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INTERVENTION
OF
BULGARIA



THE
INTERVENTION
OF BULGARIA
AND
THE CENTRAL
MACEDONIAN
QUESTION

By
CRAWFURD PRICE
(Author of "THE BALKAN COCKPIT")

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By CRAWFURD PRICE

Author of "The Balkan Cockpit"



1915.

PREFACE.

The important situation which has developed in South-Eastern Europe renders it desirable that the British public should be more fully informed with regard to the difficulties surrounding the intervention of the neutral Balkan States in the war. There is, perhaps, too pronounced a tendency to consider that certain concessions to possible combatants should be made simply that our own particular interests may thereby be served, and to lend too little consideration to the injustice which would be inflicted upon the small nations with whose territory we would lightly bargain.

My close connection with Balkan politics is sufficient guarantee that I fully appreciate the assistance which Bulgaria is in a position to render, and if I oppose the compensation proposals which have been put forward in some quarters, it is because I question whether they would have the desired effect while our speedy triumph remains doubtful in the minds of King Ferdinand and his Ministers. I am, further, of opinion that to again despoil Serbia would not only evidence a poor appreciation of her past exploits, but would be a short-sighted policy in view of the services she is yet destined to render.

Little useful purpose can be served by the prolonged discussion of impracticable proposals, however ideal they

may appear in our vision. As such, I fear, we must class the cession of Central Macedonia to Bulgaria and the reconstruction of the Balkan "bloc." We must, rather, seek proposals capable of immediate application, and such as will inflict a lesser measure of hardship upon our Allies.

Russia, to whom prompt assistance would prove of inestimable value, and whose territorial acquisitions are destined to be enormous, has it in her power to offer irresistible inducements to Roumania, and a firm diplomacy at Sofia, coupled with slight self-sacrifice in the matter of Bulgarian progress eastward, would probably help King Ferdinand along the line of least resistance.

In this pamphlet my main endeavour has been to remove some popular misconceptions concerning the nationality of the Macedonian Slavs, and to demonstrate the reasons why we should not be justified in requesting Serbia to cede territory west of the Vardar Valley.

C. P.

London, *June* 1915.

THE
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CENTRAL MACEDONIAN QUESTION

IT is a far cry from the historic battlefields of Flanders, where the flower of Britain's manhood has built up an impenetrable barrier to German progress seaward, to the little-known plains of Galicia and Hungary. But it is there, in that vast eastern theatre of the war, that lies the high road to victory. The annihilation of the Osmanli and the disintegration of the armed might of the Hapsburgs must be the prelude to the destruction of Prussian militarism. It is there that the rank and file of enemy armies know not the cause for which they fight, and would loathe it if they did; there that capture brings no remorse to the martial soul, and where defeat, when it comes, will herald demoralisation and despair. And, on the fringe of that arena, neutral onlookers whose participation on the side of the Grand Alliance would materially shorten the duration of the war and thus render inestimable service to the causes of civilisation and humanity, stand ready to turn defeat or victory to their national profit.

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

To question the services which these three States could render to the cause of the Allies is to ignore both the importance of their geographical position and the acknowledged strength of their military forces. Roumania can place in the field from 600,000 to 700,000 well-trained, sturdy, peasant soldiers. She has an extensive irredenta to redeem, and the mere concentration of her forces on her western frontier would be sufficient to draw off an appreciable Austro-German army from the Russian front in Galicia. If we seek the causes of her continued hesitation, we shall find them in the fact that she is reasonably sure to obtain Transylvania whatever be the outcome of the present struggle, coupled with her desire to include at least Bukovina and the Banat in the plunder, the necessarily

complicated negotiations connected with the forthcoming change in sovereignty over the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and the intention of her statesmen to materialise their schemes of national expansion as far as is possible by diplomatic rather than military intervention.

