister to his successor'. In the Duke's view, 'nothing could have been more reasonable, nothing more friendly and confidential than this declaration of the views and intentions of the Emperor of Russia', and he adds an expression of his own strong convictions that 'if the Emperor Nicholas had abided by the assurances of this memorandum the Crimean War would never have arisen'.[2]

§ THE CRIMEAN WAR

That is a highly disputable proposition. Two things are, however, certain. On the one hand, there is no doubt that Lord Aberdeen, who became Prime Minister in 1852, was so greatly impressed by the friendliness and apparent sincerity of the Tsar that he remained up to the eleventh hour convinced that a peaceful solution would be found for the difficulties that subsequently arose. On the other hand, the Tsar was fatally encouraged in the belief that under no circumstances would England draw the sword against him. Nothing did, in fact, do more than these misunderstandings to precipitate 'a contest' (in the words of an astute student of history and politics) 'entered into without necessity, conducted without foresight, and deserving to be reckoned from

[1] *Autobiography of the Eighth Duke of Argyll*, I, 443. The Duke gives a vivid description of the Tsar. Cf. also *Queen Victoria's Letters*, II, pp. 13–23, for the impression he made upon the Court.

[2] op cit., I, p. 444.

its archaic arrangements and tragic mismanagement rather among mediaeval than modern campaigns'.[1]

Mr. Fisher is thus in complete accord with one of the most accomplished of contemporary diplomatists—Sir Robert Morier—who described the Crimean War as 'the only perfectly useless modern war that has been waged'.[2] One of the greatest of English Foreign Ministers has enshrined in a classical phrase his deliberate opinion that in the Crimean War 'England put her money on the wrong horse'. But the Duke of Argyll, on the contrary, despite his appreciation of the Tsar Nicholas, confessed that, as a member of the Cabinet responsible for the war, he was still (1896) wholly unrepentant.[3] No one has, however, viewed the whole matter—the Crimean War and its logical sequel in the events of 1876–8—in more accurate perspective than Lord Cromer, who wrote:

> 'Had it not been for the Crimean War and the policy subsequently adopted by Lord Beaconsfield's Government, the independence of the Balkan States would never have been achieved, and the Russians would now be in possession of Constantinople.'[4]

At the moment (1943) the 'independence' of the Balkan States is indeed somewhat precarious, but their sorry plight is, on the assumption of an Allied victory, merely temporary, in which case Lord Cromer's assertions would be justified. Recent events have also demonstrated the great importance of Constantinople and the narrow Straits.

§ NAPOLEON III

At least one person in England had no doubt about the responsibility for the Crimean War. Queen Victoria refused to sanction a day of 'national humiliation' on the ground that the wickedness of the Tsar Nicholas was solely responsible

[1] H. A. L. Fisher: *History of Europe*, p. 942.
[2] *Memoirs and Letters*, II, p. 215.
[3] *Our Responsibilities for Turkey* (1896), p. 80.
[4] *Essays*, p. 275.

for the outbreak of war.[1] Critical opinion has not, however, always confirmed that view. Kinglake, who was not, perhaps, unprejudiced,[2] made Napoleon III the villain of his brilliant romance, about which Mr. Gladstone once said it was 'too bad to live and too good to die', adding that Kinglake's account was 'not only not too true, but so entirely void of resemblance to the truth, that one asks what was really the original of his picture'.

There can, however, be no question that wherever the ultimate responsibility for the Crimean War may lie the immediate firebrand was the hero of the *coup d'état* of 1851, the Emperor of the French. The Emperor relied for support fundamentally upon the peasants of France, but more directly upon two highly organized forces, the Church and the Army. He believed that the good will of both those parties might be conciliated by a diplomatic victory, especially if it were won in the region where Louis Philippe had been so conspicuously worsted by Lord Palmerston—the Near East. Ever since the days of Francis I and Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, France had enjoyed a privileged position at Constantinople. It was part of that privilege to guard the Holy Places in Palestine against any possible sacrilege at the hands of the Moslems. Since 1740, however, the Latin monks had neglected their duties as custodians of the Church at Bethlehem, and with the tacit consent of the French the Greeks had taken their place.

Napoleon decided to reassert the claims of the Roman Catholics, partly incited thereto by a desire to stand well with French churchmen, partly to be even with the Tsar Nicholas, who had contemptuously refused to accord to the successful conspirator of 1851 the courtesy commonly extended to all legitimate sovereigns, and address him as 'frère'. The Greek monks at Bethlehem and Jerusalem were to pay for the affront put by the Tsar upon the champion of the Latins. 'A war to give a few wretched monks the key of a

[1] And cf. the Queen's remarkable letters to the King of Prussia in March and June 1854, *Q.V.L.*, III, pp. 21, 39.

[2] He was reputed to have been a disappointed suitor for the hand of Napoleon's mistress.

grotto'. So Thiers dismissed the question of the origin of the Crimean War.

But his analysis was inadequate. There was more in it than a quarrel about the Holy Places. As a matter of fact, the Porte was able in May 1853 to announce that 'the question of the Holy Places had terminated in a manner satisfactory to all parties'. That was true; but so far from ending the matter the settlement served only to accentuate the quarrel between Turkey and Russia.

§ THE TSAR NICHOLAS AND ENGLAND

Although, as we have seen, well disposed towards England, the Tsar Nicholas had never really forgiven Lord Palmerston for tearing up the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, and while recognizing the legitimate interest of England in the Near Eastern Question, was not disposed to abate by one iota the claims upon Turkey asserted by his predecessors. In particular, he was resolved to insist upon what he conceived to be his right, as the Head of the Orthodox Church, to protect the members of that Church who were subject to the temporal sovereignty of the Sultan.

This was the question really at issue in the Crimean War. Was the Tsar to be allowed to establish a Protectorate, foreshadowed in the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, but repudiated effectually in the Treaties of London, over the Ottoman Empire in Europe? If not, was it England's business to fight Russia in order to preserve Turkish independence?

In March 1853 the Tsar had sent to Constantinople Prince Menschikov, a rough and overbearing soldier, who was charged to require the Porte to concede the Tsar's claims. To Great Britain they appeared to be inadmissible. 'No sovereign,' wrote Lord Clarendon, the British Foreign Minister, 'having a proper regard for his own dignity and independence could . . . confer upon another and more powerful sovereign a right of protection over a large portion of his own subjects. However well disguised it may be, the fact is that under the vague language of the proposed

Sened a perpetual right to interfere in the internal affairs of Turkey would be conferred upon Russia, for governed as the Greek subjects of the Porte are by their ecclesiastical authorities, and looking as these latter would in all things do, for protection to Russia, it follows that 14,000,000 Greeks would henceforth regard the Emperor as their supreme protector and their allegiance to the Sultan would be little more than nominal, while his own independence would dwindle into vassalage.' Lord Clarendon's argument, stated with moderation and lucidity, was indeed unanswerable; and it was sustained in Constantinople by the British Ambassador Lord Stratford de Redcliffe (Stratford Canning) with a vigour and assiduity which left even Prince Menschikov powerless to resist him.

§ THE TSAR'S SOLUTION

Meanwhile, the Tsar had made, in the spring of 1853, a sincere, if not entirely tactful, attempt to come to terms with England—entirely at the expense of Turkey. In January and February 1853 he had several interviews with Sir Hamilton Seymour, the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg. The Tsar insisted that the interests of England and Russia were 'upon all questions the same', and expressed his confidence that the two countries would remain on 'terms of close amity'. 'Turkey,' he continued, 'is in a critical state . . . we have on our hands a sick man—a very sick man: it will be a great misfortune if one of these days he should slip away from us before all necessary arrangements are made.' Nicholas declared emphatically that he had entirely abandoned 'the plans and dreams' of the Empress Catherine, but insisted that he had obligations in regard to the Christian subjects of the Sultan, which treaties and national sentiment alike compelled him to fulfil. The governing fact of the situation, in his view, was, however, that the condition of the Turk was quite hopeless: 'He may suddenly die upon our hands; we cannot resuscitate what is dead; if the Turkish Empire falls, it falls to rise no more, and I put it to you, therefore,' said the Tsar, 'whether it is not better to provide

beforehand for a contingency than to incur the chaos, confusion, and certainty of a European war, all of which must attend the catastrophe, if it should occur . . . before some ulterior system has been sketched.' England and Russia must settle the matter; neither of them must hold Constantinople, nor must any other Great Power. Russia might be compelled to occupy it *en dépositaire*, but not *en propriétaire*. For the rest, the Danubian Principalities might constitute an independent State under Russian protection; Serbia and Bulgaria might receive a similar form of government. In order to balance these indirect advantages to Russia, why should Great Britain not annex Egypt and Crete or Cyprus? On one point the Tsar was particularly emphatic: 'I will never permit,' he said, 'an attempt to reconstruct the Byzantine Empire, or such an extension of Greece as would make her a powerful State; still less will I permit the breaking up of Turkey into little republican asylums for the Kossuths and Mazzinis and other European revolutionists; rather than submit to any such arrangements I would go to war, and as long as I had a man or a musket would carry it on.'

The English Ministers, who, like Lord Aberdeen himself, had been captivated by the personality of the Tsar Nicholas when he visited England in 1844, were taken aback by the boldness and baldness of his proposals when communicated to them by Sir Hamilton Seymour in 1853. They refused to admit that the sick man was on his death-bed; they repudiated with some heat the idea of a possible partition of his estate; they pointed out with irresistible force that 'an agreement might well tend to hasten the contingency for which it was intended to provide; they objected to an agreement concluded behind the backs of Austria and France; they urged the Tsar to act with forbearance towards the Porte; and finally declined, courteously, but very firmly, to entertain his proposals'.[1] Nevertheless, several points of interest are raised by an impartial consideration of the Tsar's

[1] See for correspondence in full *Eastern Papers*, Part V (122 sp. 1954), and for above summary, Marriott: *Eastern Question*, pp. 257–9.

proposed solution of an historic problem. English delicacy might be offended by the naked candour of the Tsar, but his diagnosis of the case was not substantially inaccurate, and his prescription was, in 1915, accepted almost in full. In 1853, however, the idea of an English occupation of Egypt was as novel as it was startling. There are few things in modern diplomacy more remarkable than the tardy appreciation on England's part of the significance of Egypt in her scheme of Empire. A *scheme* of Empire, indeed, she has never formulated. Sir John Seeley was at least half-right when he declared that England had conquered India 'in a fit of absence of mind'. It was, therefore, logically natural that she should so long have ignored the truth almost forced upon her intelligence by the action of Napoleon, and recognized by French statesmen before and after his time, that to the British Empire in India Egypt held the key. Even upon the project, long entertained by French politicians, of cutting a canal through the isthmus of Suez, English statesmen of all parties frowned. Nor was it until Disraeli's advent to power in 1874 that an English statesman betrayed any interest in the completed achievement. Recent experience raises, indeed, a further question. Disraeli's purchase of the Canal shares in 1875 was generally acclaimed at the time, and has since been almost unanimously regarded as a stroke of genius. But is it quite certain that the opponents of the Lesseps project were not, from an English standpoint, politically right, even though as traders we reaped from the construction of the Canal indisputable advantage? But this is to speculate and to anticipate. To return to the situation in 1853.

§ THE CRIMEAN WAR

After England rejected his proposals, the Tsar Nicholas proceeded to plough his lonely furrow at Constantinople. That work was greatly impeded by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who advised the Porte definitely to refuse the protectorate claimed by Russia. Consequently Prince Menschikov and the staff of the Russian Embassy quitted Constantinople on May 22. The Porte, thereupon, addressed

to the Powers a Note announcing that, though the question of the Holy Places had been settled in a manner satisfactory to all parties, Prince Menschikov had demanded from the Sultan a treaty to guarantee the rights and privileges of all kinds accorded by the Sultan to his Greek subjects. 'However great,' proceeded the Note, 'may be the desire of the Porte to preserve the most amicable relations with Russia, she can never engage herself by such a guarantee towards a foreign Government . . . without compromising gravely her independence and the most fundamental rights of the Sultan over his own subjects.'

Thus was the case for the Porte stated clearly and moderately. Justifiably or not, Russia was attempting to reduce Turkey in Europe to the position of a Russian Protectorate. The Porte naturally refused to accept that humiliation; and in her refusal was strongly supported by Great Britain and France. Whether those critics are right who denounce the ensuing war as avoidable, and therefore criminal, may remain an open question, but Queen Victoria was undeniably right in fixing the responsibility upon the Tsar Nicholas.

To describe the course of the campaign is outside the scope of the present narrative. The disastrous lack of organization which inflicted such suffering upon the English troops sent to the assistance of the Turks; the costly victory of the allies at the Alma; the incompetence of the French Generals St. Arnaud and Canrobert; the personal quarrels between the English commanders responsible for the tragic if heroic blunder commemorated by Tennyson in his *Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava*; the long-drawn-out siege of Sebastopol which but for St. Arnaud's hesitation might, early in the campaign, have been taken by assault; 'the soldiers' battle' at Inkermann; the sufferings endured during the Crimean winter of 1854–5; the historic mission of Miss Florence Nightingale, the devoted ministrations of herself and the band of English ladies who brought comfort to the wounded and sick in hospital at Scutari; the astute intervention of Sardinia at the instance of Cavour and King Victor Emmanuel; the betrayal of the confiding Russians by 'General

February'; the death of the Tsar Nicholas (March 2, 1855); the anxiety of all the belligerents to end a war of which all were tired; and the conclusion of peace at Paris (March 30, 1856)—all these things may be read in any history of the times, and call for no recital in this essay.

§ RESULTS OF THE WAR

The results of the Crimean War do, however, demand close attention. By the terms of the Peace Treaty Turkey was formally invited 'to participate in the public Laws and Concert of Europe'. The Powers agreed severally and collectively to guarantee the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire and not to interfere in its internal affairs; the Sultan undertook to ameliorate the condition of his subjects 'without distinction of race and creed'; Russia recovered the Crimea, but restored Kars to Turkey, ceded Southern Bessarabia to Moldavia, and renounced her protectorate over Moldavia and Wallachia, which were to become virtually independent under the suzerainty of the Sultan, and presently (1861) to be united as Roumania; the liberties of Serbia were similarly guaranteed; the Black Sea was neutralized, its coasts demilitarized, and no ships of war were to be allowed to sail its waters. By an addendum to the Treaty, known as the Declaration of Paris, it was agreed to abolish privateering and to proclaim as permanent principles of maritime warfare the concessions made to neutrals during the recent war by England and France.[1]

The broad result of the war was, then, to deprive Russia of almost everything she had laboriously obtained by a century of consistent diplomacy and several wars: to thrust her back from Constantinople; to repudiate her quasi-protectorate over Turkey; and to close the Black Sea to her ships of war. Finally, the Turks were given another chance of putting their own house in order and of coming to terms with the rising nationalities of the Balkans. Of this chance they did not avail themselves.

[1] For details of this Declaration, see Marriott: *England since Waterloo*, p. 250.

Of special interest to England were the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty and the supplementary Declaration of Paris. But they were not permitted to survive the Franco-Prussian War. In October 1870 Prince Gortschakov, the Russian minister, supported, if not instigated by Bismarck, addressed to the Powers a circular denouncing the Black Sea clauses. That Russia would take the first opportunity of escaping from restrictions under which she had chafed since 1856 was reasonably certain. In denouncing them Gortschakov satirically referred to the 'infringements to which most European transactions have been latterly exposed, and in the face of which it would be difficult to maintain that the written law . . . retains the moral validity which it may at other times have possessed'.[1] In plain English the Tsar saw no reason why he should respect treaties when other people broke them.

The Russian circular evoked great indignation in England. But Prince Gortschakov went on his way unheeding. Bismarck was behind him, and Bismarck was confident that though England might bark she would not bite. The futile homilies on political morality addressed by Lord John Russell to the Tsar about his conduct towards the Poles in 1863 and about Bismarck's treatment of the Danish Duchies in the same year had taught Bismarck a lesson which he did not forget in 1870. 'Lord Russell's fierce notes and pacific measures', wrote the late Lord Salisbury in 1864, 'furnish an endless theme for the taunts of those who would gladly see the influence of England in the councils of Europe destroyed.' Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville were not the men to retrieve the position lost by Lord Russell in 1863.

It is, however, only fair to them to point out that in 1870 there were only two alternative courses open to Great Britain: either to acquiesce in the bold action taken by Russia and to accept the cynical doctrine by which Gortschakov justified it; or, without allies, to fight Russia. To declare war upon Russia at this juncture would have been to provoke the Armageddon which England was using all her endeavours

[1] See *England since Waterloo*, pp. 426 f.

to avert. The opinion generally expressed in England was that the continued neutrality of the Black Sea was not an object which could justify a European war. In face of this prevalent feeling Lord Granville had no option but to get out of a disagreeable business with as little loss of prestige as possible. To the suggestion made by Bismarck of a Conference to discuss the Black Sea question Great Britain assented on condition that the Conference should meet not in St. Petersburg, but in London, and that it should not assume 'any portion of the Treaty [of Paris] to have been abrogated by the discretion of a single Power'. The condition may be regarded as a solemn farce; the conclusion was foregone. At the Conference held in London in December 1870 Lord Granville got all the satisfaction he could out of a solemn Protocol affirming it to be 'an essential principle of the law of nations that no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a Treaty . . . unless with the consent of the contracting Powers, by means of an amicable arrangement'. But to this pious allocution Russia was completely indifferent; she had got all she wanted: the necessary modification of the terms of the Treaty of Paris was duly recorded in the Treaty of London (March 18, 1871).[1]

To return, for a brief space, to 1856. Russia got her satisfaction only after a long interval, and it was then partial. Sardinia more quickly reaped the advantage of her astuteness and courage. 'You have the future of the country in your haversacks,' was Cavour's parting injunction to the Italian troops as they left for the Crimea. The response came from a soldier in the trenches before Sebastopol: 'Out of this mud Italy will be made.' It was. Cavour took his place, as of right, at the Peace Conference in Paris, and by his conduct of the Italian case, at once adroit and bold, he conciliated the sympathy of England and obtained from the Emperor of the French a promise of active assistance. The promise was fulfilled in 1859, and Sardinia was thus enabled to take a long step towards the unification of Italy.

[1] For texts in full, see Holland: *European Concert in the Eastern Question*, p. 272.

Out of her heavy sacrifices made in the Crimean War France got little direct advantage. Her Emperor, on the contrary, got much. The war did much to establish his position: the war brought him, paradoxically, the friendship of Russia; the peace lost him the confidence of England.

CHAPTER X

RUSSIA AND ENGLAND IN ASIA

This little Europe offers too contracted a field. One must go to the East to gain power and greatness. Europe is a mere mole-hill; it is only in the East, where there are 600,000,000 of human beings that there have ever been vast empires and mighty revolutions.

NAPOLEON

THE RIVALRY of Russia and England was not confined to the Near East. Though less subject to public scrutiny, but even more truly significant, was the persistent advance of Russia in the Middle East with its ultimate threat to the security of British India. It was, therefore, in accordance with the facts that the agreement concluded between England and Russia in 1907 should have exclusively referred to the respective interests of the two Powers in Asia.

Before leaving England in 1844 the Tsar Nicholas raised the question of the relations between Russia and England, not only in the Near East, but also in the Middle East.[1] Ever since his accession to the throne they had been far from satisfactory.

§ NAPOLEON AND THE EAST

Long before that Napoleon had done his best to make trouble for England in that region. To him England had from his first participation in politics, been *the* enemy to be overcome. More particularly was he anxious to reverse the decision reached in the Seven Years War when, for the first time, English influence in India had superseded that previously attained by France. The idea of an Asiatic Empire had always exercised a powerful influence upon his imagination. To the realization of his ambition control of Egypt

[1] Throughout this book, in defiance of recent fashion, I use 'Near East' to denote Turkey in Europe and Asia, and also Egypt, Syria, and Palestine; 'Middle East' to denote Persia and Mesopotamia.

was essential. Accordingly, it was Egypt that, after his perfunctory exploration of the possibilities of a direct invasion of England and his rejection of the idea, he decided to attack. His Egyptian expedition was, thanks to English sea-power, a complete fiasco. Nevertheless, he kept his original objective always in mind, and after the accession of his friend and disciple Paul to the Russian throne, he invited Russia to co-operate with him in an attack upon British India. A French historian has described the scheme as 'une éclatante lumière jetée sur l'avenir'. A large force of Cossacks and Russian regulars was to march by way of Khiva and Bokhara to the Upper Indus valley, while 35,000 French troops under Masséna were to descend the Danube, make an attack on Persia and, having captured Herat and Kandahar, were to join the Russians on the Indus. The details of the campaign were worked out to an hour and a man; twenty days were to suffice for reaching the Black Sea; fifty-five more were to see them in Persia; and another forty-five in India. Before the end of February 1801 a large force of Cossacks did actually cross the Volga; but on March 24 the assassination of the Tsar Paul put an end to any further pursuit of the plan.

Not that Napoleon ever abandoned the idea. Part of the bait dangled before the eyes of the young Tsar Alexander at Tilsit was that, failing the conclusion of a peace between Russia and the Porte within three months, Napoleon would join the Tsar in expelling the Turks from the whole of their European dominions except the city of Constantinople and the province of Roumelia. It was assumed that the Tsar's share of the booty would include the Danubian Principalities, but the Tsar intimated to his fellow-conspirator that he would not ultimately be satisfied with anything short of the possession of Constantinople. For Constantinople, as Alexander urged with unanswerable logic, was the 'key of his house'. The suggestion provoked from Napoleon an angry retort: 'Constantinople! Never; that would mean the empire of the world.'

Napoleon was, of course, merely amusing the Tsar with

hopes of rich spoils for Russia in the Near East. Even more illusory was his recurrence to the idea of the invasion of India by land, according to the grandiose plan submitted to the Tsar Paul. If that plan had in truth taken stronger hold on the imagination of Napoleon it may be hardly fanciful to suggest that the idea may have been stimulated by the enforced abandonment of the Boulogne adventure in face of the demonstrated superiority of English sea-power. It may well have seemed to the master of great armies a less impossible task to march an army to the gates of India, many thousands of miles by land, than to transport it from Boulogne to Folkestone, over twenty miles of sea guarded by the British fleet.

After all, the previous conquests of India had always been made by obtaining the control of its north-western frontier. England was the first to acquire and retain dominion in India by superiority at sea. That dominion was characteristically fortified by the acquisition of the Isle of France (the Mauritius) and the Seychelles (1810), and still more by the retention, in 1814 after two conquests, of the half-way house to India, the Cape Colony.

The grandiose designs of Napoleon were still fresh in the minds of statesmen both in India and at home when Lord Minto, who was Governor-General of India from 1807 to 1813, sent out missions to establish close relations with the neighbours of India. Though Napoleon's attention was turned in other directions by events in Europe, the precautions originally taken against France were subsequently found serviceable when the threatening antagonist was not France but Russia.

§ LAHORE

In 1809 Lord Minto dispatched a young civilian, Mr. (afterwards Sir Charles) Metcalfe, on a mission to Lahore. The object aimed at was twofold: on the one hand, to frustrate the plans of Ranjit-Singh, the famous ruler who had lately built up a great power in the Punjab for the extension of his dominion southwards; on the other, to invite his co-operation in resisting a Russian, or any other, invasion from

the north-west. Metcalfe's mission was entirely successful. By the treaty which he concluded (1809) with Ranjit-Singh, perpetual amity was established between Great Britain and the State of Lahore. The British Government undertook not to interfere with the territories and subjects of Ranjit-Singh to the north of the Sutlej. Ranjit-Singh promised neither to commit nor suffer any encroachments upon the chiefs under British protection (the Sikhs in particular had been threatened) to the south of that river. The treaty, consisting of only fifteen lines, was faithfully observed by Ranjit-Singh. In the whole history of British India there are, as one of the most careful historians of India has truly observed, 'few incidents of more romantic interest than the arrest of this haughty Prince in the full career of success by a youth of twenty-four'.[1]

§ PERSIA

A second embassy was dispatched under Mountstuart Elphinstone to the Amir of Afghanistan, but the results, less immediately important, may be more conveniently considered later on in connexion with the policy of Lord Auckland. A third embassy was dispatched to Teheran under Colonel Malcolm. Unfortunately some confusion was caused by the fact that a similar mission, sent direct from London, had simultaneously arrived in Persia under Sir Harford Jones. It was eventually decided to establish a permanent embassy at Teheran to be served direct from England.

§ RUSSIAN PENETRATION IN ASIA

All this activity displayed by the Governments, both in Calcutta and Westminster, was stimulated by the designs, rightly or wrongly, attributed to Russia.

Russian advance towards the east and south-east is indicated by the routes followed by the Trans-Caspian and Trans-Siberian Railways, though those great undertakings were, in fact, not initiated until the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The penetration of Russia to the Pacific

[1] Marshman.

had no direct effect upon the relations between Russia and England, and further reference to that topic is uncalled for. Far otherwise was it in regard to the advance of Russia in Central Asia, although no acute questions actually arose between the two Powers for nearly a generation after Russia first crossed the Caucasus.

Russian penetration of the Caucasus began when the Tsar Alexander I by annexing Georgia with Mingrelia and Immeritia (1802) put an end to the civil war which for some time past had been devastating Georgia and causing endless trouble on its frontiers. 'No tract on the world's surface,' wrote F. H. Skrine, 'contains so large a variety of races, religions, and languages. The central tribes, Georgians, Ossetes, Immeritians, and Mingrelians were nominally Christians, while the northern valleys were held by Muhammadan Cherkesses who owed allegiance to Constantinople and found a market there for their girls.'[1] Instigated by Napoleon, the Shah of Persia rashly declared war upon Russia in 1811, and paid for his temerity by being forced to conclude in 1813 the disastrous Treaty of Gulistan by which Russia acquired all Persia north of Armenia, including the district of Baku, soon to be recognized as valuable for its petroleum deposits. Frontier disputes still, however, continued, and in 1826 the Shah Falteh Ali, deluded into the belief that Russia was thrown into confusion by the death of the Tsar Alexander and by preoccupation in the affairs of Greece and Turkey, declared war on Russia.

The initial successes achieved by a reorganized Persian army could not be sustained. General Paskiévich, who commanded the Russian forces, stayed the Persian advance on Tiflis, drove their army back across the Arada, stormed Erivan, 'the bulwark' of the Persian Empire, entered Tabriz and threatened Teheran. Falteh Ali, terror-stricken, sued for peace. This was granted to him by the Treaty of Turkmanchai (February 22, 1828), under the terms of which Russia obtained Erivan and Nakhichevan and the right of

[1] *The Expansion of Russia* (Cambridge, 1903), p. 132, a work to which, despite its somewhat confused arrangement, this chapter owes a good deal.

navigation on the Caspian which had hitherto been a Persian lake. Thenceforward the Shahs of Persia always proved (so Skrine briefly comments) 'obedient vassals'.