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

Mr. Venezelos, as befitted the character of so bold and

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

Whether a greater measure of support from the diplomatic representatives of the Entente Powers would have enabled Mr. Venezelos to break down the barriers which confronted him; whether, in fact, they could have so resolved the military situation in the Balkans as to permit Greece to provide not a paltry 15,000 or 40,000 men as the Prime Minister proposed, but an army of a quarter of a million for the attack on the Dardanelles, remains to be thrashed out at some more opportune moment. For the present it must be admitted that if consideration be given strictly to the arguments of the case, King Constantine could have come to no other decision than that which he adopted, and which was, in fact, that of his General Staff. The only other question is whether, at such a critical epoch in world history, a nation is justified in flinging prudence to the winds and

embarking on an enterprise the ultimate end of which is hidden behind a thick veil of opportunism and presumption. Probably she is.

Although Roumania's assertion of inability to march while Bulgaria's intentions remain obscure should not be taken too seriously (since Greece would attack Bulgaria if she moved against Roumania), there can be no doubt that the principal cause of the continuance of Greek neutrality lies in the menace of a flank attack by Bulgaria. The danger does not cease at Kavalla, for once King Ferdinand's armies advanced they would pursue their course at least as far as Salonika, and from thence into Serbian territory. It therefore follows that Greco-Bulgarian hostilities could not be localised and would inevitably involve Serbia. The attitude of Bulgaria is accordingly endowed with an importance out of all proportion to the actual military assistance which she is in a position to render to either side, and, unless very serious arguments can be advanced in her favour, she lays herself open to a charge of having acted in a manner distinctly at variance to the interests of the Entente Powers. If we find that she has openly or covertly taken advantage of her position to hamper our own action or that of any of our Allies, she must be held to strict accountability, and we shall make more progress at Sofia by insisting upon this prospect than by suggesting compensation which would be disagreeable or unfair to those who are fighting on our side.

King Ferdinand's army emerged from the War of the Allies sorely depleted in numbers and equipment, and the financial resources of the State were reduced to such an extent that, in the meantime, little has been done to set the military house in order. Britain and France, who had

seen their hopes of a durable Balkan "bloc" shattered by Bulgaria's treacherous attack on Greece and Serbia in 1913, kept their hands in their pockets, with the result that she sought and obtained a loan in Berlin upon usurious terms. This influx into the Treasury, however, served little other purpose than to pay off old debts, with the result that the army has scarce made good the wastage of men alone. In point of material it is the most unready of the fighting forces of Europe. Nevertheless, thanks to her geographical situation, Bulgaria could have fallen effectively on the rear of the Turco-German hordes defending the Dardanelles, though her progress towards Constantinople would have been laborious and costly. Simultaneously, she would have freed the Greek army and navy for co-operation and robbed Roumania of her favourite reason for continued inaction. Bulgaria, no less than the other Balkan States, stands to gain nothing and to lose all by the victory of the Central Powers. That a just appreciation of this circumstance is rendered difficult by disappointment and chagrin, detracts not one iota from its verity. Where, then, is the sticking point? The answer is to be found chiefly in Central Macedonia.

Central Macedonia has long been the Mecca of Bulgarian ambition. It is a fair land, inhabited by a race of Slavs who have been subject in turn to Greek, Bulgar, Serb and Osmanli. And when the muffled bells of history began to ring out the death toll of Turkish rule in Europe, the Russia that made the Bulgarians the precious gift of independence, bade them turn their eyes westward and wrest the Macedonian Slavs from Greek influence. The while her neighbours, left to their own devices, struggled to consolidate their self-won freedom, the Bulgarians,

sponsored by the great Tzar, set about the Bulgarisation of Macedonia with that perseverance and thoroughness for which the race is justly famous. Constitutional Turkey might well have proved the grave of these deep-laid schemes. Instead, thanks to the crass stupidity of the Young Ottomans, it provided opportunity for their realisation. The cruel despotism of the Committee of Union and Progress achieved the apparently impossible—it united those aforetime enemies, Greek, Serb and Bulgar, in a common effort to oust the Crescent from the Peninsula, and treaties were signed which matured in the Balkan War of 1912. They remained in vigour until Bulgaria destroyed them the following year by her attack upon Greece and Serbia.