There was, however, trouble awaiting the advancing Russians among the Mussulman Khanates which had established themselves in the vast tracts of country which lay in the heart of Asia bounded by the Caspian Sea on the west, by the Aral Sea on the north, by the Chinese Empire on the east, and by Persia and Afghanistan on the south. By anticipation we may for convenience speak of this great district as *Turkistan*, though the name was not given to it until 1865 when it was constituted as a Province of the Russian Empire. Further reference to the difficulties which by their rapid advance in Central Asia the Russians had to encounter before that settlement was reached may be deferred until we can treat it connectedly.

§ RUSSIA AND BRITISH INDIA

A new phase in the relations of England and Russia had been opened as regards the Near Eastern Question by the events arising from the Greek War of Independence and the Russo-Turkish War of 1828–9. But the victory of Russia over Turkey had further and more remote repercussions. For the first time the position of Russia in reference to British India began to create some apprehension among English statesmen. The Duke of Wellington, though far from unfriendly to Russia, declared that if the Treaty of Adrianople was allowed to stand it would virtually mean the end of the Ottoman Empire. It may well be that Wellington was thinking less of Turkey in Europe than of Turkey as a barrier to the advance of Russia towards Central Asia. In this connexion it is noteworthy that the Tsar Nicholas, true to the promise he had given, claimed no direct acquisition of territory from the Turk in Europe. But in the latter part of 1828 General Paskiévich had conducted a brilliant campaign in Asiatic Turkey, and the result of his victories was clearly reflected in the terms imposed upon Turkey by the Treaty of Adrianople. The cession of Poti, Anapa,

Akhalzikh, and Akhalkali, situated on the eastern littoral of the Black Sea, combined with the previous acquisition of Georgia to raise in the minds of English statesmen a fear lest Russia would, by obtaining control of the Euphrates Valley, obstruct the access of England to India. No actual collision between British and Russian agents in that region had thus far occurred. But Lord Palmerston's remark to the Russian ambassador indicated the direction to which his thoughts were tending. The peace of Asia would, he said, be assured when Russia and Great Britain could come to a clear understanding.

Suspicions were deepened when obstacles were placed both by the Porte itself and by Mehemet Ali in the way of Colonel Francis Chesney, who headed a British expedition, sent out for the purpose of establishing a new mail route to India by steamers on the Euphrates. That scheme was thwarted by the signal diplomatic victory won at Teheran, against England by Russia, the overbearing conduct of whose agents in Asiatic Turkey was the subject of frequent complaints by British merchants.

§ AFGHANISTAN

A new phase in the Asiatic relations of Russia and Great Britain was opened by the policy of Lord Auckland, who arrived in India to take up the post of Governor-General in 1836. Lord Auckland having served with Lord Palmerston in the Whig Cabinets of 1830, 1834, and 1835, knew the mind of that statesman intimately and shared to the full his suspicion of Russian policy. One of Auckland's first acts was to dispatch Captain Alexander Burnes on a mission to the court at Kábul of Dost Muhammad, the brilliant Afghan adventurer, who had lately made himself master of the fierce Afghan tribes and was ruling them with an iron hand as Amir. Dost Muhammad's immediate ambition was the recovery of Peshawar, at one time the eastern outpost of the Afghan Empire but lately captured and still held by our staunch ally, Ranjit-Singh, ruler of the Sikh province of the Punjab. Our policy was to maintain a strong power in the

Punjab as the best safeguard against any hostile incursions from the north-west.

At that moment the Persians were actually besieging Herát, often described as the 'Key to the Gateway of India'. It was generally believed that the Persians were instigated to the attack by the Russians who were deeply offended by Palmerston's resolve to deprive them of the virtual Protectorate over Persia secured to them by the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi.

Lord Palmerston and Lord Auckland strongly suspected that Russia was behind Persia. They were justified when Burnes found on his arrival at Kábul that Russia had also sent an envoy to Kábul, and that the advice given to Dost Muhammad by the Russian envoy Vicovitch was far more palatable than his own. 'Let Persia have Herát,' urged Vicovitch, 'and Persia will help you to take your eagerly desired revenge upon the Sikhs and to recover Peshawar.' For Persia Auckland read Russia and to make sure of his ground deposed the pro-Russian Dost Muhammad and replaced him by a puppet of his own, Sháh Shujá, the aged grandson of Armad Sháh, the founder of the Durani dynasty in Afghanistan. Auckland's action was cordially approved by the Home Government. 'By taking the Afghans under our protection,' wrote Lord Palmerston, 'and in garrisoning (if necessary) Herát, we shall regain our ascendancy in Persia. . . . British security in Persia gives security on the eastwards to Turkey and tends to make the Sultan more independent and to place the Dardanelles more securely out of the grasp of Nicholas.' Palmerston's complacent anticipations were the prelude to a grim tragedy—perhaps the most humiliating episode in the whole history of British India. The assassination of Burnes and Sir William Macnaghten, his predecessor as Political Officer at Kábul; the disastrous retreat ordered by General Elphinstone, resulting in the survival of only one man out of a force of 4,500 fighting men and 12,000 camp followers; the ultimate withdrawal from Kábul; the murder of Sháh Shujá and the restoration of Dost Muhammad to his throne—such was the story of the

First Afghan War, relieved only by the heroic conduct of General Sir Robert Sale, who held out at Jalálábad, and General Nott, who held Kandahar. Irony was imparted to a situation almost unrelievedly tragical by the fact that on October 9, 1838, the Persians had inconsiderately raised the siege of Herát and had agreed to molest it no more.

Some forty years later the Afghan tragedy was re-enacted with curious exactitude. In the meantime important developments, more closely concerning the position of Russia, had taken place in Central Asia and had culminated in the formation of a Russian province in the heart of Asia.

§ RUSSIA IN CENTRAL ASIA

The time has come to recur to the Middle East. For two centuries the persistent object at which Russia aimed was to reach waters not liable to be closed to her commerce by ice. That object was dictated to her by strategical as well as by commercial considerations. The most obvious means of attaining it was by exercising control over Constantinople and the narrow Straits. But the pursuit of that object had brought her up against the opposition of Great Britain.

Failing access to the Mediterranean, Russia could, by a very long land journey, reach the ice-free waters of the northern Pacific. She had actually reached them before the end of the seventeenth century, though it was not until 1860 that she established herself at Vladivostock, and only in the twentieth century was the Trans-Siberian railway completed to connect Moscow with the Far-Eastern outpost of the Empire. The great advantage of the Siberian route was that its adoption raised no suspicions on the part of England.

§ THE PERSIAN GULF

Far otherwise was it in regard to a third alternative, the establishment of Russia on the shores of the Indian Ocean by the control of a route through the Euphrates valley. In no region—not even in the eastern Mediterranean—was Great

Britain more jealous of 'intrusion' than in the Persian Gulf. In early manhood (1892) Lord Curzon of Kedleston published a work on Persia which still deserves attention. After paying an eloquent tribute to Great Britain for her work in the pacification of those 'troublous waters', he insisted that while Great Britain had no desire that the Persian Gulf should be closed to foreign traders, and asked for no territorial concessions for herself, she claimed—and justly claimed—that 'no hostile political influence shall introduce its discordant features upon the scene'. 'Let Great Britain and Russia,' he added, 'fight their battles or compose their differences elsewhere, but let them not turn into a scene of sanguinary conflict the peaceful field of a hard-won trade. I should regard the concession of a port upon the Persian Gulf to Russia by any Power as a deliberate insult to Great Britain, and a wanton interruption of the *status quo*, and as an intentional provocation to war; and I should impeach the British minister who was guilty of acquiescing in such a surrender as a traitor to his country.'[1] Eleven years later Lord Lansdowne, as Foreign Secretary, but speaking also as ex-Viceroy of India, expressed in the House of Lords his complete sympathy with Lord Curzon's views: 'I say it without hesitation that we should regard the establishment of a naval base or of a fortified port in the Persian Gulf by any other Power as a very grave menace to British interests, and we should certainly resist it with all the means at our disposal' (May 5, 1903).

It may be convenient at this point to add that the question of the Persian Gulf was not included in the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907, but Sir Edward Grey, who had succeeded Lord Lansdowne as Foreign Secretary in 1905 informed the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg that in the course of the negotiations the Russian Government had 'explicitly stated that they do not deny the special interests of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf—a statement of which the Government have formally taken notice'.[2]

[1] *Persia*, II, p. 465.
[2] Sir E. Grey to Sir A. Nicolson, August 29, 1907.

§ TURCOMAN KHANATES

To resume. It was not only the jealousy of England that impeded the Russian penetration of Central Asia. Beyond the north-eastern frontiers of Persia there lay, as mentioned above, a vast tract of country partly desert but containing also many oases occupied by Turcoman tribes—men living in loosely organized units known as Khanates which represented the deposits left by successive waves of Mussulman conquests.

Such conditions raise a point worth parenthetical consideration, though anything approaching critical examination would demand not a paragraph but a chapter. The problem is one that confronts every civilized government brought into contact with lawless groups of men living, like these Central Asian tribesmen, not by steady labour in settled agricultural communities, but by booty obtained in predatory raids upon their neighbours or upon the caravans belonging to foreigners engaged in exploration or commerce. Should it suffice for the foreign Government concerned to secure itself against the depredations of the lawless 'natives'? Or is it an inescapable part of the 'mission' entrusted to every civilized nation to reduce such tiresome neighbours to political subordination, and impose upon them by force the 'blessings' of regular if unwelcome government? To adopt the latter alternative is inevitably to provoke cynical comment upon the 'altruistic' motives which inspire such a policy. Yet, in actual practice, the alternatives are not invariably open to civilized Governments, and in any case it does not lie in the mouth of an Englishman to reproach Russia for the policy she pursued in Central Asia in the middle years of the nineteenth century.

The acquisition of Georgia in 1842 had given Russia a 'jumping-off ground' for further advances towards the east. The wars rashly provoked by the Shah of Persia in 1811 and 1828 resulted in further important acquisitions, but the Russians were still troubled by the restlessness of the tribes who inhabited the northern and eastern parts of the Caucasus.

A ring of fortresses was constructed to restrain the raid made by the Cherkesses from the north of the river Kuban. In 1830, however, the Lesghians and other tribes in the eastern Caucasus were incited to declare a Holy War against the infidel, and for the next fifteen years the Russians encountered great difficulty in reducing them to submission. The tribesmen were inspired both by religious fanaticism and by personal devotion to one Shamil, a sort of Madhi, whom they regarded with reverence and affection as a prophet invested with divine authority. Gradually, however, the eastern Caucasus was reduced to obedience and in 1859 the heroic resistance of the mountaineers was finally ended by the surrender of Shamil and his last stronghold Gunib.

Much more obstinate were the difficulties encountered by Russia in the country east of the Caspian. If it is legitimate to speak, in such fluid conditions, of a 'centre' of resistance it must be found in Khiva, and the beginning of the trouble which persisted for a quarter of a century may be dated from the plunder in 1829 of a Russian caravan by the Khivans. The Kirghiz, too, inadequately restrained by a line of forts extending from the Caspian along the southern boundary of Orenburg, were again becoming troublesome.

Between 1839 and 1842 Count Perovsky, the Governor-General of that vast but barren district, waged a war against the Khivans, the result of which was to give the Russians control of the Oxus (the Amu Darya), one of the two main highways of trade in Central Asia. The control of the second, the Jaxartes (the Sir Darya) was secured by the construction of Fort Kazalinsk on the lower reaches of that river in 1846.

The erection of Fort Kazalinsk led to a war with the Khan of Khokand, whose stronghold at Ak Mechet was carried by storm in 1853 and rechristened by the name of its conqueror Perovsky. In 1854 the position of the Russians was further strengthened by the success of an expedition which penetrated the valley of the Ili and the construction of another

fort at Verni. Thus when he died in 1855 the Tsar Nicholas I could fairly claim to be the Lord Paramount over Central Asia.

§ TURKISTAN

The advance of Russia was not arrested by her defeat in the Crimean War, and was encouraged by the embarrassment caused to England by the Indian Mutiny. In the 'sixties Russia was consequently free to fish in the troubled waters of Central Asian politics. Constant strife among the Turkoman and Kirghiz tribesmen of Turkistan and between the great Muhammadan Khanates of Bokhara, Khiva, Samarkand, gave her emissaries their opportunity. Russian troops captured Taskent at a second attempt, made in disobedience to the specific orders of the Tsar, Alexander II, in 1864. In the following year the whole territory between the Aral Sea and Issik Kul was constituted a Russian province under the style of Turkistan and placed under the Governor-General of western Siberia. Three years later the Russians captured Samarkand, the capital of the Khanate of Bokhara, and once the capital city of the famous empire of Tamerlane. After the loss of his capital the Khan of Bokhara ceded to Russia the whole province of Samarkand.

§ BRITISH INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN

For some thirty years, after the disasters of the early 'forties, the British Government in India pursued a policy of masterly inactivity. The Amirs of Afghanistan did not appreciate, or even understand, that policy, and again and again applied for assistance to Calcutta. Successive Viceroys though profuse in professions of platonic goodwill, failed to satisfy Afghan apprehensions, while the conquest of Samarkand had brought Russia uncomfortably close to the Afghan frontier. On the eve of his departure from India (1869), the great Indian Viceroy, Lord Lawrence, addressed a dispatch to the Secretary of State indicating some weakening in the policy of 'masterly inactivity' to which hitherto he had so consistently adhered. He suggested that 'we ought to have a clear understanding with the Court of Petersburg

as to its projects and designs in Central Asia', and advised that Russia should be warned 'in firm and courteous language that it cannot be permitted to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan or in those of any State which lies contiguous to our frontier'. Mr. Gladstone's government, then in power, preferred Lawrence's earlier manner, but, though adhering to their policy of *laissez-faire*, agreed that an attempt should be made, as the Russians had in fact already suggested, to delimit the frontiers of Great Britain and Russia in Asia.

In January 1873 the frontiers were formally defined by treaty. But the ink upon the treaty was hardly dry when the news reached Calcutta that the Russians had occupied Khiva. The occupation of Khiva brought the Russians within four hundred miles of the north-western frontier of British India. Count Schuvalov assured the English Government that although the moment for evacuation had not yet arrived the occupation was intended to be merely temporary. Meanwhile the capture of the capital of an important Khanate was of considerable significance, involving as it did the manumission of some hundreds of Russian subjects held as slaves by the Khan, as well as the control, immensely advantageous to Russian trade, of the navigation of the Oxus.

Only one independent State now remained in Central Asia: nor was its independence long preserved. In September 1875 the Russians invaded Khokand, took possession of its capital, and installed under their protection a new Khan. But the turbulent population soon rose in insurrection against the puppet ruler and put to the sword the Russian garrison who had alone sustained his authority. The insurrection was speedily crushed by a young staff captain, destined to win fame as General Skobelev. Annexation was the inevitable result. In March 1876 Khokand was constituted a province of Turkistan, under its ancient style of Ferghana. The last of the Khanates was extinguished. Russian supremacy in Central Asia was complete.

CHAPTER XI

THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA

You have a new world, new influences at work, new and unknown objects and dangers with which to cope. . . . The Queen of England has become the Sovereign of the most powerful of Oriental States. . . . What our duty is at this critical moment is to maintain the Empire of England.

DISRAELI (1873–5)

Yes, this is a new age; a new world.

BISMARCK, *circ.* 1890

§ A WATERSHED

THE SEVENTIES of the nineteenth century must be recognized as a most important watershed in modern history. New influences were indeed at work; a new world was coming to the birth.

§ DEMOCRACY AND NATIONALISM

The two forces which had increasingly dominated European politics during the nineteenth century—Democracy and Nationalism—reached a climax in 1870: the fall of the Second Empire cleared the way for the establishment of a democratic Republic in France; the unification of Germany under the Hohenzollerns and of Italy under the House of Savoy marked the triumph of nationalism. Yet it is noteworthy that the 'entry of Italy' into Rome coincided not only with the extinction of the Temporal Power of the Papacy but with the promulgation of the dogma of Papal infallibility—in itself a revival of the principle of autocracy.

§ IMPERIALISM

Akin to the idea of autocracy was the idea of Imperialism. The day of Liberalism was passing, the supremacy of the 'Manchester School' with its root doctrine of *laissez-faire* was almost at an end. The new forces at work, both political and economic, tended in the opposite direction. 'The future,' wrote Sir John Seeley in a famous book, 'is with the

big States, States of the type of Russia, the United States and the British Empire.' Scientific inventions were annihilating distance and time. 'The cardinal fact of geography in the twentieth century,' said General Smuts, 'is the shortening of distance and the shrinkage of the world.' This meant that the great States were brought in all parts of the world into closer contact: and closer contact might well involve more frequent conflict.

§ RUSSIA AND GREAT BRITAIN

This was particularly true of Russia and Great Britain. Their contact in Asia provided the theme of the preceding chapter. We must now reveal their intensified rivalry in Europe.

The really significant results of their conflict in the Crimean War were imperfectly appreciated by contemporaries. Contemporaries could, indeed, perceive that the defeat of Russia involved the disappointment—at any rate for the time being—of her long-cherished ambitions in regard to Constantinople and the Straits. They perceived also that the sick man, whose impending demise Russia so confidently anticipated, was given a chance of recovery. How inadequately Turkey took advantage of the respite we shall see.

Liberal publicists who regarded the doctrine of nationalism as pre-eminently important assessed the results of the Crimean war rather differently. 'By smashing the strong links which bound Austria to Russia the Crimean War,' wrote H. A. L. Fisher, 'created the conditions which led to the liberation of the German and Italian nations.' Similarly, Lord Fitzmaurice, like Mr. Fisher at once politician and historian, expressed his conviction that if the Crimean War had not been fought 'the two subsequent decades of the century would not have seen the formation of a united Italy and a united Germany, and all its consequences'.[1] Lord Bryce was almost ecstatic about the 'righteous cause' which the German victory carried to a triumph in 1870. The

[1] *Life of the Second Earl Granville*, I, p. 99.

product of that victory is somewhat differently regarded to-day.

There remains a third point of view to which Lord Cromer, as indicated above, committed himself. Though few people realized it at the time, the true significance of the Anglo-French victory over Russia lay much less in the chance it gave to Turkey than in the opportunity it offered to the Balkan States, subject for four hundred years to the rule of the Porte, for realizing their national aspirations and asserting their independence.

§ ROUMANIA

Down to the Crimean War Greece alone had achieved independence. But the ink was hardly dry on the Treaty of Paris before it became clear that the war had not disposed finally of the points at issue between Russia and Great Britain in relation to the condition of the Balkan peoples.

Particularly unsatisfactory was the position in which the Danubian Principalities were left by the Treaty of Paris. They had always stood apart from the other Balkan peoples subject to the Turk. Descended, as they believed, from the Roman inhabitants of Dacia, they claimed to be Latins in origin as they were Latin in culture: 'un îlot latin,' as Baron Jean de Witte picturesquely put it, 'au milieu de l'ocean slave et finnois qui l'environne'. 'Nous ne sommes slaves,' wrote Alexander Sturdza, 'ni Germains, ni Turcs; nous sommes Roumains.' Rome, they claimed, had given them their blood, their language, in a word, their civilization.

The two Principalities were anxious to be united: the Powers decreed that though they became virtually independent of the Porte, they must remain separate. They soon discovered that this meant their continued dependence upon Russia under whose guardianship their liberties had been placed by the Convention of Akkerman (1826). So little did the Roumanians appreciate the advantage of Russian 'protection' that in 1848 they actually appealed to their nominal suzerain, the Sultan, to deliver them from their liberators.

By the Treaty of Paris the Russian protectorate over the Principalities was abolished: they were to remain under the suzerainty of the Porte and the Powers were to guarantee their liberties. But the Principalities desired union even more ardently than liberty; and in 1857 they formally demanded it. Napoleon III supported their demand, but Lord Palmerston, always suspicious of the motives of the French Emperor, regarded the Treaty of Paris as sacrosanct and hotly opposed any revision of its terms. Not all English statesmen, however, supported Palmerston. A dissenter was Mr. Gladstone who, in opposition to his nominal leader, maintained the view that England ought to respect the wish of the inhabitants of Moldavia and Wallachia, formally declared at Divans held *ad hoc* at Jassy and Bucharest respectively (October 1857). That view he supported by an argument which ought to have specially appealed to Palmerston. 'Surely the best resistance to be offered to Russia,' he said, 'is by the strength and freedom of those countries that will have to resist her. You want to place a living barrier between Russia and Turkey. There is no barrier like the breast of free men.' It is significant that Mr. Gladstone carried with him into the lobby not only Lord John Russell but Lord Robert Cecil, afterwards Lord Salisbury.

The Powers decided that the Principalities should remain politically separate, though each might elect its own prince. Both elected as prince the same man, Alexander Couza. This *coup* caused great commotion in the Chancelleries, but the Powers ultimately had the good sense to accept the accomplished fact and on December 23 the union of the Principalities was formally proclaimed. Roumania had come into being, independent alike of the Sultan and the Tsar.

§ THE SOUTHERN SLAVS

The main object of the Treaty of Paris was, however, to substitute for the protectorate exercised by Russia over the Christian subjects of the Porte a European protectorate. But to this substitution there was an obvious corollary.

The British Government recognized that having repudiated Russian interference the Powers were under an obligation to obtain for the Christians some guarantee of security. But it was not merely a question of liberty for their religious exercises. There was also a strong Pan-Slavist movement, encouraged by Russian agents, particularly among the Southern Slavs, of whom the Serbians became more and more conspicuously the champions. As in Greece so also in Serbia the Orthodox Church has been throughout the ages the nursing mother of national independence. By the Treaty of Paris all the rights and immunities of Serbia, ecclesiastical as well as civil, were placed under the collective guarantee of the Powers. The Turks accepted the situation and finally evacuated Serbia in 1867. Belgrade became for the first time for many centuries not merely the Serbian capital but a Serbian city.

§ PAN-SLAVISM

In that same year a great Pan-Slavist Congress was held, under the thin disguise of a scientific meeting, at Moscow. A Pan-Slavist Committee with its headquarters at Moscow was formed; an active propaganda by means of books and pamphlets was carried on in the Balkans. Young Slavs flocked to Russian universities as Roumanian youths flocked to Paris; Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia, and Bulgaria were honeycombed with secret societies. Nor did the movement lack official support. Behind the popular propaganda were ranged the forces of high diplomacy: every Russian Consul in the peninsula was an active agent for Pan-Slavism, and General Ignatiev, a zealous enthusiast for the same cause, was sent as ambassador to Constantinople.

Turkish misgovernment supplied fuel to the flame. The Porte entirely neglected the opportunity for reform given to it by the Crimean War. To relieve the Sultan from anxiety on the side of Russia was, in truth, to remove his sole incentive to reform an incompetent and tyrannical administration. In the summer of 1875 the rising of the oppressed inhabitants of a remote village in the Herzegovina gave the signal

for an insurrection which presently involved all the Slav States in the Ottoman Empire; which led before it was quelled to another war between Russia and Turkey, and all but ignited a general European conflagration.

§ RUSSIA AND THE BALKAN SLAVS

From Herzegovina, the insurrection spread to Bosnia, Serbia, and Montenegro. How far the insurrection was spontaneous, how far it was stimulated by Russian intrigues, it is not easy to decide. But two things are certain: on the one hand that Russia was plainly not unwilling to fish in troubled waters; on the other that Turkey gave Russia abundant opportunity and excuses for intervention. It is indeed one of the salutary paradoxes incidental to misgovernment that it is generally as ruinous to the governor as it is injurious to the governed. In the Balkan provinces the inherent extravagance of a thoroughly pernicious system combined with the peculation of an army of officials to bring financial disaster upon Turkey, and in October 1875 the Sultan informed his creditors that he could not pay the full interest on the debt. Partial repudiation complicated a diplomatic situation already sufficiently embarrassing, and on December 30, 1875, the Austrian Chancellor, Count Andrassy, issued from Budapest a Note embodying the views of the Emperors of Austria, Russia, and Germany.

§ THE ANDRASSY NOTE

In January 1876 the Note, demanding certain drastic reforms to be put into immediate execution, was presented to the Sultan, who, with a promptitude that aroused some suspicion, assented to all the demands except one which required that all direct taxes should be allocated to local purposes.[1]

It was the insurgents themselves who foiled the efforts of the diplomatists to restore peace in the Balkans. They, not unnaturally, refused to lay down their arms without a

[1] For the text of the Note see Hertslet, *Map of Europe by Treaty*, IV, pp. 2418–29.

guarantee for the execution of reforms more substantial than the paper promises of the Sultan. The Sultan retorted, with equal reason, that to initiate reforms was impossible so long as his subjects were in armed rebellion.

And the rebellion was spreading. Bulgaria joined it in April: at the beginning of May a fanatical Moslem *émeute* at Salonica led to the murder of the French and German consuls; on the 30th, the Sultan Abdul Aziz was deposed; on June 4th he was found 'dead', having apparently committed suicide! Only drastic action, it seemed, could now avert a European war.

§ THE BERLIN MEMORANDUM

Such action the Eastern Powers resolved to take. The Chancellors of Russia and Austria, who were at the moment conferring with Bismarck at Berlin, had decided to impose upon the Sultan a two months' armistice during which certain measures of pacification and repatriation were to be carried out under the superintendence of the delegates of the Powers. If, on the expiry of the armistice, full satisfaction had not been obtained, diplomatic action was to give place to coercion. France and Italy assented to the terms of the Berlin Memorandum; Great Britain, deeming its terms to be unduly peremptory, and resenting the independent action taken by the Eastern autocrats, declined to be a party to the Memorandum. It was consequently allowed to lapse.

§ DISRAELI'S POLICY

The line taken by the British Government caused profound perturbation in foreign capitals, and evoked a storm of criticism at home. There is no question that Disraeli's refusal to adhere to the Berlin Memorandum broke the European Concert and encouraged the obstinacy of the Porte. But it is equally plain that the almost insolent attitude of the Imperial Chancellors was inspired by the conviction that Great Britain would 'never again commit the crime of the Crimean War'. Just as the Tsar Nicholas was misled in 1853 by the pacific benevolence of Lord Aberdeen, so in

1876 Bismarck and his coadjutors failed to realize that with Disraeli's advent to power a new temper had begun to inspire the policy of the British Government.

For the first time since the resignation of Peel in 1846 the Conservatives were installed in power (1874) by an electorate greatly extended by the enfranchisement of the artisans by Disraeli's Reform Act of 1867. The Conservative reaction was, moreover, reinforced by the operation of new influences. Events of world-wide significance were transforming the conditions under which, the world over, men lived and politicians wove the web of their policies.

§ THE SUEZ CANAL

It is doubtful whether any single event in world-history, since the capture of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, did more to influence the orientation of British policy than the opening (1869) of the Canal through the isthmus of Suez. England, as we have seen, had looked askance at the enterprise, and refused to forward it by subscribing a shilling to the Company formed by Lesseps. Not even in the 'sixties were the eyes of Englishmen fully opened to the truth, revealed to Frenchmen, even before Napoleon, that Egypt held the key to the British dominion in India. But on November 25, 1875, the world was startled to learn that Great Britain had purchased, for the sum of £4,000,000 sterling, from the embarrassed Khedive of Egypt, his 176,000 shares in the Suez Canal. The credit for this coup belongs exclusively to Disraeli,[1] who effected it in the teeth of opposition from some of his Cabinet colleagues—notably Sir Stafford Northcote, his Chancellor of the Exchequer, but with the warm approbation of Queen Victoria. The purchase was facilitated by Disraeli's friendship with the great house of Rothschild, who found the money for what proved to be, financially, the most fortunate speculation ever made by a

[1] It was said to have been first suggested to him by Mr. Frederick Greenwood, a distinguished London journalist (see *The Times*, December 27, 1905, and January 13, 1906), but there are other claimants to the distinction.

British Government. But the motive was, of course, not financial at all, but purely political. Disraeli, on whose shoulders the mantle of Palmerston had fallen, was moved to the step by increasing apprehension of the danger to British India of Russia's still cherished ambitions in regard to Constantinople and her actual advance in Central Asia.

§ THE EMPRESS OF INDIA

Disraeli's purchase of the Canal shares had an immediate sequel. By a dramatic 'addition to the style and title of the Sovereign', Queen Victoria was, by the Royal Titles Act of 1876, formally invested with the title of Empress of India. Though the Queen herself was immensely gratified by her new title, her subjects were sharply divided about it. To less imaginative minds the step seemed to diminish rather than enhance the dignity of the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland. Disraeli's action was denounced as characteristically melodramatic. Yet it was due to no brilliant inspiration of the moment, but was taken in furtherance of a policy long since predetermined. 'You ought at once . . . to tell the people of India that the relation between them and their real ruler and Sovereign, Queen Victoria, shall be drawn nearer. . . . You must act upon the opinion of India on that subject immediately, and you can only act upon the opinion of Eastern nations through their imagination.' So Disraeli had spoken at the time of the Mutiny before British India had been transferred to the Crown, and when Disraeli himself was in opposition. Of the Bill, which in 1876 he introduced as First Minister of the Crown, he said: 'The Princes and Nations of India . . . know in India what this Bill means, and they know that what it means is what they wish.' The moment for giving effect to an idea long since entertained was unquestionably chosen in order to convey a delicate intimation to Russia. But long before that, great anxiety had been caused to Disraeli by the policy pursued in regard to Afghanistan by the Gladstone Government.

§ BRITISH POLICY IN THE NEAR EAST

Even greater was Disraeli's anxiety in reference to the development of Russian policy in the Near East. Almost simultaneously with the introduction of the Royal Titles Bill an order was sent to the British Fleet in the Mediterranean to sail for Besika Bay (May 24). The disorder prevailing at Constantinople was in itself sufficient to justify this precaution. Unhappily, it was interpreted by the Porte as an encouragement to defy the will of the Powers, perhaps also as an intimation that they might safely show themselves to be masters in their own house.

§ THE BULGARIAN ATROCITIES

They showed it in characteristic fashion. Grave disorders which had occurred in Bulgaria led to terrible reprisals. How far, if at all, the reports of Turkish atrocities were exaggerated it was, and is, impossible to determine. Certain, however, is it that the Sultan let loose upon a half-armed peasantry a horde of irregular soldiery, the Bashi-Bazouks, and that reports of their cruelties moved the English public to profound pity and indignation. The Government could do no less than demand from the Sultan prompt and effective reparation for the victims.

Mr. Gladstone, in a famous pamphlet which he published on September 6, went much further. With characteristic vehemence he demanded that the Turks should be cleared 'bag and baggage . . . from the province they have desolated and profaned'.

§ RUSSIA AND THE BALKAN INSURRECTIONS

Another complication had already arisen. The Serbian army consisted largely of Russian volunteers, and was commanded by a Russian general. But, even so, it offered a feeble resistance to the Turks. How long, then, would it be before the Russian Government was compelled to become officially a party to the quarrel between the Porte and its subjects? To avert Russian intervention accordingly became

the prime, though not the sole, motive of the British Government in urging the Sultan to come to terms with Serbia and Montenegro. But the Serbians, not content with a mere suspension, demanded an armistice, and after six weeks' suspension hostilities recommenced. The British Government redoubled its efforts to promote a pacification and in September suggested to the Powers a detailed and comprehensive scheme of reform to be embodied in a Protocol between the Porte and the Powers. Russia then proposed (September 26) that, in the probable event of Turkey's refusal of the scheme the allied fleets should enter the Bosphorus, that Bosnia should be temporarily occupied by Austria, and Bulgaria by Russia. The Porte suggested the alternative of an armistice for six months; Russia demurred, but agreed to six weeks.

§ CONFERENCE AT CONSTANTINOPLE

The British Government, determined to utilize even that short breathing space to preserve the peace of Europe, proposed a conference, which met at Constantinople in December 1876. Lord Salisbury, the Secretary of State for India in Disraeli's Ministry, represented Great Britain. The Powers agreed to urge upon Turkey the scheme put forward by the British Government in September, but the Porte, while not rejecting the plan, stubbornly refused to allow the Powers to superintend its execution. General Ignatiev thereupon withdrew from the Conference, and Russia proceeded to mobilize.

§ RUSSO-TURKISH WAR (1877–8)

One more effort was, nevertheless, made to avert war. On March 31, 1877, the Powers signed in London a Protocol, the terms of which were suggested by Count Schuvalov, the Russian Chancellor. Taking cognizance of the Turkish promises of reform, the Powers declared their resolution to watch carefully 'the manner in which the promises of the Ottoman Government are carried into effect'. Should the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte again lead

to a 'return of the complications which periodically disturb the peace of the East [the Powers] think it right to declare that such a state of things would be incompatible with their interests and those of Europe in general'.

The Porte, in high dudgeon, rejected the Protocol (April 10). The Tsar Alexander had in the previous July met the Emperor Francis Joseph at Reichstadt and had agreed with him that if territorial changes in European Turkey became inevitable, Austria should obtain Bosnia and Herzegovina.[1] Free, therefore, from any fear of opposition from Austria, the Tsar declared war on Turkey (April 24).

It is proper to add that throughout all the negotiations which preceded the outbreak of war Alexander had behaved, in face of prolonged provocation, with patience and restraint, and proved his sincere desire to maintain the Concert of Europe. The conduct of the Turk characteristically combined shrewdness and obstinacy. That he counted upon the goodwill, it not the active support, of England is unfortunately certain. Nor can it be denied that if the British Government had trusted, and been willing to co-operate with, Russia, there would have been no war in 1877.

For Russia the war proved to be no mere military parade, though Roumania gave the Russian army a free passage, and when the Russian advance was checked by the great fortress of Plevna, gave it active and invaluable assistance. Plevna having, after a gallant resistance of five months, surrendered on December 10, the Russians rapidly advanced towards Constantinople, occupying Sofia on January 5 and Adrianople on the 20th. The great fortress of Kars guarding Asiatic Turkey had already fallen to them on November 18. The Turkish Empire now lay at their mercy; and a basis of agreement, reached at Adrianople on January 31, was confirmed in a Treaty signed on March 3 at San Stefano, a village within sight of Constantinople. The Treaty of San Stefano meant the virtual destruction of the Ottoman Empire in Europe.

[1] Confirmed by a definite Treaty, January 15, 1877.

§ ENGLAND AND RUSSIA

The terms were not, however, destined to fulfilment. As far back as June 8, 1877, the Tsar had spontaneously undertaken to respect English interests in Egypt, and in the Suez Canal, and not himself to occupy Constantinople or the Straits. In January 1878 Lord Derby deemed it both friendly and prudent to remind the Tsar of the promises given in the previous June, and to warn him that any treaty concluded between Russia and Turkey which might affect the engagements of 1856 and 1871 'would not be valid without the assent of the Powers who were parties to those Treaties'.

In order to emphasize the gravity of this warning the British fleet, which lay in Besika Bay, was ordered to pass the Dardanelles, and Parliament was asked for a vote of credit of £6,000,000. In moving this vote Sir Stafford Northcote announced the terms demanded by Russia, and intimated that in addition to the terms subsequently embodied in the Treaty of San Stefano, the agreement involved 'an ulterior understanding for safeguarding the interests and rights of Russia in the Straits'. On this point Great Britain was traditionally sensitive; the situation became critical, and the fleet was ordered to proceed into the Sea of Marmora. The Tsar retorted that if the British ships sailed up the Straits a Russian army would occupy Constantinople for the purpose of protecting the lives of Christians of all races.

Peace hung by a thread. But the Sultan withheld the necessary permission for ships of war to pass the Dardanelles, and Lord Derby, who had resigned when the order was given, withdrew his resignation when the fleet retired to Besika Bay.

The Austrian Government then intervened *more suo* with a proposal for a European Congress, and Great Britain agreed on the understanding that all questions dealt with in the Treaty of San Stefano should be open to discussion at the Congress. That Treaty had been denounced with emphasis by Lord Beaconsfield: 'It abolishes the dominion of the Ottoman Empire in Europe; it creates a large State which, under the name of Bulgaria, is inhabited by many races not Bulgarian . . . all the European dominions of the Ottoman

Porte are . . . put under the administration of Russia . . . the effect of all the stipulations combined will be to make the Black Sea as much a Russian lake as the Caspian.' Be this description exaggerated or not, there can be no question that in every clause the Treaty was a 'deviation' from those of 1856 and 1871, and consequently required the assent of the signatory Powers.

§ THE BERLIN CONGRESS

To the demand that the Treaty should in its entirety be subject to revision at the hands of a European Congress Russia demurred. Great Britain insisted. Things again looked like war. Lord Derby, the most pacific member of the Cabinet, and second in authority only to Lord Beaconsfield, resigned (March 28); Lord Beaconsfield announced that Parliament would be asked to authorize the calling out of the Reserves, and Lord Salisbury, who succeeded Derby at the Foreign Office, issued a masterly memorandum placing before the Powers the case of Great Britain.

Again peace hung in the balance. Apart from the Russo-Turkish quarrel there was a great deal of inflammable material lying about which needed only a match to set it alight. Greece, Serbia, and Roumania were gravely perturbed about the terms of the Treaty of San Stefano, and on April 17 the world was startled to learn that Lord Beaconsfield had ordered 7,000 Indian troops to embark for Malta. This step was bitterly criticized by Beaconsfield's opponents as unconstitutional, if not illegal, and more appropriate to transpontine melodrama than to sober statesmanship. Yet it cannot be denied that Lord Beaconsfield's stroke, if alarming to old-fashioned Englishmen, impressed Europe and made for peace.

Before the end of May 1878 the Indian troops began to arrive at Malta; Russia understood that England meant business, and on May 30 came to an agreement with Great Britain on the main points at issue. On June 13 the Congress opened at Berlin.

CHAPTER XII

RUSSIA, AFGHANISTAN, AND BRITISH INDIA

> The border of Afghanistan is in truth the border of India.
>
> AMIR SHER ALI

> India is like a fortress with the vast moat of the sea on two of her faces, and with mountains for her walls on the remainder. But beyond those walls extends a glacis of varying breadth and dimensions. We do not want to occupy it, but we also cannot afford to see it occupied by our foes. We are quite content to let it remain in the hands of our allies and friends; but if rival and unfriendly influences creep up to it, and lodge themselves right under our walls, we are compelled to intervene because a danger would thereby grow up that might one day menace our security. This is the secret of the whole position in Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan, and as far eastward as Siam.
>
> LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON

ON THE day that the diplomatists of Europe met in Congress at Berlin the Amir of Afghanistan received news at Kabul that a Russian mission was on its way to his capital. A week after Lord Beaconsfield returned to London bringing back 'Peace with Honour' from Berlin, General Stolietov, in command of the Russian mission, reached Kabul, where he was received by the Amir Sher Ali, with every possible mark of distinction.

§ BRITISH INDIA, RUSSIA, AND AFGHANISTAN

What did the Russian mission portend for the British dominion in India? The above extract from one of Lord Curzon's speeches made during his Viceroyalty in India supplies a summary answer to this question. We have seen that until the régime of Lord Auckland (1836–42) we had virtually no contact with other Asiatic Powers; but as a result of the rapid expansion of the Company's dominions between the rule of Lord Wellesley and that of Lord Dalhousie, buffer states were to a great extent eliminated. British India was thus brought into immediate touch with

the hill-tribes of the Himalayas, and with the loosely knit and turbulent realm which acknowledged the authority of the Amir of Afghanistan—when, but only when, he was strong enough to enforce it.

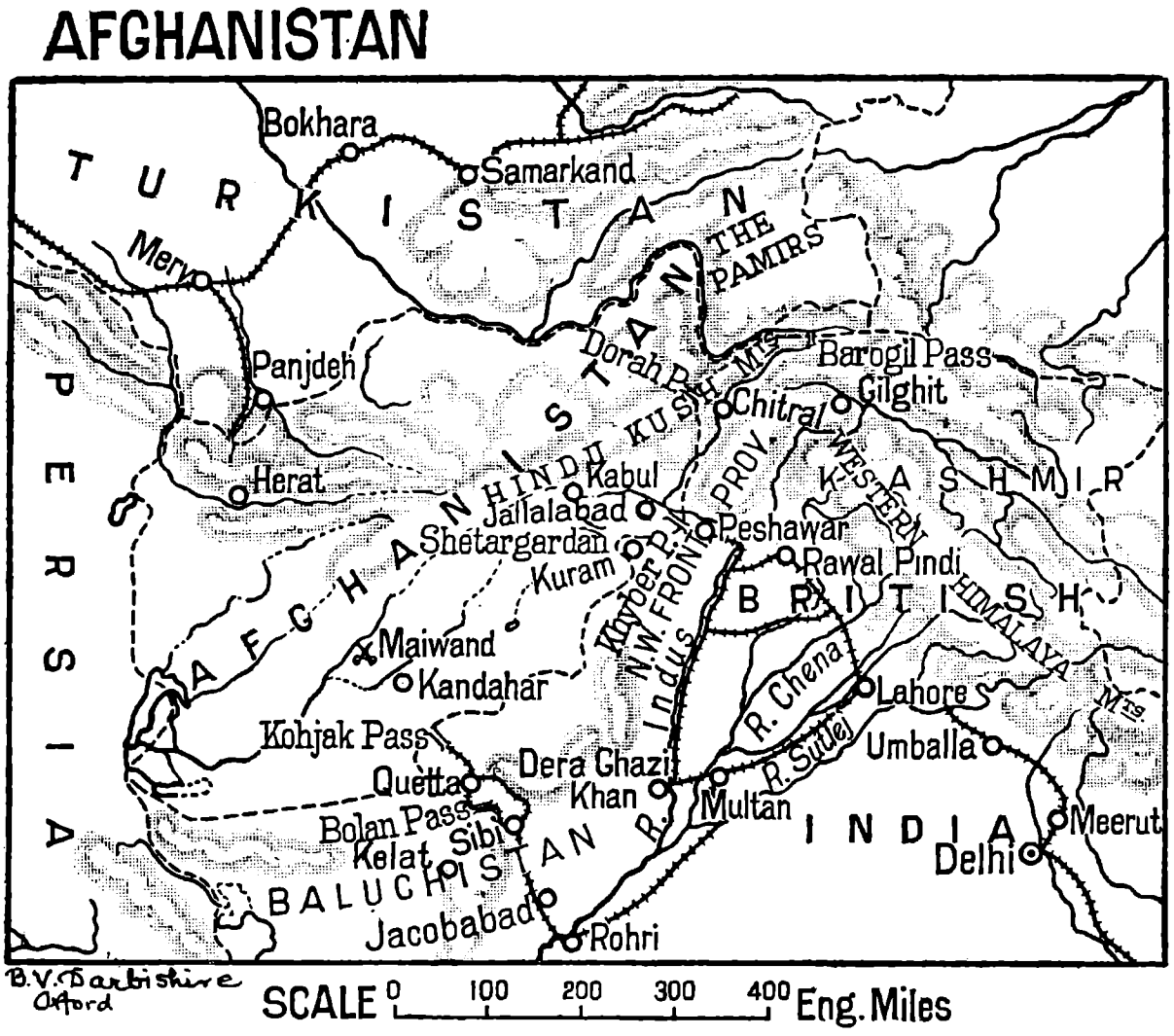
So long as Dost Muhammad lived no question arose between Russia and Great Britain in Afghanistan. That strong and astute ruler not only kept his own fretful realm in awe, but remained faithful to his treaty engagement with the British, even to the point of declining the opportunity offered by the Mutiny of trying to recover Peshawar. But Dost Muhammad died in 1863, and on his death there ensued a period of anarchy in Afghanistan, accentuated by perpetual wars between the survivors of the sixteen sons of the late Amir to secure the succession to the Amir's unstable throne. Now one now another of the sons obtained a temporary foothold, now in Kábul, now in Kandahar, or again in Herát.

§ RUSSOPHILS AND RUSSOPHOBES

The policy of Lord Lawrence (Viceroy 1864–9) was to abstain from any interference in the domestic discords of Afghanistan and to recognize any ruler who could *de facto* establish his authority. Had there been no complicating factor in the problem this would probably have been the most prudent policy to adopt. But a complication, and a very serious one, there was. Russia, as we have seen, had for some years past been advancing rapidly through Central Asia, and having in 1873 occupied Khiva, was now hovering on the frontier of Afghanistan. After the tragic failure of Lord Auckland's 'forward policy', the policy of Calcutta had been to regard the Russian advance with a careless, if not a benevolent, eye. Lord Lawrence had, indeed, expressed the opinion that Russia might prove a safer neighbour than the wild tribes of Central Asia.

Opposed to the views of Lord Lawrence and his school were those of the party which became known as Russophobes. They believed that the safety of India could be secured only by a 'forward' policy, by bringing into

subjection not only the tribesmen of the Himalayas, but Afghanistan and Baluchistan. At the very end of his career in India Lord Lawrence himself had, as we have seen, lost faith, to some extent, in the policy of 'masterful inactivity', and had advised the Home Government to come to an agreement with Russia in reference to Afghanistan.



§ THE GLADSTONE-NORTHBROOK POLICY

Mr. Gladstone would not listen to this warning, and sent out to India as Viceroy (1872–6) Lord Northbrook, a man whom he could trust to carry out the policy of the Liberal Government.

Sher Ali, a son of Dost Muhammad, had at last got the better of his brethren and established himself as Amir of

Afghanistan. He was by no means inclined to view with the same detachment as Mr. Gladstone the advance of Russia towards the frontier of his turbulent realm. Sher Ali, accordingly, tried to persuade Lord Northbrook that 'the interests of the Afghan and British Governments are identical, and that the frontier of Afghanistan is, in truth, the frontier of India'. But nothing would persuade Gladstone that the Amir knew his own business better than the British Premier, and he instructed Lord Northbrook to inform the Amir that the India Office did not share his alarm about the Russian advance, but that we intended to 'maintain our settled policy in favour of Afghanistan if the Amir abides by our advice in external affairs'. Lord Northbrook obeyed his instructions to the letter. He had, indeed, previously sent to the Amir a large present of money and 20,000 rifles. But what the Amir wanted more than arms or money was a specific and firm assurance that if he were attacked by Russia England would defend him. That assurance was withheld. Condescendingly patronized by Whitehall, repulsed by Calcutta, Sher Ali, therefore, threw in his lot with Russia.[1]

§ LORD LYTTON'S VICEROYALTY (1876–80)

The Disraeli Ministry which superseded Mr. Gladstone's in 1874 was definitely opposed to the foreign and colonial policy of its predecessor. Lord Salisbury who succeeded the Duke of Argyll at the India Office in 1876, appointed as Lord Northbrook's successor on the expiration of his term as Viceroy (1876) Lord Lytton, a son of the novelist and himself a poet with a varied experience in the diplomatic service. The appointment caused some surprise, not to say amazement, among the English public. 'Owen Meredith' they knew. Lord Lytton was to them a mere name: but Disraeli thought that he could be trusted to interpret to the Indian peoples the mind of the Prime Minister on Indian affairs.

To the incoming Viceroy Afghanistan presented a difficult problem. His first move was to propose to Sher Ali a

[1] *Lord Roberts: Forty-one Years*, II, p. 108.

comprehensive treaty, by which the Amir was to obtain what he most wanted, the recognition of his younger and favourite son as heir to his throne, a fixed and augmented subsidy, and, above all, a definite pledge of English assistance against foreign aggression. Sher Ali was, on his part, to receive a British Resident at Herát. To this the Amir was inflexibly opposed; nor was he willing even to receive a complimentary mission to announce the Queen's assumption of the Imperial title. He objected, with some reason, that if he received an English mission he could not refuse a similar request from Russia. Whether the Amir was sincerely desirous to hold both his insistent neighbours equally at arm's length, or whether, repulsed by one Viceroy after another, he had already decided to throw in his lot with Russia, cannot be known for certain. If it were possible to substantiate the latter charge, Lord Lytton's subsequent action would scarcely need further justification. Unfortunately, critical opinion is inclined to accept the former alternative, and consequently to endorse the condemnation passed by many contemporaries upon the 'headstrong folly' of Lord Lytton's proceedings.

§ QUETTA

Sher Ali's resolution against the reception of a British Resident was naturally strengthened by Lytton's conclusion of the Treaty of Jacobabad with the Khan of Kelat in Baluchistan. Under its terms the Government of India acquired the right to garrison Quetta, which, by giving us the command of the Bolan Pass, enabled us to turn the flank of the Afghan frontier. Quetta—occupying a position of great natural strength and high strategical importance—has since become an integral part of the British Empire in India.

In 1878 Sher Ali unmasked his guns: he received—whether under compulsion or not matters little—a Russian mission at Kábul. That he should receive with equal honour a British mission became, thereupon, imperative, unless British prestige was to suffer irremediable damage in Asia.

Accordingly, the Amir was peremptorily informed that Sir Neville Chamberlain, at that time commanding the army at Madras, would forthwith proceed to Kábul.

§ THE CHAMBERLAIN MISSION

The Chamberlain mission, with an escort of about 1,000 men, left Peshawar on September 21, 1878, and encamped some three miles short of the Khyber Pass. Suspecting that the advance of his mission might meet with opposition, General Chamberlain took the wise precaution of sending forward Major (afterwards Sir Louis) Cavagnari to demand leave for the mission to proceed through the Khyber. Leave was refused by the officer commanding the Afghan troops on the spot, who intimated that if General Chamberlain proceeded, he would be forcibly resisted. The mission was consequently abandoned. 'Nothing', as Chamberlain wrote to the Viceroy, 'could have been more humiliating to the British Crown and nation.' What course could the Viceroy have then taken except the one which, in fact, resulted so disastrously? To the Amir's refusal to receive an Envoy from the Queen-Empress at the moment when a Russian mission was actually being welcomed by him at Kábul, what answer could there have been save the one given by the Viceroy? Lytton's real fault was precipitancy, combined, as we now know, with flagrant disobedience to the orders of the Cabinet. 'He was told,' wrote Lord Beaconsfield on September 26, 'to wait until we had received the reply from Russia to our remonstrance. . . . He disobeyed us. . . . He was told to send the mission by Kandahar. He has sent it by the Khyber and has received a snub which it may cost us much to wipe away.' Truly it did. 'If,' as Lord Beaconsfield wrote to Lord Salisbury on October 3, 'Lytton had only been quiet and obeyed my orders, I have no doubt that under the advice of Russia, Sher Ali would have been equally prudent.'[1]

No condemnation subsequently passed upon Lytton's conduct by Gladstone and other critics of Lord Beaconsfield

[1] Buckle: *Disraeli*, Vol. VI, C. x, cap., pp. 380–90.

and his Viceroy could have been more conclusive than that passed—before the results of Lytton's blunder had accrued—by the British Premier. But the Beaconsfield Cabinet, perhaps unwisely, certainly chivalrously, refused to 'let down the man on the spot'. Their chivalry was largely responsible for the crushing defeat inflicted upon the Conservative party at the General Election of 1880.

§ THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR (1878–9)

Promptly following on the repulse of the Chamberlain mission, Lord Lytton sent an ultimatum, with a short time-limit, to Sher Ali, demanding a full apology and a promise to receive a permanent British Embassy at Kábul. As soon as the time-limit expired, a large army was ordered to march on Afghanistan.

Realizing the hopelessness of resistance, Sher Ali fled into Turkistan, accompanied by such members of the Russian mission as had lingered at Kábul, and there, having vainly besought his Russian patrons to deliver him from the misfortunes they had brought upon him, the unhappy victim of Russian ambition ended his days.

§ THE TREATY OF GANDAMAK

Sher Ali's eldest son, Yakub Khan, having established himself in Kábul, promptly concluded peace. The Treaty of Gandamak (May 25, 1879) appeared to vindicate completely Lord Lytton's action. The new Amir agreed to receive a permanent British Embassy, with a suitable escort at Kábul, with agencies at Herát and elsewhere; to conduct his foreign policy under the advice of Great Britain, and to allow such a rectification of the North-West Frontier of India as fulfilled the requirements of the 'Forward' school of British strategists. In return the Amir was to receive an annual subsidy of six lacs of rupees, and his country was to be guaranteed against external aggression.

The British Government congratulated itself and the country on obtaining 'a scientific and adequate frontier for our Indian Empire'. But, unfortunately, before congratulations

could be translated into a renewal of electoral confidence, tragedy had intervened.

§ THE MURDER OF CAVAGNARI

One of the great soldiers who had conducted the campaign crowned by the Treaty of Gandamak had misgivings about that treaty. General Roberts, thought that 'peace had been signed too quickly', and that its terms ought to have been dictated in Kábul.

Roberts's forebodings were justified only too soon and too sadly. In July 1879 Sir Louis Cavagnari, whose diplomacy had smoothed the way for the peace, arrived at Kábul to take up the Embassy. He had only a small escort, and in September he and all his comrades were murdered by the Amir's mutinous soldiers. On September 4 the news reached Simla; on the 6th Roberts left to take command of the Kábul Field Force. He reached Kábul early in October and to his dismay found that city 'much more Russian than English, the officers arrayed in uniform of Russian pattern, Russian money in the Treasury, and Russian wares in the bazaar'. Before he left Kábul he unearthed much evidence as to Russian designs upon Afghanistan, and placed it on formal record that in his opinion the recent rupture with Sher Ali had been 'the means of unmasking and checking a very serious conspiracy against the peace and security of our Indian Empire'.

Meanwhile, his own position in Kábul was somewhat precarious. Not until December 1879 did reinforcements reach him from India, and early in May 1880 General Stewart, after first evacuating, and then reoccupying, Kandahar, joined Roberts in Kábul.

Before that, the Gladstone Government, returned to power in April 1880, had reached an important decision in reference to the future of Afghanistan.