Bulgaria's friends have slightly shifted their ground since the question of her intervention in the Great War first claimed the attention of the Chancellories of Europe. In place of cut and dried assertions that the Macedonian Slavs are of Bulgarian race, we are now more often confronted with the desirability of satisfying Bulgarian "national aspirations" over Central Macedonia. Probably realising that it is easier to call a Macedonian a Bulgar than to prove him one, his nationality is largely ignored, and we are asked to hand him over to King Ferdinand by reason of his Bulgarian sentiment. The change of argument is sound, even from a purely Bulgarian point of view, but it is questionable whether it advances any more solid reasons for disturbing the existing status quo in the Balkans than did its more Chauvinistic predecessors.

The Macedonian Slavs present a thorny, complicated problem. It is insoluble by reference to old historians, because, like the Bible, anything can be proved by isolated

quotations from them. It is equally difficult of solution by natives because both Serbs and Bulgars can put forward mutually substantial claims, and by visitors because the traveller has almost invariably toured the country in tow of a dragoman of one or other of the races, and has assimilated the ideas of his guide rather than divined the nationalism of the people.

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

The Macedonian Slav has affinities to both Serb and Bulgar. He is emphatically a man without any deep sense of nationality, and one who *could* have been assimilated by the Bulgarians, and who *has* been assimilated with

unexpected rapidity by the Serbs. The few refugees who have fled across the Bulgarian frontier prove nothing. They are mainly peasants who, having hitherto enjoyed immunity from military service, flee from it now as they did when the Young Turks introduced conscription. They are of no more consequence than the Germans who were wont to leave the Fatherland and drone out vile noises in our streets, or the Bulgarians who periodically cross over into Serbia rather than serve with the colours. They have been joined by those who were forced to play the part of refugees rather than suffer extinction at the hands of Bulgarian bands, by Macedo-Bulgar agitators, and by a number of peasants lured over by promises of less work and more pay. The exodus has, significantly enough, been confined to that sector of Serbia having a common frontier with Bulgaria, and any suggestion of official persecution inevitably presumes that the Serbians are so oblivious to the fact that the eyes of Europe are turned upon them, as to deliberately single out their most vulnerable point as a suitable terrain for the inauguration of a policy of oppression. The recent occurrences around Strumnitza are the demonstration of a determination on the part of the Bulgarians to repeat the methods which served them so well during the Turkish régime, but which are foredoomed to failure when applied against Serbian territory. On the other hand, the writer was an eye-witness of the fact that during the recent campaign the Macedonians fought with great courage by the side of their Serbian brethren.

Yet, although the recent change in the tone of Bulgarophile articles suggests that the arguments which can be advanced to prove that the Macedonian Slav is a Bulgar are at least disputable, the fact remains that not only have

a majority of the inhabitants of that territory for years referred to themselves as Bulgars, but they have been called and considered as such by their rulers, their neighbours, and by the world in general. This might be held seriously to weaken the Serbian case, were it not the outcome of a chain of circumstances which we shall now proceed to discuss.

The Balkan States were not always the important military factor which they represent to-day. Time was when any claim to political attention which they possessed lay in the fact that they had been ear-marked as suitable victims for Russian and Austro-Hungarian territorial expansion. Slav, Teuton and Magyar alike turned their greedy eyes towards the Peninsula. Russia, absorbed in her designs on Constantinople and the Dardanelles, desired an outpost in the Balkans which should serve to pave her way to the Golden Horn, and as a check to Austrian ambition. Austria, fired with the dream of an Empire stretching down to the Ægean Sea at Salonika, regarded the Serbs as predestined prey, and accordingly viewed their progress southward with equanimity. Russia, on her part, settled her choice upon the Bulgars as occupying a territory geographically nearer to her and more closely approaching her sphere of influence. She made them the gift of a shadowy independence, gave them a Russian military and civil administration, and did everything in her power to extend their principality to the West.