§ ALTERNATIVE POLICIES

To retain Afghanistan in perpetuity was out of the question. Only two alternatives, consequently, presented

themselves: either to strengthen Afghanistan in order to make it an effective buffer between India and Russian Central Asia, or to maintain English influence by dividing the country up among several rulers. Lord Lytton favoured the latter policy, but the emergence of a strong ruler in the person of Abdur Rahman frustrated Lytton's attempt to carry it into effect. The British Government thereupon decided to evacuate Kandahar. General Roberts (whose superb march had previously relieved it) regarded its retention as of 'vital importance'. All the soldiers in India and many civilians took the same view, and at home it was almost ecstatically supported by Queen Victoria. But the Gladstone Government were obdurate, and in 1881 the evacuation of Kandahar was completed in reliance upon the friendship of Abdur Rahman and upon his will and capacity to make a 'friendly, strong, and independent Afghanistan' into the buffer state we desired that it should become. Abdur Rahman did not disappoint expectation.

§ MERV

Suspicion of Russian designs was not, however, allayed. Headed off both from Constantinople and from Afghanistan, mainly by the jealousy of England, Russia renewed her activities in Central Asia. At first with little success. Among the Turkoman tribes which refused to bow under a foreign yoke, the largest and most highly organized were the Tekkes, who carried their audacious raids both into Afghanistan and Persia. A disastrous campaign by the Russians to restrain their activities in 1878, was followed in 1879 by an unsuccessful attack upon the Tekke stronghold of Danjil Tepe, and by a disorderly retreat of the Russians to the Caspian.

Smarting under the blow to his prestige, the Tsar Alexander II sent his most brilliant soldier, General Skobelev to retrieve those disasters. Skobelev's brilliant campaign of 1881 did more than retrieve them. The capture of Danjil Tepe was followed by the infliction of a terrible punishment upon the predatory tribes who had repulsed the attack upon their stronghold. Rumours then reached London and

Calcutta that the Russians were preparing to occupy Merv, a vital point in South Turkistan, whence a short branch line of the Trans-Caspian Railway runs south to Herát on the Afghan frontier. Russia promptly disavowed the intention. That was in 1882. In 1884, however, the Russians, relying upon England's preoccupation in the Sudan, did occupy Merv and Sarak, and thus came within 200 miles of Herát and the frontier of Afghanistan. This step was in direct violation of Gortschakov's assurance to the British Government in 1882 that Merv 'lay outside the sphere of Russian influence'.

Notwithstanding this gross breach of faith, the Gladstone Government assented, somewhat tamely, to the appointment of a joint commission to delimit the northern frontier of Afghanistan. Sir Peter Lumsden, the British Commissioner, arrived punctually at the rendezvous, and patiently awaited the arrival of his Russian colleague, General Zelenoi. The Russian General tarried, making excuse after excuse for the delay, while the Russians usefully employed the interval by occupying various eligible points in dispute.

§ THE PENJDEH INCIDENT

Matters came to a crisis on March 30, 1885. While General Wolseley was still in the Sudan, bent on avenging the death of Gordon, the Russians attacked Penjdeh, a village some hundred miles south of Merv, and drove out the Afghans, with the loss of 500 lives. News of the treacherous coup roused indignation in England to the highest pitch. The Government could not ignore public sentiment, which had been stirred to the depths by the death of Gordon at Khartoum, and acted with unusual promptitude. They called out the Reserves and obtained a vote of credit for £11,000,000.

Russia took this hint. Lord Dufferin, who had become Viceroy of India in 1884, exerted all his great diplomatic skill to secure a peaceful settlement of a dispute essentially of secondary importance, and converted to his view Abdur Rahman, whose indignation at the Penjdeh incident was intelligibly greater than that of England. 'My country,'

said the Amir, 'is like a poor goat on whom the lion and the bear have both fixed their eyes, and without the protection of the Almighty Deliverer the victim cannot hope to escape very long.' He was, however, persuaded by Lord Dufferin that Penjdeh mattered little, as compared with the Zulfikar Pass, about which the Amir was, in fact, far more concerned. So Russia was left in possession of Penjdeh, but, as compensation, the exclusive control of the Zulfikar Pass was secured to the Amir.

Between Afghanistan and Russia the matter was thus satisfactorily adjusted. Between Russia and England negotiations dragged on until 1887, when a Protocol was signed between the two Powers at St. Petersburg. By that agreement a definite check was put upon Russian advance towards Herát, and the frontier was settled up to the line of the Oxus.

Checked on the western frontier of Afghanistan, the Russians continued their advance northwards and eastwards, and in 1895 they annexed the Pamirs. This meant that their frontier marched with that of Chinese Turkistan to the east, and on the south with that of the British North-West Frontier Provinces. The frontier was more precisely defined by another Anglo-Russian Convention signed in 1895. 'The Boundary Pillars,' wrote Sir Alfred Lyall, 'now set up by British and Russian officers on the Hindu Kush and by the Oxus, record the first deliberate and practical attempts made by the two European Powers to stave off the contact of their incessantly expanding Asiatic Empires.'

Not, however, until the conclusion of the comprehensive Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 was a complete and, it is hoped, final understanding reached between the two empires.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TREATY OF BERLIN AND AFTER

We support Turkey for our own sake and for our own interests. The policy of Great Britain from first to last has been that of protecting Turkey with a view to the repulse of Russia from an exclusive and dangerous domination over the East of Europe.

LORD PALMERSTON (1853)

The very idea of reinstating any amount of Turkish misgovernment in places once cleared of it is simply revolting.

LORD STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE

THE SENTENCES prefixed to this chapter succinctly summarize the policy pursued by Lord Beaconsfield before and during the Congress of Berlin. But the words of Lord Palmerston and of our famous Ambassador to the Porte suggest a dilemma. How was it possible to clear the Turk out of Europe while at the same time repulsing Russia? The solution of the problem was, in fact, implicit in the arrangement made at the Congress, though it was some time before the course of events revealed how heavy was the debt which the young Nation-States of the Balkans owed to the firm stand made during 1877 and 1878 by the British Government.

The Congress at Berlin opened on June 13, 1878. It was attended by the leading statesmen of all the Great Powers, and, though at one point the tension was so acute that Lord Beaconsfield actually ordered his special train to be prepared for his immediate return to London, the proceedings were generally smooth, and the task of the Congress was rapidly accomplished. It adjourned on July 13. The principal negotiators were Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury on behalf of Great Britain, Prince Gorchakov and Count Shuvalov on behalf of Russia. Prince Bismarck presided, and though acting professedly as the 'honest broker', threw his weight into the scale against Russia in the interests not of

England, but of Austria. Nevertheless, it was Lord Beaconsfield whose personality dominated the Congress. 'Der alte Jude, das ist der Mann,' was Bismarck's shrewd summary of the proceedings. The main points at issue had, however, been settled beforehand by negotiations in London between Count Shuvalov, the Russian Ambassador, and Lord Salisbury. Further, by a convention with Turkey concluded on June 4 it had been agreed that as long as Russia retained Kars, Batoum, and Ardahan, as was to be provided by the Treaty, Cyprus was to be 'occupied and administered by England, specifically as security that the Sultan would carry out reforms in his Asiatic dominions, and in particular would protect the Christian and other subjects of the Porte therein. In return Great Britain undertook to protect the Sultan's Asiatic possessions against any further encroachments by Russia. Plainly, then, the Cyprus Convention imposed upon Great Britain a responsibility, of which Gladstone did not fail to remind her at the time of the Armenian massacres. (1897).

§ THE TREATY OF BERLIN

The sole acquisition in Europe obtained by Russia under the Treaty of Berlin was the strip of Bessarabia retroceded to Roumania in 1856 and now (1878), by an act of grave impolicy and base ingratitude, snatched away from her. Roumania was bitterly chagrined, but Lord Beaconsfield, while professing platonic sympathy, refused to be diverted from more important issues. Bismarck, indifferent to the dynastic ties between Prussia and Roumania, was not sorry to see Roumania alienated by Russia, and the less able, therefore, to press its claims against Austria-Hungary for the surrender to Roumania of the Roumanian inhabitants of Transylvania and the Bukovina. Bismarck's tenderness for Austrian interests—outside Germany—was also indicated by his willingness that the Dual Monarchy should for an undefined period occupy—without annexing—Bosnia and the Herzegovina. Hardly less dissatisfied with the Treaty than the Bosnians were the Southern Slavs of Serbia and Montenegro, and the Greeks. But all these peoples owed to

Lord Beaconsfield more than they—or any one else—realized at the time. Had he not torn up the Treaty of San Stefano, both Greece and Serbia would have had to renounce their ambitions in Macedonia, and to face the rivalry of a greatly enlarged and completely Russianized Bulgaria.

§ BULGARIA

As between Russia and Great Britain, the crux of the problem lay in the position of Bulgaria. The Treaty of San Stefano had provided for the creation of a greater Bulgaria, a vast autonomous tributary Principality, extending from the Danube to the Aegean. As defined at Berlin, Bulgaria was reduced to less than one-third of its size as designed by the Treaty of San Stefano. It was now to consist of a relatively narrow strip between the Danube and the Balkans, and south of this truncated Bulgaria was constituted a province, Eastern Roumelia, which was restored to the Sultan, who was to place it under a Christian Governor approved by the Powers. The partition of Bulgaria was, however, manifestly an artificial arrangement which did not long survive the death of its author.

The enduring significance of the Treaty of Berlin is, then, not only that it frustrated the designs of Russia, nor that it preserved to the Sultan a remnant of the Ottoman Empire in Europe, but that it left the door open to the development of the newly reborn Nation-States that were arising upon the ruins of that empire under which for five centuries or more they had been submerged. Lord Beaconsfield had in truth built better, perhaps, than he knew.

The history of Bulgaria after 1882 affords a curious illustration of political irony. After the adoption of a parliamentary constitution for which it was manifestly unfitted, the Bulgarian Assembly, on the recommendation of the Tsar Alexander II, elected as a ruler Prince Alexander of Battenberg, a scion by a morganatic marriage of the House of Darmstadt, a nephew by marriage of the Tsar, and an officer in the Prussian army. The expectation was that the 'Batterboy', as he was contemptuously called in Russia, would

prove a pliant instrument in the hands of Russian diplomacy. For the first two years of his reign the young Prince, though by no means lacking in character, did not disappoint his patrons. But in 1881 the situation underwent rapid changes. On the one hand, Tsar Alexander III, who in that year succeeded to the throne of his murdered father, was much less favourably disposed towards the Prince of Bulgaria than his father had been. On the other hand, a remarkable and unforeseen development had occurred in Bulgaria itself. The arrogance of the Russian officials by whom the Prince was surrounded, and to a large extent controlled, was deeply resented by the peasants of whom Bulgaria mainly consisted, and obliterated the remembrance of the debt they had incurred to their liberators in 1878. Not less anticipatory of coming change was the appearance on the stage of Bulgarian politics of the 'strong man' in the person of Stephen Stambulov.

§ STAMBULOV

This remarkable man, the son of a small innkeeper, was born at Tirnovo in 1854. Though he had been powerfully attracted, as a young man, towards the views of the Nihilist party, the passion of Stambulov's life was not Russian nihilism, but Bulgarian nationalism. Having plunged into the turbid waters of Bulgarian politics, he was soon (1884) appointed President of the Assembly.

From the first he ardently championed the movement for the union of the two Bulgarias. Nor was the Tsar Alexander III opposed to it, provided it was effected on conditions he could approve. The primary and indispensable condition was the abdication of his cousin, Prince Alexander, whose impatience under Russian tutelage was increasingly manifest, and was matched only by that of his subjects. Russia was, in fact, willing to see a greater Bulgaria come into existence provided it were (as it would have been in 1878) a Russian Protectorate at the gates of Constantinople, with an outlet on the Aegean. But Russia was not prepared to assist in the creation of a greater Bulgaria—independent alike of the Tsar and the Sultan.

§ ENGLISH POLICY

The situation as it had developed by 1885 affords some posthumous justification for the policy pursued by Lord Beaconsfield in 1878. In 1878 the ambition of Russia was much more obtrusively manifested than the national aspirations of Bulgaria. The Englishmen who at that time favoured the creation of a Greater Bulgaria were inspired much more by detestation of the Turk, whom they did know, than by love for the Bulgarian, whom they did not know.

The course of events during the seven years since the Congress of Berlin had wrought a remarkable change in British sentiment. 'If you can help to build up these [Balkan] people into a bulwark of independent States and thus screen the "sick man" from the fury of the northern blast, for God's sake do it!' Thus wrote Sir Robert Morier from St. Petersburg to his colleague, Sir William White, at Constantinople. The latter took the same view. 'These newly emancipated races want to breathe free air and not through Russian nostrils.' But the most notable convert to the principle of a Greater Bulgaria was Lord Beaconsfield's colleague at Berlin. 'A Bulgaria friendly to the Porte,' said Lord Salisbury at the height of the Bulgarian crisis in December 1885, 'and jealous of foreign influence, would be a far stronger bulwark against foreign aggression than two Bulgarias, severed in administration, but united in considering the Porte as the only obstacle to their national development.'

§ COMPLICATIONS

Prince Alexander had already—on September 20, 1885—taken a decisive step. Two days earlier Gavril Pasha, the Turkish Governor-General of Eastern Roumelia, had been expelled from Philippopolis, and the unionist party at once sent a deputation to Sophia to offer the Crown of a United Bulgaria to Prince Alexander. As the latter showed a momentary hesitation, Stambulov bluntly told him that there were only two paths open to him: 'the one to Philippopolis and as far beyond as God may lead, the other to Darmstadt'.

The Prince's hesitation was at an end; he preferred Philippopolis.

A fresh complication then ensued. Russia began to see in a united Bulgaria a barrier in her advance towards the Straits; and Austria, who feared lest the new Bulgaria might interpose a barrier between Budapest and Salonika, instigated Serbia to declare war on Bulgaria. King Milan of Serbia, who in 1882 had followed the example of Prince Carol of Roumania and assumed a royal crown, had reasons of his own for a quarrel with Bulgaria, but they do not concern us. Enough to say that, though the Bulgarian army was disorganized by the withdrawal of its Russian officers, the peasants rallied superbly to the support of their Prince, and in a three days' battle (November 17–19) inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Serbs at Slivnitza. Austria then interposed diplomatically in the war between the two Balkan States; but Slivnitza had really decided the question. Moreover, at a Conference of the Powers at Constantinople, Great Britain had taken the lead in urging the Sultan to acquiesce in the alienation of Eastern Roumelia. Accordingly early in 1886 Sultan Abdul Hamid formally recognized the union of the two Bulgarias and appointed Prince Alexander Governor-General of Eastern Roumelia.

§ RUSSIA AND BULGARIA

The British Government was well satisfied at the turn of events and Queen Victoria was particularly gratified by the elevation of Prince Alexander. She had taken the Battenbergs under her protection. Her youngest daughter, Princess Beatrice, had in 1885 married Prince Henry, the youngest brother of Prince Alexander of Bulgaria. Another brother, Prince Louis was a distinguished officer in the English Navy and he was already the husband of the Queen's granddaughter Princess Victoria of Hesse. The Queen was also promoting the marriage of another granddaughter, Princess Victoria of Prussia to the Prince of Bulgaria, but Bismarck frowned upon the project. Nor did Prince Alexander long continue to be eligible.

Russia was gravely perturbed by the union of the Bulgarians, and the Tsar personally annoyed by the promotion of a cousin who refused to be his tool, was determined to dethrone the Prince. On August 21st, 1886, he was seized by a band of Russian officers, compelled to sign an abdication, and carried off as a prisoner to Russia. A provisional government was then set up at Sophia under Stambulov. Its first act was to recall the kidnapped Prince, who on September 3 was enthusiastically welcomed back to his capital. On his return the Prince unfortunately committed a grave indiscretion. In a grateful but humiliating telegram he placed his crown at the disposal of the Tsar who, without compunction, took advantage of his cousin's momentary weakness and curtly refused to approve his restoration. To avoid civil war, Alexander thereupon abdicated and on September 7 left Bulgaria for ever.

Bulgaria has cause to be grateful to the Battenberg prince. He had presided with dignity and not without a measure of success over its birth-throes. He left his adopted country because he believed that his presence formed the chief obstacle to a *rapprochement* between the young State and its 'natural' protector. After his retirement the Prince married an opera singer. He died in 1893.

To the Regency appointed by the Prince before his departure the Tsar sent as 'adviser' General Kaulbars, but Kaulbars, having done his best to raise the country against the regents and ignominiously failed, was recalled. The Government and people refusing to be browbeaten by the Russian agent, conferred a virtual dictatorship upon Stambulov. Declining a nominee of the Tsar's, they made a wearisome search for a new ruler in various European capitals and eventually secured the services of Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, a son of Princess Clementine of Orleans and a grandson of King Louis Philippe. Young and ambitious and counting, as he could, upon the support of Bismarck and the Emperor Francis Joseph in whose army he had served, Ferdinand remained undismayed by the Tsar's refusal to recognize his accession.

During the next seven years the young Prince, prudently feeling his way, left to Stambulov the double task of restoring internal order and emancipating the country from the tutelage of Russia. In 1894, however, Stambulov became involved in domestic trouble and resigned. Prince Ferdinand succeeded to the vacant place, rendered somewhat less uncomfortable by the assassination (1895) of Stambulov.

Master at last in his own house, Prince Ferdinand's first achievement was to effect a reconciliation with Russia, a task rendered easier by the death in 1894 of Alexander III and the accession of Nicholas II, who stood godfather to the heir born to Ferdinand and his wife in 1896. Thanks in large measure to the untiring efforts of Princess Clementine, who was clever, wealthy and exceedingly tactful, Bulgaria made astonishingly rapid progress towards economic prosperity and attained even some measure of political stability. Ferdinand's international position was also regularized when in 1896 he was recognized by the Sultan as Prince of Bulgaria and Governor-General of Eastern Roumelia. In 1908 Ferdinand astutely took advantage of the general *bouleversement* in Balkan affairs caused by the Young Turk Revolution and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria-Hungary. He had long been anxious to sever the last ties which bound his Principality to its suzerain, and to assume the ancient title of Tsar of Bulgaria. Both objects were achieved and in 1909 the Turkish Parliament formally recognized the independence of Bulgaria.

One cause of friction, not to say of hostility between Russia and England was thus eliminated. Yet it was not to be expected that after a long period of estrangement relations in the Balkans should at once become cordial.

§ THE ARMENIAN MASSACRES

Lack of sympathy between the two great Powers unhappily reacted upon their attitude towards the Armenian Christians upon whom, in 1894, Abdul Hamid launched a savage attack. The news of the massacres ordered by the 'red Sultan' sent such a thrill of horror throughout Christendom

that the Sultan was constrained to consent to the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry, consisting of the English, Russian, and French consuls, together with certain Turkish officials. The Commission, after careful investigation of the facts, presented to the Sultan a scheme of reform which he accepted in the hope that the unhappy Armenians would be exterminated before the reforms could be executed.

His hope was almost realized. All through the year 1895 the massacres went on steadily, and by December it was estimated that the victims numbered from 50,000 to 75,000, not to mention the thousands who perished from the ravages of disease, destitution, and exposure.

Great Britain, who, under the Cyprus Convention, had a peculiar and specific responsibility for the better government of the Armenians spared no effort to induce the Concert to intervene. But Russia definitely refused. The Armenian Christians belonged to an ancient church which was not in communion with the Orthodox Greek Church and consequently their appeals have always fallen upon deaf ears in Russia. Nor was the recollection of Bulgaria's 'ingratitude' without its effect upon the attitude of Russia towards the Armenians. 'We don't want an Armenian Bulgaria,' said the Russian Chancellor, Prince Lobanov. If the road to Constantinople was closed, all the more reason, in the Russian view, for keeping open the roads to Bagdad and Teheran. Nothing could, then, be more inconvenient to the Tsar than a 'nationality' movement in Armenia.

Great Britain, despite the impassioned appeals of Mr. Gladstone, now nearing his end but still fired by the generous enthusiasm of youth, hesitated to act without, still less in opposition to, Russia, If our responsibility was heavy, heavier still was that of Russia, who could act directly in Armenia. We could not, as Lord Salisbury said, send the British navy to Armenia; we could only act at Constantinople, and there only in conjunction with allies who, if not actually opposed to us, were reluctant to act with us.

Sultan Abdul Hamid diagnosed the situation with perfect accuracy. He inferred that given reasonable care he had

little to fear from St. Petersburg. Nor did the Sultan, in his ruthless butchery, lack discrimination. Only Gregorian Armenians were massacred: hardly an Orthodox or a Roman was touched. Still the hand of the butcher was bloodstained: no respectable sovereign could grasp it without loss of self-respect.

§ GERMANY AND TURKEY.

Yet grasped it was. The Sultan had found an entirely new friend in the Emperor William II of Germany.

Bismarck had always ostentatiously refused to interest himself in the Eastern Question: he had 'never even opened the mail-bags from Constantinople'. It was, moreover, a fixed principle of his foreign policy, from 1862 to 1878, to cultivate cordial relations with Russia. But Russia was greatly aggrieved by Bismarck's attitude at the Congress of Berlin. Reluctantly constrained to choose between his two partners in the *Dreikaiserbund*, Bismarck then chose Austria and in 1879 concluded with her the secret treaty (revealed in 1888) which formed the basis of the Dual Alliance. By the adhesion of Italy the Dual was in 1882 converted into the Triple Alliance.[1] Russia was left outside.

After Bismarck's dismissal (1890) the Kaiser struck out a new line which vitally affected the position both of Russia and England, and ultimately their mutual relations.

France, Russia, and England had been successively predominant at Constantinople. By the 'eighties they had all lost their predominance: there was evidently a vacancy in the diplomatic circle at the Porte. The Kaiser made up his mind to fill it. In November 1889 the Kaiser and Kaiserin paid their first ceremonial visit to a European capital. The capital selected for that honour was Constantinople. The friendship thus formed was assiduously cultivated. On the Sultan's birthday, 1896, there was placed in his hands, reeking with the blood of the Armenian Christians, an intimate birthday gift. It came from Berlin. In 1898 the German Emperor and his consort paid a second visit to

[1] See Marriott and Robertson: *The Evolution of Russia.*

Constantinople and proceeded thence to the Holy Land. At Jerusalem, Catholics and Protestants had claimed his attention; at Damascus the Moslems—not one of whom was a subject of the Kaiser—got their turn: 'His Majesty the Sultan Abdul Hamid and the three hundred million Mohammedans who reverence him as Caliph may rest assured that at all times the German Emperor will be their friend.' The sheer audacity of this remarkable utterance was by some who heard it attributed to intoxication: it was in fact the result of careful calculation. 'It is possible,' wrote Professor Naumann, who heard the speech, 'that the Caliph of Constantinople may fall into the hands of the Russians. . . . Then it would perhaps be advantageous [for the Kaiser] to be known as the friend not only of the Sultan but of all Mohammedans. The title might give the German Emperor a measure of political power which might be used to counteract a Russophil Ottoman policy.'[1] The Kaiser seemingly had one eye on Russia.

The other was fixed, even more steadily, on England. 'It is possible that the world war will break out before the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. Then the Caliph of Constantinople would once more uplift the standard of a Holy War. The sick man would raise himself for the last time to shout to Egypt, the Soudan, East Africa, Persia, Afghanistan, and India "war against England. . . ." It is not unimportant to know who will support him on his bed when he rises to utter this cry.'[2] These words were written sixteen years before those previously quoted, but they are not less significant.

The ascendancy of the Germans at Constantinople was, then, equally menacing to the interests of Great Britain and of Russia. What more natural than that the two Powers so long estranged, chiefly by their rivalry in the Near East, should be brought closer together by the sudden appearance on the scene of a great Power determined to oust both whilom rivals, now equally out of favour at the Porte.

[1] *Mitteleuropa* (Berlin, 1915). [2] *Asia* (1899).

CHAPTER XIV

THE TRIPLE ENTENTE

When the interests of two Powers are constantly touching and rubbing against one another, it is hard to find a half-way house between constant liability to friction and cordial friendship.

SIR EDWARD GREY

§ THE KAISER'S POLICY

THE SUPERSESSION of Prince Bismarck by his self-willed young master had a profound influence upon the international situation, not least, in the long run, upon the relations of England and Russia. The position when, in 1890, 'the Pilot was dropped' was roughly as follows. Germany had already forfeited the friendship of Russia, but France had not yet gained it; still less had England. Austria was united by close ties with Germany; Italy was estranged from France, France from England, and England from Russia. With great skill and little scruple, Bismarck had conciliated his friends and kept asunder his potential enemies. He encouraged England to remain in Egypt knowing that as long as she did so there could be no cordiality between Great Britain and France: he is said to have hinted to Russia that Germany would regard with sympathy her advance in Central Asia, so alarming to England; he practically tossed Tunis to France to make bad blood between France and Italy, and bring Italy into the Triple Alliance.

Within twenty years of Bismarck's dismissal the whole of this carefully constructed edifice was in ruins.

§ FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

The first step in the diplomatic revolution was the growing friendliness between France and Russia. This was taken just before Bismarck's fall and was first revealed by large loans made (1889–96) by France to Russia after similar accommodation had been refused in Berlin. Meanwhile,

consternation mingled with indignation had been aroused in St. Petersburg when (1888) Bismarck published the terms of the Triple Alliance. To that alliance Russia was, in 1884, on the point of making herself a party. She had the more reason to congratulate herself on her abstention when, a few days after the publication of the text, Bismarck made a speech clearly calculated to warn both Russia and France against taking any steps towards a closer understanding.

Bismarck's dismissal gave impetus to a movement already begun. In 1891 the French fleet paid a ceremonial visit to Cronstadt and was welcomed with great cordiality. A similar demonstration was evoked by the visit paid by the Russian Mediterranean fleet to Toulon (1892). In that same year a military convention, purely defensive in character, was concluded, to be followed in 1896 by the official acknowledgment of a formal alliance between the two countries.

§ THE ISOLATION OF ENGLAND

The Russo-French alliance, in conjunction with the Triple Alliance, accentuated the political isolation of England. Lord Salisbury still regarded that situation as satisfactory, if not 'splendid', though before the close of the century he began to have misgivings on the subject. Still more perturbed about the situation of England was Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, then only second to Lord Salisbury in his influence upon the Unionist Party and not perhaps second to him in the country at large. During the Kaiser's visit to England in 1895 Mr. Chamberlain had two interviews with the Kaiser himself and, in a confidential interview with the German Chancellor von Bülow, threw out the suggestion of a new Triple Alliance between Germany, Great Britain, and the U.S.A. Immediately after his return to Germany, Bülow, though profuse in complimentary references both to France and Russia, publicly spurned Chamberlain's overtures. To a communication from the Kaiser to his cousin the Tsar asking his 'old and trusty friend what he would do for him if he refused the English offers', the Tsar Nicholas

was able to reply that England had approached him first.[1] Nothing more was heard of an Anglo-German-American Alliance, nor of any further overtures to Germany. In 1899 the South African War broke out.

§ THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

The disasters that befel England during the first phase of that war offered an irresistible opportunity to her many enemies in Europe. Notably to Russia, who proposed that Germany and France should offer mediation to Great Britain, and that if it was accepted Russia should join them.

Bülow, however, declined to take a step certain to estrange England until he could be sure of the attitude of France which, for reasons to be explained presently, was becoming less unfriendly to England. Russia, therefore, withdrew her suggestion. The German Chancellor, however, did not hesitate to encourage what Sir Eyre Crowe truly described as 'the campaign of odious calumny carried on throughout the length and breadth of Germany',[2] and even himself to make an impassioned attack upon England in a speech delivered in the Reichstag. Yet, curiously enough, all this did not prevent England and Germany from reaching in the so-called *Yang-Tse Treaty* (October 1900) an agreement in regard to China.

§ RUSSIA AND ENGLAND IN THE FAR EAST

Throughout the nineteenth century Russia had been pushing steadily on towards the Pacific,[3] and after the Treaty of Berlin, finding herself diplomatically isolated by Bismarck's defection and not yet allied with France, she had become deeply interested in China. It was not, however, until the twentieth century that between England and Russia any serious conflict in that region developed. In the troubles arising out of the anti-foreign movement which led to the 'Boxer Rising' and the international expedition to Pekin

[1] For further details, see Marriott: *History of Europe*, 1815–1939, pp. 395 f., and Marriott's *Modern England*, pp. 201 f.

[2] *British Documents*, I, p. 276. [3] See Marriott: *Europe*, pp. 355 f.

(1900–1) England and Russia had indeed co-operated, along with the other Powers.

§ SINO-JAPANESE WAR

Just six years earlier war had broken out between China and Japan. Japan won an easy victory and imposed upon China the Treaty of Shimonoseki, the terms of which, highly advantageous to Japan, reflected the results of the victory (April 18, 1895). But Japan then found herself confronted by the jealousy and hostility of certain European Powers. Russia was greatly perturbed by Japan's conquest of Southern Manchuria upon which she herself had always looked with envious eyes. France and Germany were in this matter temporarily in accord with Russia, and—still more remarkably—with each other. The three Powers insisted that Japan must renounce all the cessions of territory on the mainland secured to her by the treaty. England protested against this high-handed treatment of Japan but could not in isolation resist the will of the continental Powers. Russia then concluded (1896) a secret treaty of alliance with China by which she obtained the right to the free use of Port Arthur and any harbour in China, and the right to levy Chinese troops in the event of a conflict with any Asiatic state, as well as other military and economic concessions.

The sequel (1898) afforded an illustration of political cynicism almost without parallel. Hardly had Japan yielded to the solicitude of the European Powers for the integrity of China before Germany seized Kiaochow, Russia seized Port Arthur and Talienwan, while the Chinese themselves shrewdly suggested that as soon as Japan evacuated Wei-Hai-Wei (held as security for the payment of the war indemnity by China) Great Britain should take a lease of it.

§ ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE (1904)

Japan naturally nourished intense resentment against the Powers which had robbed her of the fruits of her victory over China. Resolved not to acquiesce permanently in the results of European intervention, Japan turned to England as

the one Great Power which had stood aloof from her neighbours when they inflicted injury and humiliation, in her hour of triumph, upon Japan. As Count Hayashi[1] told Lord Lansdowne, who in 1901 had succeeded Lord Salisbury at the Foreign Office, the Japanese had a strong 'sentimental dislike to Russia's retention of [Manchuria] from which they had at one time been expelled'. But of far more immediate concern to Japan than Manchuria was Korea. 'Sooner or later,' said Hayashi, 'it would have to be decided whether the country was to fall to Russia or not. The Japanese,' he added, 'would certainly fight in order to prevent it, and it must be the object of their diplomacy to isolate Russia *with which Power, if it stood alone, they were prepared to deal.*'[2]

The italicized words supply the key, from the Japanese side, to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty. Japan believed herself capable of fighting Russia single-handed, but not of facing such a combination of Powers as had torn up the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Hence the approach to England.

For England the Japanese alliance was less a matter of necessity than of convenience. She was drawn to Japan by common suspicion of the designs of Russia in the Far East, by desire to maintain the 'open door' in China, and at the same time to ease the pressure on her naval resources in the Pacific. Moreover, she had realized during the South African War that the hostility of her European neighbours rendered her isolation more dangerous than splendid.

The terms of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty carried out precisely the objects the contracting parties had in view. Repudiating any idea of aggression against either China or Korea, the new allies expressed their anxiety to maintain the *status quo* in both countries. If the interests of either Party should be threatened by a third Power, or by internal disturbance, the other Party undertook to maintain a friendly neutrality and endeavour to isolate the conflict. If, notwithstanding that endeavour, one or more other Powers

[1] Japanese Ambassador in London. For the whole matter, see *Secret Memoirs of Baron Hayashi* (London, 1915).

[2] *British Documents*, ii, 80–3.

intervened the hitherto neutral Power undertook to come in.

The significance of this unique Treaty cannot be missed, and can hardly be exaggerated. An Asiatic Power which had but recently emerged from obscurity and isolation was honoured with the alliance of the greatest of world empires which had hitherto stood out against any such alliance. Japan was assured that if she were attacked by Russia alone the British fleet would keep the ring and would intercept any possible intervention against Japan. If Germany or France came to the assistance of Russia Great Britain would come in as a belligerent.

On her part Great Britain secured a powerful naval ally in the Pacific and made a friend of a Power which her Australian Colonies were beginning to suspect. The treaty, Lord Lansdowne insisted, 'would make for the preservation of peace', and if peace were unfortunately broken would 'have the effect of restricting the area of hostilities'.

The treaty was concluded for five years, but before the expiry of that term was revised in two important particulars. It was agreed that each country should come to the assistance of the other even if attacked only by a single Power, and words were also added to make it clear that the treaty included British India. In 1911 the Treaty was again revised in order to remove any danger of England being involved in a war between America and Japan.

§ EUROPEAN REACTION TO THE TREATY

The reaction to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty naturally differed in different European capitals. In Berlin there was ill-concealed annoyance mingled with a certain amount of chagrin that Germany had been left out. Baron von Eckhardstein, for example, an experienced and detached observer, regretted that Germany had 'missed this best and last opportunity of a firm friendship with England'. Some Englishmen shared his regret that Germany had not been invited to become a party to the Treaty. But, according to

Baron Hayashi, King Edward, though at one time favourably inclined towards the inclusion of Germany in the alliance, became reluctantly convinced that 'nothing could be done with the Kaiser and his ministers'. King Edward's own ministers shared the Sovereign's conviction. Italy and Austria were cordial in their congratulations and believed that the Treaty would make for peace. So did Lord Rosebery who thought the treaty absolutely right.

France and Russia were disappointed and made no attempt to conceal the fact. M. Cambon, the astute representative of France in London, remarked to Lord Lansdowne that there was 'far too much *méfiance* in England as to Russian designs in various parts of the world'. In view of rapidly approaching events this remark was specially significant. Count Lamsdorff, the Russian Foreign Minister, declared with an air of injured innocence that he knew of no Powers which had any intention of threatening the *status quo* in the Far East. He must have been greatly startled by what occurred within two years of the signature of the treaty.

Japan had not wasted her time over a mere diplomatic gesture. Japan had never forgiven Russia, whom she justly held primarily responsible for the joint intervention of the European Powers in 1895. Steadily therefore she proceeded with plans for taking her revenge. By 1904 they were completed, and on February 5, 1904, negotiations which for six months had been proceeding between Japan and Russia were broken off; Japan required Russia to name an early and specific date for withdrawal from Manchuria. On February 8 Admiral Togo, in command of the Japanese fleet, was on his way to Port Arthur.

§ THE DOGGER BANK INCIDENT

The details of the Russo-Japanese War are outside the scope of this narrative, but one incident which might well have brought Great Britain in as a principal must be recalled.

In October 1904 the Russian Baltic fleet, under the command of Admiral Rodjestvensky, sailed from the Baltic

and on the night of the 21st found itself in the midst of a flotilla of British fishing-smacks and trawlers pursuing their 'lawful occasions' off the Dogger Bank. The Russians opened fire upon them, sank some of the boats and killed some of the fishermen. The incident naturally created intense indignation in England and there arose a clamant demand for an immediate declaration of war upon Russia. Nevertheless, the British Government, behaving with admirable restraint, allowed the incident to be referred to an international commission. It was established that the Russian admiral, perhaps haunted by the fear that Great Britain might, in the interests of her ally, impede his progress through the Channel, had fired in panic upon the British boats, which he mistook for Japanese torpedo boats. Russia was required to make a full apology to Great Britain and to compensate the fishermen.

Rodjestvensky's voyage to the Far East was not interrupted, but hardly had he reached Japanese waters before Togo fell upon the Russian fleet and annihilated it in the Straits of Tsushima. That finished the war. The triumph of Japan was complete.

The reactions of the Japanese victory were unfortunately felt wherever coloured people were in contact with whites. The effect upon India was of special moment to England. There the victory was craftily represented—not indeed untruly—as a blow to the prestige not of Russia only, but of all white peoples, and not least of the English.

§ EGYPT AND THE SUDAN

Great Britain, having emerged from isolation in order to conclude one alliance, had less hesitation about a second.

Bismarck, as we have seen, had done his best to keep England and France apart, relying largely upon the friction generated between the two Powers by the British occupation of Egypt.[1] By the autumn of 1898 long continued friction had brought the two countries to the brink of war. But in

[1] See, for more detailed narrative, Marriott: *Modern England*, pp. 93 f., 212 f.

the paradoxical way not infrequent in politics the clash between General Kitchener and Major Marchand at Fashoda instead of resulting in war (as but for the combined firmness and tact of Lord Salisbury it well might have done) actually cleared the air.[1] In reply to a question by an Italian colleague: 'What effect will Fashoda have on French relations with England?' a French diplomatist promptly replied: 'an excellent one. Once the difference about the Sudan is settled nothing stands in the way of a complete *entente* with England.'[2] So it proved. In March 1899 France concluded with England a comprehensive Agreement in regard to the Sudan and the whole Nile basin. But France would not so lightly have surrendered her interests on the Nile had she not been more vitally interested in Morocco. About Morocco, and reciprocally about Italian interests in Tripoli, France and Italy concluded Conventions in 1900 and 1902.

Important as these were—as revealing the slender basis of the Triple Alliance—they were almost insignificant as compared with the Agreement reached between England and France in 1904.

§ THE ANGLO-FRENCH ENTENTE

Russia's preoccupation in the Far East and her decisive defeat at the hands of Japan left France dangerously exposed on her eastern frontier. Great Britain, on her side, was becoming increasingly alarmed by the development of German sea-power, by the failure of her repeated attempts to reach a naval agreement with Germany, and by the menacing language of the Kaiser and von Tirpitz. Accordingly, Lord Lansdowne and M. Delcassé, greatly assisted by M. Cambon and Lord Cromer, and with the cordial approval of King Edward VII, laboured to bring about a comprehensive settlement of all outstanding differences between the two countries.

[1] The accession of Delcassé to the Quai d'Orsay in place of Gabriel Hanotaux, an ardent Anglo-phobe, also powerfully contributed to this happy issue.

[2] The conversation is reported by von Bülow.

The settlement was effected in the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904.[1] Though nothing in the nature of a military alliance was concluded, and though no provision even for common defence against a German attack was made, the Agreement opened the way to a complete understanding between the two countries on many matters to which there was no allusion in the text of the Agreement, as well as to a confidential exchange of views between the military authorities.

On one point, however (and this must justify the inclusion of the preceding paragraphs in this place), France remained anxious. France and Russia had for some ten years past been allies: between Russia and England the old estrangement still persisted.

§ THE ALGEÇIRAS CONFERENCE

The way for a better understanding had, however, been paved at the Algeçiras Conference summoned at the instance of Germany to consolidate the results of the Kaiser's visit to Tangier in 1905, to neutralize the effects of the Anglo-French Entente, and to draw Russia over from France into 'the orbit of German policy'. This object the Kaiser was persistently seeking to achieve by secret intrigues with his weak cousin, the Tsar Nicholas, during the years 1904–6.[2]

The Algeçiras Conference entirely disappointed German anticipations. 'The victor at the Conference,' said the American delegate, 'is England.' That result was due largely to the British delegate, Sir Arthur Nicolson, whose son thus aptly summarizes the effect produced: 'She [Germany] lost the confidence of Europe; what was even more important to her she lost the confidence of America. She obtained no compensations. She did not even succeed in humiliating France. . . . France and Spain, England and Russia had drawn closer together. The nakedness of the Triple Alliance had, with Italy's defection, been exposed to public gaze, and

[1] For details, see Marriott: *Modern England*, pp. 216 f., and for the whole history of the negotiations *British Documents*, Vol. II, with which cf. *German Diplomatic Documents*.

[2] S. B. Fay: *The Kaiser's Secret Negotiations with the Czar*, pp. 52–3.

above all the Anglo-French *Entente* had assumed an entirely new character.'[1]

§ THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT

Even more important, from the point of view of this narrative, was the *rapprochement* between England and Russia. During the next two years (1906–7) there was a frank interchange of views between London and St. Petersburg; and on August 31, 1907, the momentous treaty was at last concluded. The scope of the Agreement was not, of course, nearly so comprehensive as the Anglo-French Agreement, but it covered all the outstanding questions at issue between the two Powers in the region where in recent years their interests had been most evidently in conflict, in Central Asia, notably in Thibet, Afghanistan, and Persia.

In regard to Thibet the parties pledged themselves to respect its integrity, to abstain from all interference in its internal affairs, to seek no concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, mines, and other rights in Thibet; not to send representatives to Lhassa, and to deal with Thibet only through the intermediacy of its Suzerain, China.

As regards Afghanistan the conclusion reached was even more important. The Russian Government recognized Afghanistan as 'outside the sphere of Russian influence; they engaged that all their political relations with Afghanistan should be conducted through the intermediacy of Great Britain, and undertook not to send any agents into Afghanistan'. Great Britain, on its side, declared that there was no intention of changing the political status of Afghanistan; that British influence would be exercised in a pacific sense, and that no steps were contemplated, or would be encouraged, against Russia. Finally there was to be complete equality of commercial opportunity in Afghanistan for both countries.

The agreement concerning Persia was in some respects the most important of all. England and Russia engaged to respect the integrity and independence of Persia, and to keep the door open to the trade of all other nations. Persia

[1] Harold Nicolson: *Lord Carnock*, pp. 198–9.

was, however, mapped out into three spheres of influence. The Russian sphere embraced the north and centre, including the chief cities, Tabriz, Teheran, and Ispahan. The British sphere was in the south and east; it included the coastal district of the Persian Gulf and of the Indian Ocean up to the frontiers of Baluchistan. Between the two spheres of influence was interposed a neutral zone, in which both Powers were free to obtain political or commercial concessions while renouncing any such freedom in the spheres respectively assigned to them.

The details of this Agreement were sharply criticized in Great Britain in certain sections of the Press and in both Houses of Parliament. Its most powerful critic was Lord Curzon of Kedleston who, speaking with unique authority, denounced in particular the agreement about Persia. Sir Edward Grey retorted that the treaty must be judged as a whole. While not admitting that, even as regards Persia, it was unduly favourable to Russia, he pointed conclusively to the substantial concessions made by Russia to Great Britain in respect of Afghanistan.

Much more restricted in scope than the Anglo-French Agreement the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Agreement was an immense relief to our French ally, and sensibly diminished the strain which had so long diverted the energies both of England and France.

CHAPTER XV

ALLIES IN ARMS

Russian public opinion was now strongly set towards friendship with England as an essential part of a national foreign policy.

PARES

La guerre c'est l'industrie nationale de la Prusse.

MIRABEAU

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN Agreement closed a chapter. For nearly a century the relations between two great empires had been almost uniformly embarrassing and painful.

§ AUSTRIA ANNEXES BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

The Agreement came just in time. If the completion of the Triple Entente gave France unmixed satisfaction, the German allies regarded it with profound misgiving, not to say alarm. King Edward VII had achieved his 'sinister ambition': Germany and Austria-Hungary were encircled. Only at one point could they break through: the Balkans alone offered them their opportunity. They seized it with avidity. In 1908 the signatories of the Berlin Treaty were startled to learn that Austria-Hungary, in defiance of its terms, had annexed Bosnia and the Herzegovina. King Edward was profoundly perturbed. So lately as August he had paid a ceremonial visit to the Emperor Francis Joseph at Ischl, and after an intimate discussion with him and his minister, Baron Aerenthal, on the Eastern question, had bidden good-bye to his host in the full assurance that there was no cloud on the horizon. In the high-handed action of Austria-Hungary King Edward immediately perceived the certain prelude to the European war he had laboured unceasingly to avert.[1]

[1] See John Morley's *Recollections*, II, p. 227. Lord Morley was Minister in attendance upon the King at Balmoral at the moment when the news arrived.

The Kaiser was hardly less shocked. 'Material for cheap suspicions in England about the Central Powers. . . . Vienna will incur the reproach of double dealing, and not unjustly. They have deceived us abominably. . . . King Edward will now inscribe the "Defence of Treaties" on his banner. . . . A great score over us for Edward VII.' So the irate Kaiser minuted on Bülow's Dispatches of October 5th and 7th announcing the annexation.

How would Russia take it? To their Protector the Serbians naturally looked for support in resisting the outrage committed upon the Southern Slavs. But Russia had not regained her breath after her defeat by Japan, a fact fully appreciated at Potsdam and at the Ballplatz. Accordingly the Kaiser melodramatically announced that if his august ally was compelled to draw the sword, a 'knight in shining armour' would be found at his side. Russia had, therefore, no alternative but momentarily to acquiesce in the *fait accompli*. But she bitterly resented the necessity and prepared for revenge.

§ AGADIR

Events moved rapidly towards the catastrophe. The Kaiser attempted in 1909–10 to revive Bismarck's 'reinsurance' policy, and concluded with the Tsar Nicholas, a weakling in his cousin's hands, an agreement about their respective interests in Persia and Mesopotamia.

It was, however, in Morocco that the crisis of 1911 arose. On July 1st the French Government was officially informed by Germany that the *Panther*, a German gunboat, had been dispatched to Agadir on the west coast of Morocco to protect the lives and property of German subjects in that disordered country. To the thinly veiled demand from Germany for the partition of Morocco between Germany, France, and Spain, France hotly retorted that she had been recognized as the paramount power in Morocco and would assert her position as such.

Great Britain promptly intimated her determination to stand by France, and in the early autumn of 1911 the tension between Great Britain and Germany was so great that the

British Admiralty was warned that war might at any moment break out. The tension was, however, for the moment relieved by a deal between France and Germany in regard to Morocco and the Congo (November 1911), and by the attack which (September) a member of the Triple Alliance had suddenly launched in Tripoli upon one of the sleeping partners in the same firm.

§ THE BALKAN WARS

The Turco-Italian War (September 1911–October 1912) was ended abruptly in October 1912 only because the Porte found itself threatened from another quarter.

In that month the patient and persistent efforts of M. Venizelos of Greece and M. Gueshoff of Bulgaria were crowned by the conclusion of an alliance between Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro—veritably a miracle of diplomacy. War was declared by the allies upon Turkey and within the 'brief space of one month the Balkan League had', in Gueshoff's triumphant words, 'demolished the Ottoman Empire'. An armistice proposed to the belligerents by the Powers was followed by the conclusion of a Treaty signed in London on May 30, 1913.

But how were the spoils secured to the League by the Treaty to be divided among the victors? Their irreconcilable claims led to the 'War of Partition' between Greece and Serbia, subsequently joined by Roumania on the one hand, and Bulgaria on the other. Against this combination the Bulgarians could offer no effective resistance. The Turk—*quartus gaudens*—came in and recaptured Adrianople and regained Thrace. The war was ended by a Treaty signed at Bucharest on August 10th.

For the speedy conclusion of peace the Kaiser took special credit. Austria-Hungary, on the contrary, would gladly have prolonged and extended the scope of the war. The day before peace was signed she communicated to the other partners in the Triple Alliance her 'intention to take action against Serbia', and invoked their participation in a 'defensive war'. Italy bluntly refused to recognize the proposed

action of Austria-Hungary as a *casus foederis*. Berlin exercised a restraining influence upon Vienna, and the attack upon Serbia was, therefore, postponed—for eleven months. But Serbia remained a rock of offence to both the German Powers. Across the path leading to Constantinople and Salonika lay Belgrade. Constantinople was on the route of the Berlin-Bagdad Bahn. Belgrade blocked Austria's access to Salonika and the Aegean. Before Germany and Austria-Hungary could realize their respective ambitions Serbia must be annihilated.

§ THE OUTBREAK OF THE WORLD WAR

The signal for war was given by the assassination of the Archduke Franz-Ferdinand, heir to the Habsburg Empire, at Serajevo, the capital of Bosnia, on June 28, 1914. The crime was planned in Belgrade though carried out by Bosnian assassins. On July 23 Austria-Hungary presented an ultimatum to Serbia, and before negotiations actively promoted by Sir Edward Grey could reach results, Austria-Hungary occupied Belgrade.

Serbia, as in 1908, appealed to Russia. The Russian autocracy could not afford a second humiliation imposed upon her through Serbia, by Germany; and accepted the alternative of war. On the 25th of July she had declared that war could be averted only if Great Britain would take her stand firmly with Russia and France. France was bound by treaty to go to the assistance of Russia, and honoured her bond. But what of England?

§ ENGLAND AND RUSSIA

The attitude of England towards Russia had, for some years past, been undergoing, even apart from the Agreement of 1907, a considerable change. The Tories had inherited the traditional view that the advances made by Russia towards Constantinople and in Central Asia menaced British interests. Liberals had regarded the Tsardom as the incarnation of reactionary obscurantism and tyranny. But the Russia of 1914 was not quite the Russia of 1870. During

the forty years preceding the outbreak of the Great War great changes had taken place in Russia. Tardily and slowly but demonstrably Russia had been moving towards industrialization. In Russia, as elsewhere, industrialization was accompanied by social, political, and intellectual restlessness. Repression, as so often, tended to extravagance, and, as a result, many of the most brilliant apostles of revolution found themselves in prison or in exile.

§ REFORM IN RUSSIA

More promising than the revolutionary movement was that for constitutional reform, which found a focus in the *Zemstvo*. These bodies, roughly corresponding to our County Councils, had been set up by the reforming Tsar Alexander II in 1864, three years after he had completed the emancipation of the serfs. But the assassination of the good Tsar, in 1881, postponed all idea of moderate reform for a quarter of a century.

The disastrous failure of Russia in her war against Japan suddenly revealed the rotten condition of the country, and in particular the incompetence and venality of the autocracy. A fresh impetus was consequently given to the reform movement. A conference of *Zemstvo* meeting in St. Petersburg in November 1904 not only drafted a comprehensive programme of political reform, but gave a strong lead to political agitation throughout the country. Fresh fuel was added to the flame on January 2, 1905, by a clash between the troops and a procession of workmen in St. Petersburg. 'Bloody Sunday'—so known from the heavy toll of life—was followed by a series of disturbances which, in the summer of 1905, culminated in a general strike.

The Government had, meanwhile, decided to summon a represented assembly, or Duma, elected on a suffrage virtually universal and endowed with legislative powers.

No such Assembly had met in Russia since Peter the Great had dissolved the last *Zemsky sobor* in 1698. The strongest party in the Duma were the Constitutional Democrats or Cadets led by men like Struve and Miliukov, and they

demanded the appointment of a ministry responsible to the Legislature. The Tsar had, however, not the slightest intention of yielding to the demand, and after two months of acrimonious debate the first Duma was dissolved.

A second Duma met in March 1907, only to suffer the same fate (June 16). A third Duma elected on a more varied and restricted franchise was more fortunate. It met in November and settling down quietly to carry through a comprehensive programme of administrative reforms was sustained by a large measure of public support. The Duma, as Sir Bernard Pares has truly observed, 'was becoming a school in which its members learned the important lesson of mutual tolerance, of co-operation for objects on which agreements could be reached; it was acquiring the atmosphere and instincts of parliamentary life'.[1] The third Duma lived out its full time of five years and was in due course succeeded by a fourth which, largely composed of the same members, was ended only by the outbreak of the Revolution.

§ THE GREAT WAR

Before revolution broke out Russia had been at war for nearly two and a half years—August 1914–March 1917. Involved in the war by the brutal attack of Austria-Hungary, backed by Germany, upon Serbia, Russia announced partial mobilization on July 29, 1914. On the 31st Germany required Russia to countermand mobilization within twelve hours. In the absence of a compliant answer Germany itself mobilized (August 1st) and declared war on Russia.

France was as anxious as England to keep out of the war on any terms compatible with self-respect, but to France Germany made a bid for neutrality on terms so insulting as to leave no alternative but mobilization. Consequently on August 3rd Germany declared war on France. Thus the danger Bismarck had laboured so assiduously to avert was realized: Germany had to fight on two fronts.

In England ministerial counsels were much divided; but Germany's violation of Belgian neutrality finally put an end

[1] *History of Russia*, p. 445.

to hesitation. At midnight on August 3–4 Great Britain also was at war with Germany.

The course of the war must not be followed here. It must suffice to say that in the first months of the war Russia rendered invaluable service to the cause of the allies; but her troops, bravely as they fought, were badly equipped; she lacked guns and munitions, and, worst of all, her efforts in the field were paralysed, if not by downright treachery, at least by gross maladministration. Mobilizing with unexpected rapidity Russia gave a great fright to the citizens of Berlin by thrusting forward a force into East Prussia. On August 28th, however, she suffered a crushing defeat on the historic field of Tannenberg. Cleared out of East Prussia, the Russians were in turn invaded early in September by the Germans, and though they captured Lemburg, they could not hold it, and before the end of August 1915 were driven also out of Russian Poland.

§ THE DARDANELLES EXPEDITION

Meanwhile their British Allies had made an heroic effort (February 1915) to relieve the pressure on Russia by forcing the narrow Straits, and so getting supplies through to Russia by the Black Sea. Despite the gallantry of the British army, largely reinforced by territorials from home and by the 'Anzacs' from Australia and New Zealand and splendidly supported by the navy, an untenable position had to be abandoned. By a superb piece of organization the Gallipoli peninsula was completely evacuated before the end of the year. The Dardanelles expedition, brilliant in conception but faulty in execution, had ended in confessed failure.[1]

Under the Grand Duke Nicholas Russia, during the first half of 1916, won a succession of victories against the Turks in the Caucasus, thus raising a hope that she might render resistance to our own hard-pressed forces in Mesopotamia. Moreover, before the end of 1916, Russia had, apparently, overcome the worst of the difficulties which had paralysed

[1] See, for a brilliant defence of his policy, W. Churchill: *World Crisis*, Vol. II.

her military efforts in the earlier stages of the war. That is emphatically Mr. Churchill's opinion. 'Surely,' he writes, 'to no nation has Fate been more malignant than to Russia. . . . Despair and treachery usurped command at the very moment when the task was done. The long retreats were ended; the munition famine was broken; arms were pouring in; stronger, larger, better equipped armies guarded the immense front . . . victory (was) certain.'

Whether Mr. Churchill was over-optimistic or not cannot now be determined, since all hopes of victory or even partial recovery were shattered when, on March 13, 1917, the long threatened revolution at last broke out.

§ THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

The Russian Revolution is generally recognized as one of the great events of history. A whole library of books has already been devoted to its elucidation. Reference to it is, in this place, permissible only in so far as it reacted upon the relations between England and Russia.

Though the Tsardom was incomparably more oppressive than the *Ancien Régime* in France, and though Nicholas II was even less capable than Louis XVI of 'riding the whirlwind and directing the storm', popular opinion in England deepened into hostility towards the revolution in Russia far more rapidly than in the case of France. That was doubtless due mainly to the greater rapidity with which events developed in Russia. But though the pace was greater, the course followed was strikingly parallel.

On March 8, 1917, a shortage of food and fuel led to riots in St. Petersburg; on the 12th the Guards fraternized with the people; the mob seized the arsenal, distributed weapons, opened the prisons, and invaded the Winter Palace. The Duma, still in session, attempted to control the situation, and like the Constituent Assembly in France, to set up a constitutional monarchy. It was too late. On the 14th the Tsar attempted to reach his capital, but the railway lines were torn up, and on the 15th he abdicated in favour of his brother, the Grand Duke Michael, who made his acceptance

of the Crown contingent upon an invitation from a Constituent Assembly summoned for the 16th. The invitation was not given.

A Provisional Government was then set up by Prince George Lvov, President of the Union of Zemstvo, with Professor Miliukov, an able man and a great patriot, as Foreign Secretary, and Kerensky, the strongest man in this —the *Girondist* phase of the Revolution—as Minister of Justice (and later of War). The authority of the Provisional Government was, however, shared with the St. Petersburg *Soviet*, or Committee of Workers and Soldiers. As a result the Lvov Government was frustrated in its honest attempt to effect radical reform at home and at the same time to carry on the war vigorously in company with the Western allies.

The Soviet, who had already seized the banks, the post-offices, the railway stations, and other strategic points, had other views. They immediately democratized the army at the front; discarded all discipline; gave the order to cease fire, and bade their comrades fraternize with the troops of the enemy. The war-weary and half-armed peasants promptly obeyed the order, and with all speed raced home to seize the land belonging to their lords. The generals at the front were left without an army.

§ THE BOLSHEVIKS

Meanwhile, the exiled apostles of a world revolution were returning to Russia. Vladimir Ulianov (1870–1924), known to history as Nicholas Lenin, was an ardent disciple of Karl Marx, whose gospel, designed for an industrialized proletariat, he proposed to apply to a land of peasants. Lenin's return from Geneva to his native land was facilitated by the Germans, who shrewdly calculated that his influence would be exerted to the discomfiture of their enemies and would hasten their march to victory. Lenin's return to Russia in April 1917 was accompanied by that of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, and other exiles. Trotsky shortly afterwards returned from America to join them. Equally brilliant as an orator and an organizer of war, Leon Trotsky, or Bronstein, emphasized,

even more strongly than Lenin, the international aspect of Bolshevism.

It was, then, natural that the first task of these men after they attained power in November 1917, was to make peace with the Central Empires. Terms were signed at Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918. Germany was free to concentrate all her efforts upon the task of bringing France and England to their knees.

§ THE LAST STAGE OF THE WAR

The Western allies had now been reinforced by the adhesion of the United States, who on April 6, 1917, declared war on Germany. But, though the moral effect of that reinforcement began to operate from the moment President Wilson made his famous speech to Congress on April 2, 1918, the military results of American intervention were not felt until the penultimate months of the war.

How sorely the Allies needed American help was made clear when the Germans launched four terrific assaults upon the Western front between March and July 1918. Invested at last with the supreme command of the Allied forces, Foch held his fire with superb self-restraint, and on July 15 permitted the Germans for the second time to cross the Marne. On the 18th he let loose his reserves, and the Germans were driven back with immense slaughter.

On August 8 the British counter-offensive began, and ceased only when on November 11 the Germans made an unconditional surrender and agreed to the terms of an armistice.

The Great War was ended.

CHAPTER XVI

THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS ENGLAND AND THE U.S.S.R.

Failing to conquer Germany for the Communists, Zinoviev and the men of his outlook had hoped at least to conquer Britain for social revolution through the trade unions. But the failure of the General Strike of 1926 proved that the British unions would never be revolutionary in the Marxist sense.

FRANZ BORKENAU

THE ONLY possible basis for enduring friendship between the two great empires whose interests have in the past so frequently collided is full and frank recognition of facts. To help towards such recognition is the purpose of this book.

Never was mutual understanding more difficult than in the years immediately after the Great War. Great Britain and Russia were poles asunder. Everything in the past had tended to keep them apart. Their political evolution had been widely different. England had attained to national unity at an exceptionally early period. A powerful monarchy effectually frustrated the disintegrating forces of feudalism. The feudal system, which in England was never more than half-developed, had given place, in the course of long years, to parliamentary government under a monarchy essentially constitutional. In Russia physics combined with politics to retard the realization of national unity and the development of representative institutions. The peoples destined to form, under the Tsarist autocracy, the Russian nation were for many centuries migratory.

'Debarred,' writes Kluvchevsky, 'from close settlement by the geographical features of the country, the Eastern Slavs were forced for centuries to maintain a nomad life, as well as to engage in ceaseless warfare with their neighbours. It was this peculiar conjunction of circumstances which caused the history of Russia to become the history of a country for ever undergoing colonization—a movement continued up to

and given fresh impetus by the emancipation of the serfs and remaining in progress to the present day.'[1] The result of this migratory habit was that the evolution of anything like a 'constitution' in the English sense, was inevitably slow. There had been, indeed, in the days before the accession of Peter the Great, an embryonic attempt to set up a national Assembly, but from the time of Peter down to the reign of Nicholas II the energy of the Russian people was diverted into other channels. Progress towards Constantinople was, from 1739 to 1833, uninterrupted, and Russian influence over Central Asia was rapidly extended. In both directions Russia came into contact with Great Britain, with results chronicled in preceding chapters.

§ CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

That Russia achieved a great position in the world under the rule of the Tsars is incontestable. But as a form of government autocracy has one fatal defect: it is tolerable only so long as it is efficient. The inefficiency of the Bourbon monarchy after the death of Louis XIV laid the train for the outbreak of revolution of 1789. In Russia Nicholas II made, at the eleventh hour, some effort to introduce constitutional reform. But the prestige of the Tsardom had been fatally undermined by the disastrous defeat of Russia at the hands of Japan; nor is constitutional reform, even if honestly initiated by the ruling power, a thing to be accomplished at a single stroke or even in a decade. As a fact, Nicholas II never had the slightest intention of conceding 'parliamentary government' as understood in England. Not for a moment was he prepared to allow the Duma to control the Executive. That had been the real point at issue (as Pym so clearly perceived) between Charles I and the Long Parliament in England. The control of the Executive represents the crucial differentia between a parliamentary and an autocratic régime. In a sense Nicholas was right in refusing the demand made by the Duma. Russia was not ready for the English parliamentary system. Only by prolonged discipline can a nation

[1] *History of Russia* (trs. Hogarth), I, p. 2.

prepare itself for complete self-government. That, indeed, is the fatal mistake made by so many reformers in England and elsewhere. They imagine that 'parliamentary government' is a suitable article for export. Cavour made this mistake—to the undoing of Italy, for which in other directions he had done so much. Those who framed the Weimar Constitution for republican Germany shared Cavour's error. You cannot import the finished article. Many are the presuppositions, and long the experience, needed for the successful working of 'responsible' government. If the history of the British Overseas Dominions appears to contradict this generalization it is because British colonists carried to their new homes the long traditions of free government. Hamilton and his colleagues in the Philadelphia Convention wisely refused to adapt the English system to conditions that were not precisely parallel. The American Constitution is consequently not a copy but an original, a native product, which has abundantly justified the prescience of its 'fathers'.

The members of the Russian Dumas were less prudent. They imagined that at a single stroke they could establish a parliamentary régime. The result was that constitutional reform served only, together, of course, with other contributory causes, to precipitate revolution.

§ THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION

The Revolution, initiated in March, developed with whirlwind rapidity. From the outset it was really dominated not by the Duma, nor by the 'bourgeois intellectuals' who for a brief space attempted, under this leader or that, to establish themselves in power, but by the All-Russian Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. Although the Soviets ultimately formed the backbone of the Bolshevik party, it was not until November that the Bolsheviks definitely established themselves in power. Thenceforward they dominated the revolutionary movement.

The Government of the dominant party was vested in the Council of Peoples' Commissars, of which Lenin became President, while among the ten 'Commissars' who acted as

his ministers or colleagues, the most prominent were Rykov (Internal Affairs), Trotsky (Foreign Affairs), and I. V. Djugashvili, the Georgian peasant, now known to the world as Stalin, who became 'President for Nationality Affairs'.

The first business of the Bolshevik Government was to make peace with Germany; the second was to establish their authority against a counter-revolutionary movement at home.

§ THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION

It was the second task that brought them into conflict with the Western allies. In the anti-Bolshevik movement three phases must be distinguished. The first was marked by a curious phenomenon, the exploits of a small force of Czechoslovaks, former war prisoners and deserters from the Austro-Hungarian army. These men were, as Chamberlin graphically puts it, 'citizens of a State which in 1918 still existed only in the imagination of its nationalist leaders'.[1] The Czech phase of Counter-revolution was, however, practically over before the end of 1918. The second phase of the Counter-revolution was strictly native, marked by the formation of a volunteer army, which was organized, directly after the Bolshevik Revolution, by General Alexseev and General Kornilov, both of whom had been Commanders-in-chief of the Tsar's army. They were joined by Admiral Kolchak and a number of Generals, the most prominent of them being General Denikin and Baron Peter Wrangel, together with a force of some 3,000 to 4,000 men. Of this force many had been officers in the Tsar's army, and all were of high fighting quality, though most inadequately supplied with guns and ammunition. Kornilov was unfortunately killed by a shell during an unsuccessful attempt to storm Ekaterinodar (April 13, 1918). On June 8 an anti-Bolshevik Government was set up at Omsk, in Siberia. In July the Czech contingent entered Ekaterinburg, but too late to save the lives of the Tsar Nicholas and his family, who had been brought back to that town by the Bolsheviks from Siberia,

[1] The details of the Counter-revolution may be read in Chamberlin: *The Russian Revolution*, I, ch. cxvii, and II, ch. cxx (for the Czech phase).

whither they had been sent for safety by Kerensky. On July 16 Nicholas and his wife and children were butchered in a cellar in Ekaterinburg, and on the 17th all the rest of the Romanovs within reach were thrown down a mine.

§ ENGLAND AND THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION

The brutal murder of the Romanovs intensified the horror with which the Bolshevik Revolution was regarded by the majority of Englishmen. The first—or 'constitutional'—phase of the revolution had, on the contrary, been cordially welcomed by all parties in this country. But the hope that the revolution might run an orderly course quickly faded. 'This evil in the heart of Europe must be extirpated from that centre, or no part of the circumference can be free from the mischief which radiates from it.' So Burke had advocated intervention against the Revolution in France. Not a few Englishmen were inclined to apply his warning to the situation as it developed in Russia. The French Government was even more strongly opposed than the British Government to the Bolshevik régime. As early as December 1917 an Anglo-French Convention had been concluded to define their respective spheres of military operations in Russia. The British 'zone of influence' was to consist of the Cossack regions, the territory of the Caucasus, Armenia, Georgia, and Kurdistan, and the French zone of Bessarabia, Ukraine, and the Crimea. For this arrangement there was, as Chamberlin points out, an economic justification: British investors were more particularly interested in the Caucasian oil-fields, the French in the coal and iron mines of Ukraine. This Convention was confirmed immediately after the signature of the Armistice (November 13, 1918).

Meanwhile, an Allied force had (August 2) occupied Archangel, and, supported by the British Navy, had organized an anti-Bolshevik Government for North Russia. In this movement Great Britain played the leading part: out of 23,000 Allied troops (excluding 11,770 Russians), the British numbered (March 1919) no fewer than 13,000.

§ KOLCHAK

General Alexseev had died on October 8, and in November Admiral Alexander Kolchak was, after a successful *coup d'état*, recognized as Supreme Ruler by the other scattered centres of anti-Bolshevik resistance, and by the several leaders of White armies, by General Denikin in South Russia, General Miller in Archangel, and General Yudenich in the North-west. But Kolchak, though a disinterested and courageous patriot, had no military experience or capacity; he and his government were never officially recognized by the Allies, and after the capture of his capital, Omsk, by the Red army (November 14, 1919), his position became hopeless. In January 1920 he resigned in favour of Denikin. In the same month the Czechs, tired of their Russian adventure, and horrified by the excesses of the White terrorists, which unhappily rivalled the atrocities of the Reds, practically surrendered the Admiral to his enemies, by whom he was imprisoned and on February 7, 1920, was shot. He met his fate with the gallantry of a sailor.

Kolchak's failure made the position of the British in the north valueless to the combined effort, and to the satisfaction of our soldiers and sailors, Archangel was evacuated in September and Murmansk in October 1919. About the same time the small British force in Siberia, though gallantly led by General Sir A. Knox and Colonel John Ward, the stalwart Labour M.P. for Stoke-on-Trent, was withdrawn from Siberia. But the help given by Great Britain in that region must not be underrated. Mr. Churchill reckoned that during 1919 we had sent to Kolchak 100,000 tons of arms, ammunition, equipment, and clothing. The British casualties in the North Russian area of the war were officially stated as 983, including 327 killed.

The Japanese had from the first seen in the Bolshevik Revolution an opportunity for territorial acquisition. For two years they continued to hold Vladivostock and the adjacent country on the Siberian coast, but at last they were reluctantly obliged to abandon it, though it was not until

the end of October 1922 that they finally cleared out of Siberia, leaving the Soviet Union in triumphant possession.

A third area of British intervention, though on an even smaller scale, was in the neighbourhood of Petrograd. General Yudenich had recruited a White army in North-western Russia, and with the help of a small British force under General Marsh, made two attempts in the course of 1919 to capture Petrograd. The second was made in October, supported by a flotilla of British motor-boats which broke into Kronstadt harbour and inflicted some damage upon it. The bold advance of Yudenich on Petrograd so much alarmed the Soviet Government that Trotsky himself flew to its defence. Yudenich was within measurable distance of success, but Trotsky's presence turned the scale against him; his army was driven into Esthonia, where it was disarmed, interned, and soon afterwards disbanded.

§ GREAT BRITAIN AND DENIKIN

It was in the south that Great Britain and France intervened to the greatest, though still imperfect, effect. By the occupation, in the late autumn of 1918, of Batoum on the Black Sea, and Baku, the centre of great oil-fields on the Caspian, the British secured a firm grip upon Trans-Caucasia, and penetrated as far south as Erivan. But although General Denikin, who commanded the White armies in the south, was the ablest of their generals and a disinterested patriot, and although we sent him all the assistance in our power, he could not prevail against the military skill of Trotsky and the enthusiasm of the Red armies. Still less could we maintain the advantageous position we had at first achieved. The British troops withdrew from Baku and Tiflis in the summer of 1919, and a year later from Batoum, 'the last British stronghold in the Caucasus'. Thus ended British intervention in the Counter-revolution. Yet Mr. Churchill refers, and with justifiable pride, to the help we gave to Denikin: 'A quarter million rifles, two hundred guns, thirty tanks, and large masses of munitions and equipment were sent through the Dardanelles and the Black Sea to the port

of Novorossisk; and several hundred British officers and non-commissioned officers, as advisers, instructors, storekeepers and even a few aviators furthered the organization of his armies.'[1] In April 1920 Denikin resigned the command of the White armies in favour of Baron Peter Wrangel, and went into exile abroad.

Wrangel put up a good fight, but he was hopelessly outnumbered by the Red army opposed to him; and his evacuation of the Crimea (November 1920), into which he had been compelled to retreat, and the dispersion of his army and its followers, marked the end of the civil war in Russia.

§ DEFEAT OF THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION

The final defeat of the Counter-revolution was inevitable, nor do the causes of it require any further analysis. Success could have been achieved only if Great Britain, France, the United States, and Japan had thrown their whole weight into the struggle against Bolshevism. None of them was prepared to do so. England and France were war-weary, and in both countries the hands of the Government were, as will be seen, tied by the attitude of certain sections of society which in both countries sympathized with the aims, if not with the methods, of the Bolsheviks. The United States, more nearly unanimous in detestation of Bolshevism than either of its allies, was insufficiently interested in the Counter-revolution to give it effective support. Japan was interested, but only locally and selfishly. The 'obvious waverings and inconsistencies of the Allied policy in relation to Russia are', says Chamberlin, who quotes it, vividly summarized and satirized by Churchill in the following passage: 'Were they [the Allies] at war with Soviet Russia? Certainly not; but they shot Soviet Russians at sight. They armed the enemies of the Soviet Government. They blockaded its ports and sank its battleships. They earnestly desired and schemed its downfall. But war—shocking! Interference—shame! It was, they repeated, a matter of

[1] *The World Crisis; The Aftermath*, pp. 246, 250, quoted by Chamberlin, to whose monumental work this chapter owes much.

indifference to them how Russians settled their own internal affairs.'[1]

Apart from this, two reasons for the success of the Red armies were conclusive. One was the skill and courage and persistence of Trotsky. The other was the failure of the 'Whites' to gain any support from the peasants, who constituted four-fifths of the Russian people. The peasants did not love the Bolsheviks, but still less did they love the aristocrats and landlords who filled the thin ranks of the White armies. The success of the Whites would have endangered the possession of the land by the peasants. That was the root cause of the success of the 'Reds'.

§ PRINKIPO

It is interesting, though futile, to speculate what might have happened in regard to British intervention in Russia had Mr. Winston Churchill, instead of Mr. Lloyd George, been in control of British policy. That the latter had any sympathy with Bolshevism is not suggested; but that he was less enamoured than Mr. Churchill of intervention in Russia is undeniable. And that fact gives a certain if transitory significance to an episode which evoked at the time a good deal of satirical comment on the action of Mr. Lloyd George. In January 1919 the British Premier concurred with President Wilson in an invitation to all the Russian groups to meet in conference representatives of the Allied Powers on the island of Prinkipo, off Constantinople.

The 'Reds' not only accepted the invitation, but offered important concessions in regard to the debts due to the nationals of the Allied Powers. The Whites, on the contrary, declined to 'confer on an equal basis with traitors, murderers, and robbers'. The proposal, amazingly fantastic in conception, was consequently abandoned.

§ GREAT BRITAIN, RUSSIA, AND POLAND

Before closing our account of the Counter-revolution it remains to refer to the action of Poland and to

[1] Op cit., p. 325.

its repercussion upon English sympathizers with Soviet Russia.

The Poles, somewhat elated, maybe, by the practical sympathy extended to them by the Western allies, and by the recovery of their independence, rejected two offers of peace made them by Soviet Russia. Preferring to take advantage of the civil war in Russia, in order to 'rectify' their eastern frontier, they launched an offensive against Russia in April 1920, and on May 6 reached Kiev. There the tide turned against them; they were driven back in confusion; Poland was in turn invaded by a 'Red' army; Russian patrols reached the suburbs of Warsaw; Warsaw itself was in imminent danger of capture. The Bolsheviks, though innocent of any wish to annex Polish territory, were anxious in Lenin's words, to 'break the crust of Polish bourgeois resistance with the bayonets of the Red army'. To establish a communist régime in a neighbouring State was, in fine, their object.

The Governments of France and England would gladly have responded to the Polish appeals for help. But in both countries the 'Hands off Russia' movement was in full swing among influential sections of the manual workers. In England some of the employees of the Great Northern Railway refused to handle packages containing munitions for Poland. They pleaded that their Trade Union had 'decided that in the interests of the workers of Europe, effective steps must be taken to compel the capitalists of Europe to cease their attacks on the Soviet of Russia'. The incident, thanks to the firm action of the Great Northern directors, and the equally firm attitude of Mr. Lloyd George, quickly ended in the surrender of the employees.

Meanwhile, Warsaw was saved at the eleventh hour by the military genius of Marshal Pilsudski, with the invaluable assistance of General Weygand, who as Chief of Staff had served Foch brilliantly, and had been sent to Warsaw with a staff of French officers. The Russians were driven back in headlong flight from the very gates of Warsaw, and in March

1921 a Peace Treaty was signed at Riga which restored to Poland the frontier of 1793.

The failure of Soviet Russia to establish communism in Poland did not, however, discourage their efforts to spread the gospel in the Western democracies, not least in the country which they regarded as the 'bulwark of capitalism'.

CHAPTER XVII

ENGLISH DEMOCRACY AND RUSSIAN DICTATORSHIP

The Russian worker rising at the head of all the democratic elements will overthrow absolutism and lead the Russian proletariat (together with the proletariat of all other countries) along the direct road of open political struggle to the victorious communist Revolution.

LENIN

There is no such political democracy in Russia as there is (in England), nor any such freedom for the expression of opinion. . . . But why should Russia have to go our way any more than we have to go hers? There is no future for Anglo-Russian friendship without mutual respect for each other's independence.

SIR BERNARD PARES

THE INTERVENTION of England in the Russian Civil War, though it failed to effect its purpose, was not calculated to promote good relations between the two countries. Equally mischievous in its effects was Russian interference in English domestic politics. Between 1919 and 1926 Russian propaganda was, however, carried on in England, as elsewhere, with remarkable skill and persistence.

§ THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

The conversion of the whole world to communism was an essential article of the Marxian creed. Lenin's aspirations were embodied in the passage from his *Who are the Friends of the People?* prefixed to this chapter. Trotsky was even more zealous in preaching the gospel according to Karl Marx. 'No military victory can save the inheritance of the October revolution if imperialism holds out in the rest of the world. . . . The toilers have not the slightest interest in defending existing (national) boundaries. . . . The task of the European proletariat is . . . a Socialist United States of Europe.' So Trotsky wrote in his *The Revolution Betrayed*

(1935). The whole of that book consists, indeed, of a fierce tirade against the idea of the 'isolated socialist state', a bitter indictment of the achievements of Soviet Russia, and of the 'Thermidorians' who were responsible for 'Soviet Bonapartism'.

Trotsky was, then, in complete accord with the doctrines embodied in the *Third International*, or *Comintern*, which was founded in March 1919 under the immediate leadership of his friend Zinoviev. This man, whose name is inseparably connected with the disaster to the political fortunes of the British Labour Party in October 1924, was one of Lenin's most intimate and trusted lieutenants, and an active agent in the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917. The avowed object of the *Comintern* was 'to accelerate the development of events towards world-revolution', and to do this by unceasing propaganda and by far-reaching subterranean organization.

§ POST-WAR ENGLAND

There were certain patches of soil in England upon which the seeds of communism could with some hope of a harvest be sown. But the patches were few and scattered, nor was the soil really fertile. Much more serious was the epidemic of what Mr. Lloyd George described in one of his picturesque phrases as 'the fever of anaemia'. Pointing out that the war had drained the strength of every country engaged in it in a degree hardly realized at the time, that all the nations, including our own, had 'bled at every vein', he attributed the prevailing restlessness to the 'fever of anaemia', and earnestly besought his own countrymen not to 'demobilize the spirit of patriotism' in their own land.[1] The response to his appeal was disappointing. All classes were infected by the epidemic, and the manual workers in particular exhibited signs of restlessness which went perilously near to 'demobilizing the spirit of patriotism'.

Many of the symptoms arose merely from temporary irritation caused by apparent favouritism in the procedure

[1] Speech in House of Commons, July 3, 1919. *Hansard*, Vol. 117, p. 1231.

for demobilization, from dissatisfaction about war gratuities and pensions, by the failure of the Government to provide, on the instant, 'homes fit for heroes', and so forth. But among a certain section of the wage-earners intervention in Russia was, in addition, exceedingly unpopular: the mere mention of the word 'Bolsheviks' was enough to provoke, in public meetings and even in the House of Commons, howls of execration against 'bourgeois prejudice' and 'capitalist greed'.

Sympathy with the 'nationalists' in the civil war raging in Ireland added fuel to the flames, and in March 1919 the situation in England had become grave. There were mutinous riots among the troops retained in camps at home and abroad. The Metropolitan Police were restless and angered by the firm refusal of the Government to recognize their 'union'.

§ THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

The most serious threat to the Government, or rather to the State, came from the 'Triple Alliance', formed between the National Union of Railwaymen, the Miners' Federation, and the National Transport Workers' Federation. this alliance, originally negotiated in 1913, was ratified in 1915, and played the leading part in the agitation which persisted almost continuously from 1919 to 1926.

Behind this agitation there was a general sense of social disintegration and industrial dislocation. The economic momentum derived from war expenditure lasted for about two years after the conclusion of the Armistice. But the sense of prosperity diffused by large payments out of capital could not last. Before the end of 1920 there were ominous signs that the seed carelessly sown in the war years was due to yield an abundant crop of troubles: exports began to shrink; the demand for industrial capital slackened; agricultural prices fell sharply. Tenants who had purchased their farms at high prices during the post-war boom were hard hit. Labour became a drug in the market; Labour Exchanges were thronged with men unable to find work.

Of the many social and economic problems confronting

statesmen in the inter-war years, the most obstinate was that of unemployment. France deemed herself entitled to a large share of the reparations due from Germany on the ground that she had to restore her regions devastated by Germany. No one contested the claim. But the payment of reparations in kind—notably in coal—accentuated the problem of unemployment in Great Britain, who, like France, had her devastated areas. Thus was the soil prepared for the seed of agitation.

§ RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA

The seed was plentifully supplied from Moscow; whether it was supplied by the Government of the U.S.S.R. or by the Comintern is immaterial. The two bodies were not, of course, identical; and the precise relation between them has been repeatedly disputed; but there can be no doubt that Professor Max Laserson, formerly of St. Petersburg University, expresses the exact truth when he writes: 'Throughout . . . [the last twenty-five years] the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has played a leading role in the political life of the Soviet State. . . . Throughout the period the party has been the matrix of the most important policy-making organs of the State, most powerful of which is the Party's Political Bureau. The constitution of 1936 (Articles 126 and 141) declares that the Communist Party is "the guiding core of all organizations of the working people" and the only party of the country which has the right to nominate candidates to the State bodies, to public organizations and societies (central and local).'[1]

The aim of the Communist International was defined as follows: 'to organize the armed struggle for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie and the establishment of an international Soviet Republic as a transition to the complete abolition of the capitalist State'. To promote this object was Lenin's policy no less than Trotsky's or Zinoviev's. 'We live,' said Lenin, 'not in a State but in a system of States and the existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with Imperialist States for an extended period is unthinkable.'