In the early 'sixties the Tzar's Government inaugurated a campaign which resulted in the establishment of a schismatic branch of the Orthodox church known as the Exarchat. Strangely enough, the idea was welcomed, to a certain extent, by the Turks. Regarding both Greeks and

Serbs as dangerous revolutionaries, they recognised in it only a means of assailing the solidly entrenched position of the one, and a weapon which could be turned with advantage against the other. The Serbs were oblivious to the menace which lay hidden in the scheme, for the Bulgars were at that time but a tribe which it appeared probable would ultimately become a part of the Serbian Kingdom. Thus, Prince Michel lent diplomatic support to the proposal, and actually dispatched his most energetic propagandist—a Croate named Verkovitch—into Macedonia to there create a movement in its favour. But the Exarchat, once obtained, speedily developed into an instrument of Bulgarian propaganda. In its true guise as a national rather than a religious institution, it became the advance guard of Bulgarianism in Macedonia.

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

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

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

Subsequent developments, however, tended to enlarge the breach. Though the Serbians had been deserted by Russia, it is impossible to absolve them entirely from responsibility for the situation which had been created to their detriment. While the people remained, as ever, hostile to Austria, the Serbian Obrenovitch rulers played into the hands of the Hapsburgs, and there set in a series

of quarrels between the rival dynasties and the politicians who exploited them, with the result that the nation, thus rent asunder, paid too little heed both to its own future and that of the Serbs under alien rule. In 1884, Austria, making use of Serbia as a pawn in the struggle against Russia, induced King Milan to attack the Bulgars at Slivnitza. Internal dissension robbed the invaders of any hope of success from the outset, but it was, nevertheless, largely due to the incompetency and cowardice of their ruler that the campaign ended in disaster. The lesson of that defeat, following on the heels of the Treaty of San Stefano, was not lost upon the Macedonians, who were quick to assume that to the unpopularity of the Serbs with Russia must now be added the further drawback of military weakness.

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

The Turks, also, hastened to class this troublesome section of Ottoman subjects as Bulgars. Not only was this solution imposed upon them by the diplomatic representations of the Great Powers and the various panacea which were brought to the healing of the Macedonian malady, but, since Turkish nationality is based upon religion, the peasant was registered as a Greek or a Bulgar according to the school or church which he attended. Thus it many times happened that both Greeks and Bulgars were to be found among members of one and the same family. To have professed Serbian race would have led to a speedy annihilation of the courageous patriot by one or other of the murder bands which infested the country.

Now while the activity of the Serbians was, under the circumstances, highly blameworthy, the temporary indifference to their responsibilities which they exhibited cannot, particularly in view of recent history, be held to justify the claim of Bulgaria to the Macedonians. The country was originally colonised, at the beginning of the seventh century, by the same Jugo Slav tribes which descended from the Carpathians and filtered into Serbia and the western part of the Balkan Peninsula. At various epochs in history alien Emperors made them subject to their rule; but the Bulgars never succeeded in attaching any degree of permanency to their occupation, and when, prior to the Ottoman conquest, the Serbian leader Dushan regained Macedonia for Serbia, he reconquered a Serbian race, in the same manner that the Balkan wars left King Peter once more ruler of a people who sprang from the same stock as the men who routed the Turks at Koumanovo and Monastir.

It has, again, been held that though the Macedonian Slavs may, in reality, be more Serbian than Bulgarian, the employment of the foregoing argument is inadmissible, in view of the conditions of the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty in 1912. According to Bulgarian partisans, Serbia, by that document, acknowledged Central Macedonia to be Bulgarian. This is but an example of the inexact and unprovable statements which are circulated and accepted on behalf of Bulgaria. Just as the flimsiest arguments are often endowed with a certain superficial conviction when voiced by a popular advocate, so it seems that a large section of the public is ready to give ear to any proposition, however absurd, where the Bulgars are concerned. Take the theory of settlement on the basis of nationality. Few States would have more to lose by its strict application, and yet we find apologists for Bulgaria pleading for a solution of the Balkan tangle which shall be founded on the nationality of the inhabitants as it was presumed to exist in 1912. Striving to clutch at any available straw, they fasten on to a principle the first application of which would entail the cession of Thrace to Greece. Obviously, geographical and economic considerations force Bulgaria to hold Thrace, but these are no more than two of the reasons which oblige Serbia to insist upon the retention of Central Macedonia and the Vardar Valley.