[1] *International Conciliation*, No. 386 (January 1943), pp. 5, 6.

Zinoviev had no apprehension that the period would be 'extended'. 'Old Europe,' he triumphantly announced in 1919, 'is dashing at mad speed towards the proletarian revolution. . . . In a year the whole of Europe will be Communist.'

As regards England he was entirely mistaken. The Communist Party in England has never been other than negligible. None the less the propaganda of the Comintern had unquestionably a considerable effect upon the attitude of certain sections of 'Labour' in this country in the difficult years between 1919 and 1926.

In 1920 Mr. J. H. Thomas, Secretary of the N.U.R., headed a deputation from his Union to the Prime Minister in the hope of making terms with the Government in regard to the action of the Irish railwaymen. He candidly admitted that 'to support these men meant a declaration of war on the Government'. Mr. Lloyd George's retort was swift and effective: 'Not on the Government but on Government, which is a much more serious thing.' That was the real issue: Was Great Britain to remain a Parliamentary Democracy, or to become a Soviet Republic.' Was 'direct action' on the part of a section of wage-earners to be tolerated? Was Parliament to govern, or was the Triple Alliance to dictate the policy of the country?

§ BLACK FRIDAY

The dispute reached a crisis in April 1921 when the Triple Alliance threatened to call a General Strike to take effect on Friday, April 15, in support of certain claims made by the miners upon the Government whose control of the mines, assumed during the war, had ended on the preceding 31st of March. The moment was undeniably critical. But as a result of a certain admission made at a meeting of private members of the House of Commons[1] by the Secretary of the Miners' Federation a breach was created in the ranks of the Triple allies, and at the eleventh hour on 'Black Friday' the sympathetic strike was called off.

[1] At this meeting the present writer presided.

The hour of revolution was, however, merely postponed. Despite a subsidy of £10,000,000 paid (ultimately increased to £24,000,000) by the State to the miners to make up wages after the withdrawal of control; despite a payment of £51,000,000 to the railways (a large part of which had been paid in wages), after State control was relinquished a General Strike took place in May 1926.

§ ENGLISH SOCIALISTS AND THE U.S.S.R.

Meanwhile, commercial relations had been reopened between the U.S.S.R. and 'capitalist' countries In 1921 England concluded a commercial treaty with the Soviet Union, and trade missions were exchanged. The lead of England was followed in 1922 by Norway and Germany and later by other European countries. In 1924 England went further. In January of that year a Socialist Ministry had for the first time come into office, though it did not command a majority in the House of Commons. Existing from the outset on Liberal sufferance it survived only for nine months.

In that time, however, it made an effort to establish friendly relations with Russia. Though British socialists kept British Communists at arm's length, the new Government promptly recognized the U.S.S. Republics as the 'de jure rulers of those parts of the old Russian Empire which acknowledge their authority', though they uttered a warning that 'genuinely friendly relations cannot be said to be completely established so long as either party has reason to suspect the other of carrying on propaganda against its interests and directed against its institutions'. In reply the Russian Government, recalling the fact that 'friendly co-operation' between the two peoples 'remained one of the first cares of the U.S.S.R.', expressed its full concurrence in the view that to that co-operation 'mutual confidence and non-interference in internal affairs remain indispensable conditions'.

Nevertheless, it was its relations with Russia that so quickly brought the MacDonald Government to grief. Russia was anxious to obtain a large loan from England in

return for which it might be willing to recognize (though not to pay) the debt of £1,000,000,000 owing to the British Government and British nationals. A further loan was intensely unpopular in England, but it was on another issue —the handling of the prosecution against a prominent British Communist—that a coalition of Liberals and Conservatives defeated the Socialist Ministry in the House of Commons.

Mr. MacDonald at once appealed to the country and sustained a crushing defeat. His defeat was largely due to the projected loan, but even more directly to the publication, on the eve of the poll, by the Foreign Office, of which Mr. MacDonald himself was the head, of a protest against a letter alleged to have been written by Zinoviev, the head of the Comintern, to the British Communist Party. The letter instructed English 'comrades' 'to work for the violent overthrow of existing institutions in England and for the suborning of His Majesty's Forces as a means to that end'. There is no real reason to doubt that the Zinoviev letter was genuine; but genuine or not it was 'in common form' and decided the fate of the MacDonald Ministry.

§ THE GENERAL STRIKE

The Socialists attempted to avenge their defeat at the polls by organizing in May 1926 a General Strike. Warned by the activities of the Triple Alliance Parliament had passed in 1920 an Act designed to 'make exceptional provision for the protection of the community in cases of emergency'. The powers taken under the Act were not left to rust. The Government had quietly made preparations to meet an emergency. When in May 1926 the crisis came the plans made by the Government worked like clockwork. The country instantaneously and instinctively realized that the General Strike was not, as its apologists maintained, an industrial dispute, but a direct challenge not merely to the Government or to the State, but to the community. The community won a memorable victory. But it was a victory won to a large extent without tears. Despite a few awkward incidents, the struggle was conducted, in the main, on both

sides, with good humour. The wise restraint of Parliament, and in particular of Mr. Baldwin, the Prime Minister, averted recriminations after the fight was won. Many disagreeable consequences that might have followed on a phenomenon so grave, so un-English and unprecedented were fortunately averted. The collapse of the General Strike cleared the air, The relations between manual labour and the other sections of the community notably improved, and have happily been maintained.

No good purpose can, however, be served by failure to recognize how much of the trouble in England since the war had been caused by the subversive but subterranean activities of the Russian Communist International. They are thus succinctly summarized by Sir Bernard Pares: 'Kamenev was active on our Black Friday. Tomsky had a hand in our General Strike. Zinoviev's chief job was to work for revolution in England.'

§ N.E.P.

Most significant changes had, meanwhile, taken place in Russia itself.

Lenin's first experiment—a cross between State Socialism and Syndicalism—had ended in disaster. The output of industry had fallen by nearly 90 per cent; over 800,000 peasants and 13,000 landowners had, between 1917 and 1921, paid with their lives for disobedience to the orders of Moscow; but coercion had failed to produce food for the towns; millions of people perished from famine; strikes occurred in half the factories; the fleet mutinied.

Lenin proved his greatness by facing the facts, by reversing his policy and by initiating in 1921 a new economic policy (N.E.P.). The results were eminently satisfactory. But in 1922 Lenin was incapacitated by a stroke and in 1924 he died.

§ STALIN *v.* THE COMINTERN

On Lenin's death the Government was taken over by a triumvirate consisting of Stalin, Kamenev, and Zinoviev. But a struggle for ascendancy soon broke out between Stalin

and his two colleagues. Stalin won hands down and rapidly established a virtual dictatorship. Kamenev, and Zinoviev were relegated to minor offices; later on they were imprisoned; and finally in 1936, together with fourteen other members of the 'opposition', they were charged with conspiring against the life of Stalin and were executed. The apostles of world revolution were expelled from the Communist Party in 1927, and those who did not or could not escape from the country paid for their opposition to Stalin with their lives. Trotsky himself was deported from Russia in 1929 and died in 1940 in Mexico. The General Congress of 1928 had met to condemn Trotsky and to repudiate Trotsky's policy of world revolution. The Communist International having held only two General Congresses since Lenin's death in 1924 was itself, on May 22, 1943, dissolved, to the immense satisfaction of the two great Anglo-Saxon democracies, who had by then become the firm allies of Russia.

§ THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND THE WAR

The New Economic Policy initiated by Lenin in 1921 was carried further by Stalin who, in 1928, launched his first Five-Year Plan, the execution of which was officially stated to be so far ahead of the schedule in 1931 that a Second Five-Year Plan was organized for 1933–8.

The results of the new policy and the plans based on it can be appreciated only if studied in detail in specialized works devoted to the subject. Nor are they pertinent to the present inquiry except in so far as they indicate, if not a change of heart, at least such a revolution in methods as has encouraged the 'capitalist' countries to enter into more friendly relations and ultimately into close alliance, with Russia.

More than that. The industrial revolution, carried through with astounding rapidity within a decade, has enabled Russia to equip herself for war waged on a colossal scale against the greatest military Power in the world. It would seem also to have inspired the Russian workers with a

spirit which has found noble expression in the armies on the fronts.

Reference to the results of the new policy and the plans must, however, be bare and brief. Of those results the most contradictory estimates have been formed and published. Nor would any attempt to reconcile them be pertinent to my immediate purpose. But a few conclusions can be summarily stated without much fear of contradiction. (i) Mr. Joseph Davies's objective record *Mission to Moscow*[1] has made it clear that the Russia of the Bolshevik revolution no longer exists, that large concessions to human nature have been found necessary in order to make the communistic experiment economically successful. Nevertheless (ii) Communism, though modified in practice, has not in theory been abandoned, and upon the theory society is still based. (iii) Yet Mr. Hindus, writing with intimate knowledge, states that while the ownership of land, industrial capital, mines, factories, transport, in fact 'all property that ministers to communal needs' is vested in the State, homes, furnishings, clothes, etc., 'may be privately owned'. The Government, he adds, is encouraging factory workers to build and own their houses. More than that: citizens are encouraged to save money and deposit it in banks or invest it in Government bonds, receiving 3 or 4 per cent thereon. The same authority says that 'in January 1941 there were sixteen million savings accounts in Russia with an aggregate of seven billion roubles to their credit'.[2] There is, then (iv) some ground for Mr. Davies's conclusion that the phenomenal success of the 'plans', which he not only recognizes but emphasizes, is due not to the Government operation of industry but in spite of it.[3] It is, however, of the essence of the system (v) that production should be determined by the needs, scientifically ascertained and formulated by the State Planning Commission, of the consumer. (vi) Economy and efficiency in production are secured by a provision that, if a given enterprise can execute its job to show a profit in excess of the prescribed

[1] U.S.A. Ambassador to Russia, 1935–8.

[2] *Russia Fights On*, pp. 82, 84.

[3] *Mission*, p. 252.

profit, some 40 per cent of this 'excess profit' may be used for payment of a commission to the staff or for the improvement of working conditions or the homes of the employees. (vii) Inequalities of income derived from property are still theoretically impossible, but incomes obtained by work are differentiated according to the skill and industry of the workman. This point Mr. Maurice Dobbs in his valuable studies on *Soviet Planning and Labour in Peace and War* is at pains to emphasize. 'The ordinary economic incentives associated with work and wages still play an important role. . . . For this monetary incentive to have full force, it is not sufficient that money wages should be paid out in proportion to the work done by various workers: it is necessary that wage- and salary-earners should (within limits) have free disposal of this income—be free to spend it as they choose in various directions or to vary the amount they spend and save. . . . By the later '30's something approaching three-quarters of all workers were being paid according to some variation of [the system of payment by results]. . . . The average earnings of higher paid grades may well be some five or six times that of the lowest grade. . . . Engineers and technicians with specialist qualifications are paid at special rates of remuneration.'[1]

§ THE STAKHANOV MOVEMENT

This inequality of earnings is largely due to the official encouragement of the *Stakhanov* movement. Stakhanov—a miner—was detected in the 'crime' of having accomplished five times as much as was prescribed to him. Stalin not only overrode the censure of the miner's immediate superiors but extended the 'Stakhanov principle' to the whole country with the result that every factory began to number Stakhanov men among its employees. The result was that not only did the Stakhanovites treble or even quadruple their earnings in the course of a few months, but that the *per capita* output all round was substantially increased. Nevertheless, Stalin himself lately emphasized the fact that while aggregate

[1] pp. 48, 82, 93–4.

production in certain important industries greatly exceeded that in the most advanced countries, the output per head in the U.S.S.R. had still failed to catch up with Great Britain, the U.S.A., or Germany.[1] As to the astounding increases in aggregate production, especially in iron and steel, oil, coal, machine tools, etc., indeed in all industries essential to modern warfare, there can be no question.

In view, however, of the truly marvellous achievements of the Russian forces (ground and aerial alike) in the present war there remains to be noticed another feature of Soviet industry more significant than any other. The drive for greater and greater aggregate production has been relentless. The incentives offered to higher individual productivity have driven nails into the coffin of Communism. But the outstanding feature in Russian industry to-day is the stress laid upon the encouragement of individual initiative and a capacity for improvisation, and this capacity, encouraged in the factory, is at the root of the success achieved by the armies in the field. From the days of the Napoleonic invasion the guerrilla type of fighting has ever been most popular—almost instinctive—with private soldiers in Russia and is now encouraged by their officers. 'The commander instructs his men to the best of his ability. But if his way does not succeed we expect our men to find their own way.'[2] How well this method works recent experience has proved.

The influence of Stalin's policy in bringing capitalist England and communist Russia to a better understanding and later into close co-operation, cannot easily be exaggerated. His success must justify the space devoted to that policy in preceding paragraphs. The imperative need for understanding and co-operation the next chapter will conclusively demonstrate.

[1] See, for example, Hewlett Johnson: *The Socialist Sixth of the World*, pp. 171–216.

[2] Speech to Eighteenth Congress of the Party.

CHAPTER XVIII

RUSSIA AND ENGLAND, 1917–39

For twenty-five years the two countries (Britain and Russia) have been divided by a fog of mutual ignorance and prejudice, deepened rather than illuminated on the British side by a certain amount of that undiscriminating enthusiasm which lacks lasting quality and is a poor substitute for sober and critical appreciation.

The Times (*June* 22, 1943)

§ OUTLAWRY OF RUSSIA

ON MAY 22, 1943, Stalin dissolved the Communist International. Commenting upon that noteworthy event *The Times* wrote (May 25): 'Now that Russia has given her allies this dramatic assurance of her intentions, it is doubly important to give her no ground for suspicion that, once the victory is gained, Britain and the United States will revert to the policy so fatally pursued after 1918 of attempting to exclude Russia from her rightful place in the organization of peace and liberty in Europe.' The implied censure does inadequate justice to Great Britain and the U.S.A. Moreover it would be interesting to know at what date *The Times* discovered that the policy of excluding Russia was 'fatal', when it acknowledged that Russia had 'a rightful place in the organization of peace and liberty'? If *The Times* can establish its own consistency, it must needs involve a confession of its failure (a rare occurrence) to reflect current opinion. There can have been few thoughtful people either in England or America who in the years immediately following the Peace Conference of Paris would have acknowledged the right of Soviet Russia to a 'place in the organization of peace and liberty'. Whether in 1919 England was technically at war with Soviet Russia may, as Mr. Churchill admitted, be doubtful, but there is no doubt that English soldiers and seamen were fighting against it. More than that. During the whole of the inter-war period there was grave suspicion

in England as to the real policy of the Soviet Union. It is true that in 1924 the Socialist Government in England granted *de jure* recognition to Russia, but the suspicion that the Comintern had a hand in the General Strike dissipated any goodwill that might thereby have been generated.

The Trade Union Congress had, indeed, prudently declined the financial assistance proffered by Russia towards the General Strike, but that a close connection was maintained between the Comintern and British Communists there can be no question. Despite repeated protests from Whitehall, Bolshevik propaganda was carried on by secret agents as well as by the so-called Russian Trade Delegation, with the object of suborning the armed forces of the Crown and promoting revolution in this country. On May 12th, 1927, the police made a thorough search of certain premises in the City jointly occupied by Arcos, Ltd., and the Russian Trade Delegation. Though many documents, presumably incriminating, had been carried off, quite enough fell into the hands of the police to prove that not only had the conditions attached to the Trade Agreement of 1921 been grossly violated, but diplomatic privileges accorded to the Russian Embassy had been systematically abused. The inevitable result of the evidence obtained by the search was the deportation of the Trade Delegation and a complete breach of diplomatic relations between the two governments.[1] They were not resumed until the return of the Socialist Party to office in England in 1929.

§ RECOGNITION

The recognition accorded to Russia by the Socialist ministry in 1924 led to similar action on the part of Italy, Greece, Austria-Hungary and the three Scandinavian kingdoms as well as several non-European States. Germany had already accorded it in 1922 by the treaty negotiated by Mr. Litvinov and Walter Rathenau at Rapallo, and the diplomatic circle was completed when (October 24th, 1924)

[1] *Hansard* for May 24 and 25, 1927, and Cmd. 2874 and 2822 (1927).

France recognized the Soviet Union. Not until 1933 was it recognized by the United States.

The position of Russia had, meantime, been strengthened by treaties concluded with Japan (January 1925), Turkey (December 1925) and Germany (April 1928). Russia also demonstrated her pacific intentions by attending in 1928 the Preparatory Disarmament Commission set up by the League of Nations, and by adhering in the same year to the Briand-Kellog Pact for the renunciation of war. The efforts to secure general disarmament finally collapsed in 1934 despite the unceasing endeavours of successive British Governments to commend the acceptance of the principle both by precept and by example. In the same year Russia was at long last admitted to the League of Nations.

§ RUSSIA AND EUROPEAN PEACE

At Geneva her representative, Mr. Litvinov, lately described by Mr. Joseph Davies as 'the ablest Foreign Minister in Europe', now the Ambassador of Russia at Washington, but in 1934 generally mistrusted, startled the League Assembly by proposing 'immediate, complete, and general disarmament . . . the disbandment of all land, sea, and air forces; the destruction of all weapons and military supplies, all fortresses, naval and air bases, military and air bases, the scrapping of all warships, military aeroplanes, etc., etc.' The speech was regarded by the Assembly as merely an histrionic not to say farcical performance, but it may well have been seriously intended as a *reductio ad absurdum*, an attempt to 'show up the hollowness of the League and the hypocrisy of the capitalist Powers towards disarmament'.[1] Be that as it may, the Soviet Government would, as was shrewdly observed, have lost little and gained much by the adoption of Litvinov's proposal since his country relied less on armaments than on underground intrigue and subversive propaganda.

§ LOCARNO

Russia had been gravely perturbed by the sheaf of treaties

[1] Temperley: *The Whispering Gallery of Europe*, pp. 77, 81.

concluded between Great Britain, France, and Germany, Italy and Belgium at Locarno (1925). The object of these treaties was to guarantee the inviolability of the frontiers between Germany and France, and Germany and Belgium. An 'Eastern Locarno', signed on the same day between Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, represented the completion and counterpart of the Western Pact. In neither Pact was Russia included.

§ THE 'STRESA FRONT'

Nor was Russia invited to participate in the Conference which met in April 1935 at Stresa. Represented in some quarters as an attempt to 'sidetrack the League of Nations', the meeting was a result of the ripening friendship between Mussolini and Laval, who with Ramsay MacDonald and the British Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, established what was known to diplomacy as the 'Stresa Front'. The object of the meeting was to frustrate the threatened attack of Hitler upon Austria. Its practical effect was to convince Mussolini that neither England nor France was seriously concerned about Abyssinia which, though Italy was notoriously preparing to attack it, was not, it is believed, even mentioned at the meeting. Any results the 'Stresa Front' might have achieved were unfortunately negatived by an agreement concluded by Great Britain with Germany, without notification to Britain's Stresa allies, for the limitation of naval armaments.

Mussolini went on his way gaily rejoicing in the resulting fissure between England and France. So did Hitler. France had in fact already concluded a defensive alliance with Russia (May 2), which was clearly intended to avert attack by Germany upon either State. Stalin nursed his resentment against England the more bitterly as he realized that the Russo-French Alliance had little effect upon the international situation. The fear of communistic infection was in fact even stronger in France than in England and prevented the development of any real cordiality between Paris and Moscow.

§ STALIN AND HITLER

Meanwhile, in Moscow, mistrust of Nazi-Germany steadily increased. Stalin, if he had not studied *Mein Kampf* more carefully than it was studied in England, had evidently assimilated the ideas which lay behind it, and attached far more importance to Hitler and his doctrines than we did. That was natural. There was no evidence of hostility to England in *Mein Kampf*. On the contrary, 'war with the British Empire must be avoided; the appropriate allies for Germany were Italy and Great Britain—the greatest world-power on earth'; 'no sacrifice should have been considered too great [by Imperial Germany] if it was a necessary means of gaining England's friendship'. England's antagonism to Russia was natural and Germany should have encouraged it. As for Russia itself, her people, belonging to the inferior Slav race, could be permitted to survive only as hewers of wood and drawers of water for their German masters. Those masters must, moreover, reproduce their species, and, as they multiplied, room for them must be found to live on and by the land. That could be found only if the Slavs of Poland and Russia were cleared out.

That was the prospect held out for Poland and Russia by Hitler. But a necessary preliminary to its realization was the conquest of Czechoslovakia. Russia was under no illusion about the danger threatening that recent creation, and concluded with it a treaty of mutual assistance (May 1935). France, though not less alarmed than Russia, was less prompt to take action, but in March 1938 joined Russia in a pledge to defend Czechoslovakia if attacked. Hitler had, meanwhile, taken the measure of France and of England. On March 7, 1935, he had occupied the demilitarized Rhineland. It is now known that Hitler acted in opposition to the advice of his own General Staff, and that if France and England had 'called his bluff', he would have withdrawn. Hitler's bluff was not called: England and France acquiesced in this shameless violation of the Locarno Treaty. In March 1938 Hitler occupied Austria. Russia, alarmed by the

unchecked progress of Hitler's aggressions, proposed a conference of the peace-loving Powers. Great Britain refused to participate, and the proposal was accordingly dropped. Nevertheless the Russian and French ministers at Prague assured the Government of Czechoslovakia that if their country was attacked the guarantors of Czechoslovakian integrity would fulfil their obligations (May 22nd, 1938). Great Britain was entirely unpledged in respect of Czechoslovakia, but having in no measured terms condemned Hitler's rape of Austria, Mr. Chamberlain deemed it not superfluous, in March, to warn the Führer that, if war broke out, countries that were not parties to the original dispute would be immediately involved.

The situation became steadily worse, and in August the British Government sent Lord Runciman, an ex-Cabinet minister of great experience and exemplary tact, on an 'unofficial mission' to Prague. In view of the increasing violence of the inspired German Press which called on its Government to put a stop to Czech outrages (greatly exaggerated if not entirely imaginary) upon the German population of Bohemia, Lord Runciman's mission was fruitless.

§ APPEASEMENT

Still Mr. Chamberlain, who in May 1937 had succeeded Mr. Baldwin as Prime Minister, strove earnestly to avert a European war, and his efforts were cordially supported by Lord Halifax, who in February 1938 took Mr. Eden's place at the Foreign Office. Towards the end of 1937 Mr. Chamberlain had sent Lord Halifax to Berlin to bring his personal influence to bear upon Hitler. But in vain. Accordingly on September 15 (1938) the Prime Minister, determined to leave no stone unturned, himself visited Hitler, and on his return announced that 'each of us fully understands what is in the mind of the other'. Unfortunately, the only impression made upon Hitler was apparently that under no circumstances would Great Britain take up arms to defend Czechoslovakia, and that she would even persuade France to break her pledge to that country.

Be that as it may, a visit to London of M. Daladier, the French Prime Minister, was almost immediately followed (September 21st) by the announcement that 'under excessive and unbelievable pressure' Czechoslovakia had accepted the Anglo-French plan by which the 'Sudeten' Germans (virtually Bohemia) were to be handed over to the Reich.

In the negotiations which issued in this unhappy result Russia, co-guarantor with France of Czechoslovakian integrity, was not consulted. British suspicions of Soviet Russia still persisted: the determination to exclude her from participation in European diplomacy was unabated. Nevertheless, Russia declared herself still ready to honour her bond, provided that her co-signatory France was also ready. France was not. Russia naturally would not fight Germany single-handed.

One great English statesman raised his voice against a surrender dishonourable in itself and likely to be futile. A day or two after the news of the decision to sacrifice Czechoslovakia to the vain hope of peace Mr. Churchill made his historic protest against the surrender to Hitler. He predicted—only too accurately—that it would not bring peace or safety to Great Britain and France. 'The neutralization of Czechoslovakia,' he declared, 'alone means the liberation of twenty-five divisions to threaten the western front. The path to the Black Sea will be open to triumphant Nazism. The idea that safety can be purchased by throwing a small State to the wolves is a fatal delusion.'

Mr. Chamberlain had meanwhile (September 22nd) again visited Hitler only (as he supposed) to arrange certain details about carrying out the arrangements previously agreed to.

To the amazement of an honourable man he found himself confronted with an ultimatum of far wider scope, by acceptance of which Czechoslovakia would have been left entirely at the mercy of a merciless foe. 'Bitterly reproaching' Hitler for his dishonourable conduct Mr. Chamberlain refused to advise the Czechs to accept the new conditions or to delay mobilization.

War was imminent. France mobilized: England promised to support France, mobilized her fleet, and took precautions against attacks from the air.

§ MUNICH

Mr. Chamberlain was actually reporting to the House of Commons the breakdown of negotiations and the consequent imminence of war with Germany, when a 'chit' was handed to him announcing that Hitler was ready to meet him again. A more dramatic scene had never been witnessed at Westminster. To tense anxiety there succeeded delirious enthusiasm when the Prime Minister announced his immediate departure by aeroplane for Munich.

At Munich he met not only Hitler but Mussolini and M. Daladier. Russia was again excluded, but the other four great Powers reached an agreement which, though it embodied a few concessions made by Hitler as to time and method, virtually sealed the doom of Czechoslovakia. Mr. Chamberlain and Hitler also appended their signatures to a document professing to establish perpetual amity between England and Germany. It was this document that the returning Prime Minister waved to the crowd which tumultuously welcomed back the great statesman who, like Lord Beaconsfield, had brought back 'Peace with Honour'.

Honour had in fact been sacrificed: peace had not been secured. Yet it is bare justice to the memory of an honourable man, whose training had left him imperfectly versed in European diplomacy, to remember that, for the moment at least, he represented the all but unanimous sentiment of his countrymen. Thus after Munich *The Times*, not anticipating the censure which in its riper wisdom it would be constrained to pronounce upon the 'policy so fatally pursued after 1918', wrote that 'applause for Mr. Chamberlain registers a popular judgment that neither politicians nor historians are likely to revise'.

Yet September had hardly passed into October before both sections of the Opposition were in full cry against Mr. Chamberlain and the Munich policy. Murmurs arose that

the only outcome of Mr. Chamberlain's labours was an undertaking 'to pay Danegeld to a rapacious aggressor, in order to obtain a worthless respite from an inevitable war'. Mr. Churchill shared these misgivings but expressed them in more cautious and courteous terms. Though he paid a warm tribute to Mr. Chamberlain's courage he did not conceal his fear lest the concessions made at Munich 'might not stay, or even divert for more than a few months, if that, the march of events upon the continent'. 'All we can do in the meantime,' he added, 'is to gather forces of resistance and defence.'

For that purpose the respite was invaluable. We had already (September 14) drawn up a five-year rearmament programme; on April 26, 1939, we adopted conscription.

Hitler had, meanwhile, occupied Bohemia and Moravia (March 15), Memel (March 23) and had demanded the restoration of Danzig to the Reich. He had also denounced the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as well as the Treaty of Non-aggression which, in 1934, he had concluded for ten years with Poland.