The statement that the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty of 1912 involved Serbia in an acknowledgment of the Bulgarian pretensions is either a calculated perversion of the truth or the result of ignorance of the clauses of the Treaty. By Article 2 of that document, Serbia only "recognises the right of Bulgaria to territory east of the Rhodopes and the

River Struma." What Serbia did was to agree to put forward *no claim* to the territory lying south-east of a line running roughly from the Lake of Ochrida to Mount Golem, "if the two parties become convinced that their organisation into an autonomous province is impossible in view of the common interests of the Bulgarian or Serbian nationalities, or for other reasons of an internal or an external order." It should be obvious, therefore, that Serbia agreed to make a sacrifice by reason of certain fundamental considerations, and it will be of assistance to ascertain correctly what were the influences which animated the Government, not only in the interpretation of this article, but in the very foundation of the Treaty itself.

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

Simultaneously faced with the desire for protection against Austria, the economic importance of an outlet to

the sea, and the necessity for the liberation of the Macedonian Slavs, Serbia saw herself unable to realise all her ambitions. She also under-estimated her own military strength. The shadow of the mailed fist of Bulgaria had fallen upon her, and, feeling that some sacrifice was imposed if negotiations were to proceed, Serbian statesmen agreed to the annexation by Bulgaria of certain sections of Macedonia, without in any way surrendering their conviction that its inhabitants were, despite the Bulgarian propaganda, of Serbian race.

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

Those obligations included liabilities:—

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

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

Bulgaria entirely failed to fulfil these promises. She

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

Bulgaria had therefore failed to fulfil the terms of the Military Convention, and, since the Convention formed an "inseparable part of the Treaty," the Treaty itself became at least liable to amendment. Further, in view of the fact that the spirit of the document is held to be even as important as its letter, it is logical to suggest that, if the Military Convention had been subjected to any eleventh hour alteration, the Serbian case with regard to the disputed lands would still be a good one, for it must be obvious that Mr. Pashitch took into consideration the armed assistance which Bulgaria would presumably render when he made the territorial concessions referred to in Central Macedonia.

It might, indeed, be advanced with reason that the failure of Bulgaria to act in accordance with the terms of the Military Convention was in itself good and sufficient cause for the revision which Serbia subsequently demanded. But while Bulgaria had fallen short of her obligations, Serbia rendered assistance for which no

provision had previously been made. Appreciating the difficulty experienced by her ally in the taking of Adrianople, she despatched an army of 50,000 men and a number of siege guns against the Thracian fortress. No attempt was made to bargain for this necessary assistance, but the Serbian Government advised Bulgaria that compensation would be expected. The ingratitude of the Bulgars for this aid caused the Serbs to awaken to the realities of the situation. Shortly afterwards (December, 1912) Bulgaria refused to sign peace with Turkey solely in her own interest, and the Serbs found themselves obliged to maintain an army of 400,000 men in the field for months in order to second the ambitious schemes of Tzar Ferdinand.

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

“Every difference which may arise in relation to the

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

Thus Bulgaria, confident that Serbs and Greeks would fly in terror before her battalions, put the question of Central Macedonia to the sword, and lost. With the first shot from her cannon she destroyed the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty of 1912. To talk of the "injustice" of the Treaty of Bucharest is illogical. It is the "injustice" which all defeated combatants have to accept at the hands of their victors. It is the "injustice" which Germany will have to suffer. And, it may be asked, shall we take count of the millions which the Kaiser's Government have spent to Germanise Alsace-Lorraine and prate of the "injustice" of the reversion of these provinces to France?

The plain truth of the matter is that the exclusive Bulgarian right to Central Macedonia cannot be substantiated. There is not an argument available in her

cause which cannot be countered with overpowering effect from the Serbian side. Therefore, we are being invited to ignore our Serbian Allies, together with recent history, in order to secure, so it is alleged, Bulgarian intervention on our side and settle a well-established peace upon the Balkan Peninsula. Both objectives are, in themselves, admirable enough, but the measures which it is proposed to adopt to achieve them will scarce bear analysis.

The great services which Serbia has rendered to the Allies should not blind us to the fact that she is fighting her own battles. She is struggling for territorial expansion, not for national disintegration; to add new lands to her realm, not to lose those she has won by enormous sacrifice in other wars. For the Serbs, Central Macedonia represents more than the blood of her sons and the reclamation of part of her ancient empire. The common frontier with Greece and the possession of the Vardar Valley are of immense strategical and commercial importance to her. It should not be assumed that the possession of a port, or ports, on the Adriatic will remove the necessity for railway facilities to Salonika, for southern Serbia will naturally continue to seek an Ægean outlet for its products. Again, Italy, possessed of Taranto and Vallona, has it in her power to close the Adriatic at any moment—an action which would render Serbia as dependent upon the Vardar Valley as she is to-day. It is, perhaps, only when one realises that the Uskub-Salonika railway has been the thread upon which the very existence of Serbia has hung since August last that one is able to appreciate how impossible it is for her to willingly allow any power—least of all Bulgaria—to step in between her and the port owned by her ally.

We serve no useful purpose by suggesting that the satisfying of existing Bulgarian ambition would remove these dangers. The close relationship which has for years existed between the Foreign Offices of Vienna and Sofia, the bitter experience of 1913, the unfriendly attitude of the Bulgarian press and people during the war, and the irregular raids on the railway which have ceased only with a stern warning from the allied powers, have convinced the Serbians that any concessions west of the Vardar River will but encourage their neighbours in a desire for further expansion. One could wish that British sympathisers of the Bulgarian cause had taken their cue from the highly correct attitude of their Government. But instead of so doing, they have encouraged their friends in their ambitions and held out hopes that a policy which is little less than blackmail will be attended with success. Thus, although uncertain as to whether even the cession of Central Macedonia would capture such an elusive diplomacy as is that of Bulgaria, they have unwittingly fanned the flames of hostile neutrality. The movement which suggests that a settlement favourable to Bulgaria should be imposed upon Serbia cannot be too strongly condemned, particularly in view of the sacrifices which Serbia will be called upon to make in Dalmatia as the price of Italian intervention, and in the Banat in order that the assistance of Roumania may be obtained. It would be unacceptable to any section of the Serbian people, it would destroy the fine spirit which pervades their army, and rob us of the signal services which King Peter's soldiers are destined to render in the future.

One is, indeed, prone to wonder how such a decision as is so glibly contemplated could be put into effect.

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

The policy of bribing Bulgaria at the expense of Serbia will not lead, as some appear to think, to the establishment of Balkan peace on a firm basis. Impose this distasteful solution on Greece and Serbia, and they will most assuredly unite once more to drive out their hereditary foe. Maintain the *status quo*, and Greece and Serbia will not trouble Balkan peace. Left to themselves when European intervention could have stayed the hand of war, they fought out their own salvation, and they are convinced that the peace of the Peninsula will only be assured so long as Bulgaria remains powerless to attack them with any hope of success. Bulgaria is admittedly following a policy of opportunism. She will not take the field in order to help us win, even with Central Macedonia as a bait. Her intervention will follow when she is assured of our ultimate victory, and the forcing of the Dardanelles will do more to speed up her decision than any offers of Serbian territory. For this latter-day assistance we can offer her ample compensation to the east. The Enos-Midia line must, in common fairness, be restored to her, and it would seem that the general interests of the Allies would be served by allowing her to descend to the Sea of Marmora and giving her the port of Rodosto. Serbia could, and

doubtless would, cede Istib and Kotchana; but no good purpose can be served by the submission of propositions entailing a crossing of the Vardar River.

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

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