§ ANGLO-RUSSIAN NEGOTIATIONS

On March 30, England and France had pledged themselves to defend Poland and in April Great Britain proposed that the U.S.S.R. should also guarantee the integrity of Poland and Rumania, though with neither country had Russia's relations been cordial. Great Britain had already refused Stalin's suggestion that a conference should be held at Bucharest between Great Britain, France, Russia, Poland, Rumania, and Turkey. Stalin's reply to the latest British proposal was that England and France should join with Russia in guaranteeing the whole of the small States from the Baltic to the Black Sea. England was, however, suspicious of Russia's intentions in regard to the little Baltic Republics. Moreover, the Republics themselves, perhaps aware that a 'guarantee' meant the establishment on their soil of Russian garrisons, and fearful lest the acceptance of a guarantee would be to invite immediate attack by Germany,

refused to be guaranteed. England was not prepared to force it upon them, and Russia's proposal, therefore, fell through. The sequel fully justified the reluctance of the Baltic republics. But the refusal of Stalin's proposal greatly impeded, if it did not frustrate, the success of the Anglo-French negotiations which still proceeded, though in an increasingly unsympathetic atmosphere, at Moscow, throughout the spring and summer of 1939.

§ RUSSO-GERMAN TREATY

Whether Stalin was, all through those months, simply fooling England and France it still is impossible to say with certainty. Nor would it be profitable at the moment to inquire. It might well be that Stalin was glad of the opportunity to pay back the aloofness (to use no harsher word) manifested towards Soviet Russia since 1919 by the western Democracies. Be that as it may, the news that a Treaty had been concluded between Germany and Soviet Russia on August 23 fell as a bombshell upon the world, and in particular upon the two Powers engaged up to that moment in negotiation with Russia.

True the Treaty was purely defensive: it did not commit Russia to fight the enemies of Germany, nor in fact did the Allies cross swords with the Russians. But it did put an end to any hope of peace between Germany and the western Powers, and it sealed the fate of Poland.

Apart from the removal of Germany's fears that she might have to fight simultaneously on two fronts, the advantages of the bargain rested entirely with Stalin. The Agreement gave him a free hand in the Baltic, which he presently employed to include Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in the Soviet Union, and virtually to close the Baltic to Germany. The Russo-German Agreement might also have interposed a barrier between Germany and the Balkans. In that respect it failed; but it did give Russia, with a minimum expenditure of blood and treasure, a large part of Poland. Perhaps Stalin also entertained the hope that it would enable him (but this is conjecture) to wait and watch until

Germany and the Western Allies were mutually exhausted and then to step in as *tertius gaudens*, and, by establishing the supremacy of the Slavs over the Teutons, mark the triumph of Bolshevism over Nazism.

Materials are still lacking for forming a final judgment upon the conduct of Russian policy in the inter-war period, and in particular upon the motives which governed Stalin's attitude towards Hitler. Still less can we pronounce a fair verdict upon the course pursued by Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Chamberlain between 1933 and 1939. If their policy towards Hitler and Mussolini betrayed timidity the blame must rest largely upon those who, in their genuine anxiety to promote the peace of the world, deprived England of the power to enforce it by the only means that could be used with effect against bullies and aggressors. It is only fair to add that the Socialist Party, pacifists to a man, persistently argued against the ostracism of Soviet Russia, maintaining that without its co-operation England and France were not strong enough to hold Hitler and Mussolini in check. Unfortunately, the advice thus tendered, though sound in itself, was suspect. The part played by the Comintern in the domestic affairs of England between 1919 and 1926 could not be forgotten or forgiven, nor did the Labour Party as a whole conceal their admiration for the persistent assault of the Bolsheviks upon capitalism.

These considerations not unnaturally made a Conservative Government less disposed to heed the views on foreign affairs of their opponents.

The result, inevitable as the English Socialists contended, was to drive Stalin into the arms of Hitler.

Their embraces, as the sequel proved, were less tender than onlookers could, in August 1939, reasonably have been expected to perceive.

CHAPTER XIX

UNDERSTANDING

A settlement which was such that it could be maintained only by aligning American and therefore British military power against Russia in Europe would set the stage inexorably for a third world war in Europe, and Asia as well.

WALTER LIPPMANN (1943)

§ RUSSIA AND FINLAND

THE SITUATION arising from the Russo-German Treaty of August 1939, though technically clear, was practically ambiguous, and, as regards the relations of England and Russia, it was evidently liable to deterioration. England, though at war with Germany, did not become automatically at war with Russia, albeit she was brought close to it by Russia's invasion of Finland (November 30, 1939). It may be (as was subsequently asserted) that Stalin, by invading Finland, was merely anticipating the action of Hitler, and that for a freedom-loving people like the Finns communism was preferable to Nazism. Nevertheless, the Russian attack upon Finland caused bitter indignation in England and France. The heroic, and up to a point successful, resistance offered by the Finns evoked in both countries loudly expressed admiration and sympathy. To the passionate appeal for help made by the Finns, England and France would certainly have responded had it been physically possible. But they could no more save Finland than save Poland. Russia presently put forth her strength and the resistance of the Finns was ended by a peace, relatively moderate in its terms, imposed upon them in March 1940. Meanwhile, the League of Nations had (December 14, 1939) passed resolutions condemning Russia's violation of its agreement with Finland as well as of the 'Covenant of the League and the Pact of Paris'. The U.S.S.R. was declared thereby to 'have placed itself outside the League of Nations and to be


ARCTIC OCEAN
SWEDEN
FINLAND
Archangel
R. Dvina
Ural Mountains
Revel
ESTONIA
St. PETERSBURG
Novgorod
Riga
LATVIA
LITHUANIA
MOSCOW
R. Volga
Kama R.
Vilna
Smolensk
WARSAW
POLAND
Brest Litovsk
Kiev
Kharkov
R. Don
R. Volga
R. Dniester
R. Pruth
R. Bug
R. Dnieper
HUNGARY
Stalingrad
Taganrog
R. Don
Odessa
Akerman
RUMANIA
CRIMEA
Sebastopol
BULGARIA
BLACK SEA
CASPIAN SEA
RUSSIA IN EUROPE
1917 Boundaries
1940 " "
0 100 200 300 400 500 Miles
MORTON 1943

in consequence' no longer a member of the League.[1] That Russia was greatly affected by exclusion from the League cannot be asserted, but her action had very nearly involved her in war with England and France, and, later on, brought Finland in against her in the war with Germany.

§ THE WAR, 1939–41

The course taken by the war before the German attack upon Russia is outside the scope of this narrative. A bare summary will suffice to explain events subsequent thereto.

Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939; a fortnight later Russia followed her example (September 17). Poland, though it fought bravely with totally inadequate equipment, could offer no effective resistance to the invaders, who, on September 28, agreed upon the details of partition.

After the occupation of Warsaw, Hitler, in an address to the Reichstag (October 6), professed his readiness to make peace on the basis of 'accomplished facts', throwing the responsibility for the continuance of the war, if the terms were rejected, upon England. Yet rejected they were!

Not, however, until the spring of 1940 did hostilities between Germany and the Western Allies really begin. In rapid succession Germany occupied Denmark, Norway, Holland, and Belgium; France, having revealed its weakness, political and military, capitulated and concluded an 'armistice' with Hitler (June 17); Great Britain was left alone to confront the might of a Germany that had carried everything before it.

§ THE BRITISH EMPIRE *v.* GERMANY

As in the dark days of 1757 England had 'brought forth a man', so in the darker days of 1940 the British Empire had found in Mr. Winston Churchill a man to give it much-needed leadership and inspiration. The whole Empire rose superbly to the occasion. The young men of a young and relatively diminutive Air Force won imperishable fame by repelling the German air attack upon the capital of the Empire (August and September).

[1] *Monthly Summary*, Vol. XIX, No. 11.

In the previous June Stalin had annexed the Baltic Republics and brought their administration into line with that of Soviet Russia, whereupon Hitler, fearful of communist infection, deported the German inhabitants of those States and established them in Poland. In the same month Stalin, no less suspicious of Hitler in the Balkans than in the Baltic, annexed Bessarabia and the northern part of Bukovina, where, as in Bessarabia, there was a considerable Ukrainian population.

Early in October, Mussolini, who, after the defeat of France, had come in on the side of Germany, attacked Greece, fearful lest his partner should get in first. As things turned out his defeated troops had to be rescued by his German ally. But the passage of German troops through Bulgaria evoked from Stalin a sharp protest to Bulgaria—a further indication of the precarious basis of the Russo-German alliance.

§ GERMAN ATTACK ON RUSSIA

The rupture between the allies was not long delayed. Hitler had fortified his position by concluding a treaty with Turkey on June 18, 1941. Four days later he launched a tremendous attack upon Russia on a front of 1,800 miles, extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

Hitler accused Stalin of waiting his opportunity to stab Germany in the back; of violating treaties; of establishing spheres of Bolshevik influence in the Balkans; of subversive activities in Germany itself; of massing troops on the frontier; of encouraging provocative 'incidents'; and—worst of all—of conspiring with England against Germany.

Stalin was not unprepared for the German invasion. By the mouth of Sir Stafford Cripps, who had gone to Moscow as British Ambassador in June 1940, Mr. Churchill had more than once warned Stalin of Hitler's perfidious intentions. Within a few hours of the reception of the news that Hitler had actually carried them out Mr. Churchill broadcast a declaration of British policy. The latest tactics of this 'blood-thirsty guttersnipe' Hitler and his accomplice and jackal Mussolini, were on the pattern of those employed against

many small Powers. Mr. Churchill refused to unsay a word of his many denunciations of communism uttered during the last twenty-five years, but 'all this fades away before the spectacle which is now unfolding. . . . Any man or State who fights against Nazism will have our aid. Any man or State who marches with Hitler is our foe. . . . It follows, therefore, that we shall give whatever help we can to Russia and the Russian people.' Finally, Mr. Churchill warned his countrymen that Hitler's invasion of Russia was a prelude to an attempted invasion of the British Islands, which he hoped to overwhelm before the United States could intervene. All parties in the United Kingdom approved, not less cordially than the Dominions, Mr. Churchill's declaration that we intended to fight on by land, sea, or air until 'we had rid the earth of all who have shadowed it and liberated the peoples from [Hitler's] yoke'.

§ ANGLO-RUSSIAN CO-OPERATION

Thus there opened a new phase in the second world war. On July 8 a Russian military mission reached London, and on the 12th an Anglo-Soviet Agreement was signed at Moscow. The two Governments mutually undertook to render each other assistance and support of all kinds against Germany, and not to negotiate nor conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement.[1] This agreement was followed by an agreement between the U.S.S.R. and the Czechoslovakian Government located in London (July 30), and by a 'Declaration of Friendship and Mutual Aid' signed in Moscow by Joseph Stalin and Vladislav Sikorski, Premier of the Polish Government (December 5).

§ THE MIDDLE EAST

More immediately important was the Treaty of Alliance concluded at Teheran by Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. with the Shah-in-Shah of Iran on January 29, 1942.

During 1941 German 'tourists' had in large numbers been pouring into Syria, Iraq, and Iran—a movement which

[1] *Treaty Series*, No. 15 (1941). Cmd. 6304, H.M.S.O.

seemed to portend the German occupation of these countries, the more serious for Russia, and in consequence for her new allies, by reason of the control which Hitler had established already over the Balkans and Greece. Evidence of his intentions to advance into Asia had been given by a *coup d'état* effected by a pro-German military party led by Raschid Ali in Iraq. The legitimate Government of the Regent was, however, re-established, after some initial reverses, by troops dispatched from India and Palestine. Syria was restored to the control of the Free French by a six-weeks campaign conducted by a mixed force of British and Free French; but these successes, though they mitigated, did not remove the menace to Basra, the most important of the three ports of entry by which munitions from Great Britain and the United States could reach the hard-pressed Russians.

§ GERMAN ADVANCE IN RUSSIA

In the summer and autumn of 1941 the Russians had been compelled to abandon a great part of Western Russia and to yield to the Germans the important industrial and agricultural districts therein. Stalin then adopted the 'scorched earth' tactics first practised in Napoleon's time. Stalin's orders were loyally carried out by the patriotic Russians, and the Germans were consequently deprived of much of the advantage upon which they had counted. None the less, the losses suffered by the peasants might well have overwhelmed a less determined and patriotic people.

The help of Great Britain in repairing the losses of munitions and mechanical equipment was now more urgently than ever needed. But such help could reach Russia only by way of Archangel, a very dangerous route, owing to German control of Norway; or by way of Vladivostock, which, besides being remote from the battlefield, became almost useless after Japan's entry into the war; or by Basra.

Signs were not wanting that Germany meant, by exerting pressure upon Iran, to deprive Russia's friends of this invaluable port of entry, and that the Shah of Persia was about to yield to this pressure. In consequence of the Shah's

evasive replies to the demands of England and the U.S.A. for the expulsion of the 'tourists', a Russian force entered Iran from the north, a British force advanced from the south. They joined hands at Teheran; the Shah was reduced to submission, and in three days compelled to abdicate. His pro-German counsellors were driven into exile, and on January 29 a treaty was signed. This treaty, having in view the principles of the Atlantic Charter agreed upon by President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill, on August 14, 1941, endorsed by the Soviet Government on September 24, and assented to by the Shah-in-Shah of Iran, promised, in return for permission to use Iran as a military base, to defend Iran against aggression by Germany or any other Power, and to respect Iranian integrity.

§ THE U.S.A. COMES IN

On December 7, 1941, Japan had made a sudden and unprovoked attack upon American and British bases in the Pacific. Four days later Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. Mr. Churchill, in order to establish the closest relations between Great Britain and her new allies, made his memorable journey to America. Before this year of great events reached its close the British Prime Minister had addressed the American Congress at Washington (December 26,) and the Canadian Parliament at Ottawa on the 30th. About the same time, and for a similar purpose, the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Eden, undertook a mission to Moscow.

§ STORM AND SUNSHINE IN 1942

These dangerous journeys could be justified only by the extreme gravity of the situation confronting the United Nations. The brilliant success which marked Japan's entry into the war created a fresh menace to the Russians and their allies. With the Russians hard-pressed on several fronts, with the British retreating before the Germans in North Africa, with the Americans not ready to put forth their strength in the Far East or elsewhere, with disasters falling thick upon the British Empire in the Pacific, and with

Australia itself threatened by Japanese invasion, the situation was grave almost to the verge of hopelessness. Had the Japanese been able to continue without check their triumphant progress to the west, had the Germans broken through the Russian defences and advanced south-eastwards into Asia, the position might well have become desperate. Sebastopol fell on July 1; Rostov was evacuated on July 28; and the German forces poured across the Don towards the Caucasus. Had they crossed them and effected a junction with the Japanese in Central Asia, an attack upon Russia from the east, combined with the terrific attack upon Moscow and Stalingrad from the west, might have broken down even the superb resistance of Russia. As it was, the terribly expensive but wisely conceived and effectively executed retreat of the Russians into the Don Valley, their superbly courageous defence of Stalingrad, and their counter-offensive resumed against the Germans in August and September 1942, enabled them to hold firm.

§ TREATY BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND RUSSIA

Meanwhile, two important agreements had been negotiated between Russia and its Anglo-Saxon allies. Towards the end of May 1942 M. Molotov came to London, and on the 26th of that month concluded a Treaty of Mutual Assistance between Great Britain and the Soviet Union. The Agreement of July 12, 1941, was replaced by a formal Treaty, Part I of which was designed to remain in force until the re-establishment of peace, and Part II for a period of at least twenty years. The former reiterated the military terms of the Treaty of 1941, and in particular the undertaking of the two Powers not to negotiate an armistice or peace with the Hitlerite Government 'or any other Government in Germany that does not clearly renounce any aggressive intentions'. Part II declared the desire of the two Powers to unite with other like-minded States for common action to preserve peace and resist aggression in the post-war period, and to promote 'security and economic prosperity in Europe'.

'It is generally recognized to-day that the Treaty of May 26, 1942, is one of the corner-stones upon which may rest not only the future collaboration of two great Powers, but the whole vast edifice of post-war reconstruction.' So said Mr. Eden in a message addressed to M. Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, on the first anniversary of the signature of the Treaty.

Mr. Eden's words were re-echoed or, rather, anticipated by the *Manchester Guardian*, which, commenting on the Treaty wrote on June 12, 1942: 'Neither the balance-of-power system nor a League of Nations that is not strongly underpinned and equipped with large constructive powers can save Europe. . . . Two Powers commanding great resources and immense potential strength undertake [by the Treaty of May 26] direct obligations to Europe. They form an alliance . . . that aims at shielding Europe. Their mutual pledges form a sheltering screen behind which Europe can recognize her security and economic life on new principles, those of the Atlantic Charter . . . without the fears that have haunted the Continent since 1931.' Those words are as apposite as they are eloquent.

§ THE U.S.A. AND THE U.S.S.R.

On June 11, Mr. Cordell Hull, on behalf of the U.S.A., concluded with M. Litvinov, the representative of the U.S.S.R., an agreement for mutual aid in the prosecution of the war against oppression.[1]

These two treaties committed the two great Anglo-Saxon democracies to the most complete co-operation with Russia. Nor was the assurance they conveyed to her superfluous. The brilliant success achieved by the British and their American and French allies in North Africa has by now (June 1943) combined with the pounding inflicted on German naval bases and great industrial cities by the Allied Air Forces to convince the Russians of the effectiveness of Anglo-Saxon collaboration. But in 1942 the situation, as

[1] The full text will be found in the Department of State *Bulletin*, Vol. VI, No. 155, June 13, 1942.

already disclosed, had been very different. The Germans and the Japanese were on the flood-tide of success. Russia was murmuring that the assistance given to her by her allies was inadequate; and that they failed to recognize the sacrifice she was making in the common cause. She declared that the Anglo-Saxon allies ought, without further procrastination, to relieve the pressure upon her by opening a 'second front' on the European Continent. These murmurings found an echo in the ignorant clamour of a certain section of the English people. Fortunately Mr. Churchill was strong enough to resist pressure exerted from ill-informed quarters at home and abroad, and to hold on grimly to his predetermined course of action. How brilliantly his firmness was justified, the sequel quickly demonstrated. And Stalin was generous enough virtually to retract the reproaches he had levelled at his allies.

So all was well. But so serious had the situation been that in August Mr. Churchill had gone to Cairo, and taken the grave responsibility of ordering the British Commanders to attack the Axis forces in Egypt. From Cairo the English Prime Minister thought it prudent to go on to Moscow to convey to Stalin reassurances in regard to the assistance forthcoming from the allies. His promises did not lack rapid and complete fulfilment: swiftly upon his reassuring words came even more reassuring deeds. Mr. Churchill's visit to Cairo had immediate results. General Alexander became Commander-in-Chief Middle East, and Lieutenant-General Montgomery took over command of the Eighth Army. Strongly reinforced in men and material, they launched an attack on the Axis positions at El Alamein on October 23, chased Rommel and his armies out of Egypt, and did not rest until by the middle of May 1943 they had completely cleared the Germans and Italians out of North Africa.

Meanwhile, a large force of British and U.S.A. troops, finely equipped, had been safely transported by the combined vigilance and skill of the Navy and the Air Forces, to key points in Algiers and Morocco (November 8). Together with the Fighting French these British and

American forces played an important, not to say dominating, part in the final annihilation of Axis power in North Africa.

That resounding victory, besides being, as we hope, the prelude to victories still more conclusive, removed all immediate danger of renewed misunderstanding between the British and Russian Empires.

§ THE FUTURE

That the peace and happiness of the world will depend in the immediate future on the continued collaboration of the British Empire, Russia, and the United States, has now become the commonplace of political commentators. Collaboration depends on mutual understanding. Understanding depends on sympathy and knowledge. As regards the relations of England and Russia, it has been the purpose of this book to stimulate the first, and to make a contribution, however modest, to the second.

The record of the relations between the two countries since Russia made its entry upon the European stage, some two centuries ago, may not, indeed, seem to hold out very roseate hopes for the future.

Nor can we shut our eyes to the truth that there are problems awaiting solution which may well raise difficulties, if not arouse passions, between Russia and her immediate neighbours. In some of those problems British honour and interests are also involved.

The relations between Russia and the small Republics on the Baltic sea-board are a matter of concern to them, and, in less degree, to Germany. But whether Latvia, Lithuania, and Esthonia should remain members of the Russian Federation, or should reassert the independence conceded to them in 1918, marked by their admission as units to the League of Nations, and recognized by Russia in treaties concluded with each of them in 1920, is a matter in which Great Britain is not directly interested.

We cannot so lightly regard the problem involved in the future relations of Russia with Turkey, Greece, and the

Balkan States. But of that matter enough has been already said.

The most difficult obstacle to an understanding is presented by the position of Poland. If the position of Dantzig was unsolved by the Settlement of 1919, there is reason to fear that the future of Poland will raise a problem at least as difficult when the present war is over. The interests of Great Britain are indeed involved only so far as world-peace is the greatest of British interests, yet our honourable obligations will compel us to help towards an adjustment of the widely divergent interests of the Poles and the Russians.

That divergence Germany has naturally done its best to accentuate, and thus far (June 1943) not without success. In November 1941 M. Maisky, on behalf of Russia, and General Sikorsky,[1] on behalf of the exiled Government of Poland, negotiated an agreement. It was then agreed between the parties to allow the subject of post-war frontiers to stand over until the war was won. Satisfactory as that arrangement was for the time being, it does not diminish the anxiety of Great Britain lest the question should create friction when the time for a permanent settlement arrives.

That settlement will not, however, be accomplished unless the understanding, now at long last existing between England and Russia, is maintained. Upon the breakdown of that understanding the hopes of Hitler and Goebbels are now manifestly based. 'We have only to hold on, and the Anglo-Saxons and the Russians will fall out.' The wish is father to the thought; but both Stalin and Mr. Eden have lately been at pains to dispel the hope of any rupture of good relations being effected even by German propaganda. In November 1942 M. Stalin spoke of the coalition between the U.S.A. and the British and Russian Empires as destined to continue in spite of differences of ideology and structure. Mr. Eden, speaking early in the present year (1943), cordially endorsed that declaration.

[1] His death, due to an aeroplane accident, on July 3, 1943, aroused in England profound sympathy, to which Mr. Churchill gave eloquent expression in Parliament.

Idle were it, however, to pretend that the coalition can be expected to continue in the post-war world without a sustained effort on the part of the leaders and the peoples they represent in both Empires. 'The U.S.S.R. in the past has been a country,' said a recent writer, 'seen through a glass darkly, often in a distorting mirror. . . . Understanding . . . can do much to repair the legacy of the past.'[1] That, as preceding chapters have shown, is profoundly true. But how can 'understanding' be achieved and maintained? Mr. Wallace, Vice-President of the U.S.A., gave the true answer to that question (March 8, 1943): 'We must treat other nations in the spirit of democratic Christianity. We must make our religion practical.' General Smuts, one of the greatest statesmen in our own Empire, spoke not long ago to the same effect, with even greater emphasis and (to me) with still greater authority: 'Fundamentally the world has need only of the honest and courageous application of the historical Christian idea. . . . Our Christian civilization is based on an eternal order, an endless plan in the message of Christ. His message is: Cherish in love your fellow-men, irrespective of race or language, cherish and keep the divine idea in your hearts as the highest good' (March 25, 1942).

The precept is unassailable: how difficult the practice experience unfortunately proves. We can only hope that the dead may be allowed to bury their dead, and that the future may show an increasing purpose 'to improve upon the past'.

[1] Maurice Dobb: *Soviet Planning and Labour in Peace and War* (1942).

APPENDIX A

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

A. HISTORY OF RUSSIA—GENERAL

V. KLYUCHEVSKY: *Hist. de la Russie* (Eng. trs. Hogarth), 1911.

SIR B. PARES: *Hist. of Russia*, 1926; *Russia and Reform*, 1907; *Fall of the Russian Monarchy*, 1939; *My Russian Memories*, 1939.

R. BEAZLEY AND OTHERS: *Russia*, Oxford, 1918.

F. H. SKRINE: *The Expansion of Russia*, Cambridge, 1903.

A. RAMBAUD: *Hist. de la Russie* (E.T.), 1884.

B. RUSSIA SINCE 1917

P. GRIERSON: A Guide to all books on Soviet Russia published in the U.K. since 1917 (Methuen, 1942).

W. H. CHAMBERLIN: *The Russian Revolution*, 2 vols., 1935; *Soviet Russia*, 1929; *The Soviet Economic Order*, 1931; *Russian Iron Age*, 1935.

H. JOHNSON: *The Soviet Sixth of the World*, 1939.

J. DAVIES: *Mission to Moscow*, 1941.

J. MAYNARD: *The Russian Peasant*, 1942, and other works.

M. HINDUS: *Russia Fights On*, 1942, and other works.

J. STALIN: *Leninism*, 2 vols., 1933.

L. TROTSKY: *Russian Revolution*, 3 vols., 1933; *The Revolution Betrayed*, 1937.

C. HOLLIS: *Lenin*, 1938.

C. ENGLAND, RUSSIA, AND THE EASTERN QUESTION

J. A. R. MARRIOTT: *The Eastern Question*, 4th ed., Oxford, 1940; *History of Europe* (1815–1939), 4th ed., 1942; *England Since Waterloo*, 12th ed., 1941; *Modern England*, 2nd ed., 1941.

E. DRIAULT: *La Question D'Orient.*

A. SOREL: *La Question D'Orient au XVIII Siècle.*

S. GORIANOV: *Le Bosphore et les Dardanelles*, 1915.

T. E. HOLLAND: *Treaty Relations Between Russia and Turkey*; *European Concert in the Eastern Question.*

R. WALISZEWSKI: *La roman d'une inperatrice* (Catherine II); *Pierre le Grand*, 1897.

M. PALÉOLOGUE: *The Enigmatic Czar* (Alexander I), 1938.

DALLING AND ASHLEY: *Life of Lord Palmerston*, 1870.

LORD STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE: *The Eastern Question.*

S. LANE-POOLE: *Life of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe.*

J. MORLEY: *Life of Gladstone.*

MONYPENNY AND BUCKLE: *Life of Lord Beaconsfield.*

SIR E. WOOD: *The Crimea in* 1854 *and* 1894.

APPENDIX B

THE ROMANOV DYNASTY

Michael, 1613–45.
Alexis, 1645–76.
Theodore III, 1676–82.
Ivan V and Peter, 1682–9 (Tsarevna Sophie Regent).
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Peter II, 1727–30.
Anna, 1730–40 (daughter of Ivan V).
Ivan VI, 1740–1 (great-grandson of Ivan V).
Elizabeth, 1741–62 (daughter of Peter I).
Peter III, 1762 (murdered).
Catherine II, 1762–96.
Paul I, 1796–1801 (murdered).
Alexander I, 1801–25.
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|
Alexander II, 1855–81 (murdered).
|
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|
Nicholas II, 1894–1917 (murdered).

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