

**ČEDOMIR ANTIĆ**

**RALPH PAGET**  
**A Diplomat in Serbia**



Čedomir Antić  
*Ralph Paget: A Diplomat in Serbia*



СРПСКА АКАДЕМИЈА НАУКА И УМЕТНОСТИ  
БАЛКАНОЛОШКИ ИНСТИТУТ  
ПОСЕБНА ИЗДАЊА 94

ЧЕДОМИР АНТИЋ

**РАЛФ ПЕЦЕТ**  
Један дипломата у Србији

Београд  
2006

SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS  
INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES  
SPECIAL EDITIONS 94

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**RALPH PAGET**  
**A Diplomat in Serbia**

Belgrade  
2006

Published by  
Institute for Balkan Studies SASA  
Belgrade, 35 Knez Mihailova St.  
e-mail: balkinst@sanu.ac.yu  
www.balkaninstitut.com

For the Publisher  
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Zia Gluhbegović (MA)

Printed by  
ATC Belgrade

Printed in  
500 copies

ISBN 86-7179-049-5

Supported by the Ministry of Science & Environmental Protection,  
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## Serbian

## English Phonetic

|       |     |    |
|-------|-----|----|
| A     | А а | A  |
| B     | Б б | B  |
| V     | В в | V  |
| G     | Г г | G  |
| D     | Д д | D  |
| Đ đ   | Ђ ј | Dy |
| E     | Е е | E  |
| Žž    | Ж ж | Zh |
| Z     | З з | Z  |
| I     | И и | I  |
| J     | Ј ј | Y  |
| K     | К к | K  |
| L     | Л л | L  |
| Lj lj | Љ љ | Ly |
| M     | М м | M  |
| N     | Н н | N  |
| Nj nj | Њ њ | Ny |
| O     | О о | O  |
| P     | П п | P  |
| R     | Р р | R  |
| S     | С с | S  |
| T     | Т т | T  |
| Ć ć   | Ћ ћ | Ch |
| U     | У у | U  |
| F     | Ф ф | F  |
| H     | Х х | H  |
| C     | Ц ц | Ts |
| Čč    | Ч ч | Ch |
| Dž dž | Џ ѓ | Dj |
| Š š   | Ш ш | Sh |

## **RALPH PAGET: A Diplomat in Serbia**

**Preface by  
Dr Nigel J. Brailey,  
University of Bristol**

It has been claimed of the eminent Sir Ernest Satow, Ralph Paget's sometime diplomat-scholar patron, that after an initial two decades service in Japan, his career, and thereby also his reputation, were marred by constant moves from one post to another at the behest of the British Foreign Office. In fact, Satow ended up a Privy Councillor, one of Britain's delegates to the Second Hague Peace Conference, and a recognized authority on the Far East as a whole, until the 1914-18 War arrived, to largely obscure Far Eastern affairs.

Sir Ralph Paget served similarly in a variety of posts, Bangkok 1902-1909 being the most lasting. But his time in Serbia, 1910-13, on the very eve of the Sarajevo assassination and outbreak of the 1914-18 War, is of special interest. What is more, it was followed by two years back home in the Foreign Office when Balkan expertise was especially valued, and then two more at Copenhagen, the capital of neutral Denmark, when for a time, prior to the deposition of Tsar Nicholas II, it featured in attempts to achieve a negotiated end to the war. And if Paget himself never returned to Serbia after 1915, his wife maintained her interest in the country, post-1918 as the heart of the new but ultimately ill-fated Kingdom of Yugoslavia, for years afterwards.

It is therefore specially appropriate that Čedomir Antić, a Serb historian, should investigate these aspects of Paget's

career. The greater part of this work is devoted to Serbian affairs up to 1913, along with Sir Ralph's experiences on his return on a humanitarian mission in late 1915. However, of particular interest finally is the inclusion here, printed in full in an appendix, of the memorandum of early August 1916, drawn up by Paget on his return to London, and in association with Sir William Tyrrell, private secretary to Sir Edward Grey, on negotiations at the end of the war. As has been noted elsewhere (E. Goldstein, 'Winning the Peace', Oxford 1991), this memorandum was founded in the idea of a territorial settlement following the 'principles of nationality', even to the extent of dismembering the Russian Empire and uniting Germany with German-speaking Austria. But composed in the latter stages of the Asquith administration in London, it also discussed at length the consequences of an inconclusive outcome to the war.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation and sincere gratitude for the help I have received from Dr. Nigel J. Brailey of the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Bristol.

I am especially grateful to my dear friend and benefactor Dr. Robert Anderson, who has advised me, supported me, believed in me and encouraged me since my first visit to Great Britain.

For generous and devoted support and stimulating historical discussions, I would like to thank Mr. Timothy Garton Ash of St. Anthony's College, Oxford.

I am also grateful to Dr. John R. Whittam and Prof. Christopher Clay of the University of Bristol for their thoughtful advice.

I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Dimitrije Djorodjević of the University of Santa Barbara and Mr. Aleksa M. Gavrilović who provided me with important sources. I owe special thanks for the hospitality and support to Mrs. Ethel and Mr. Mirko D. Miličević, and Mrs. Zagorka and Mr. Aleksa M. Gavrilović, who have never forgotten our Serbia. Finally I would like to thank my old friend Mr. Dejan P. Hinić for precious advice and understanding.

For material support for my studies in Bristol I am indebted to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



Sir RALPH SPENCER PAGET

Dedicated to  
**Dr Robert Anderson**  
- A distinguished scholar and philanthropist

## INTRODUCTION

During the first period of official diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Serbia (1837–1918), Sir Ralph Paget was the British Minister in Belgrade for three years only. Paget was the British representative in Serbia from 1910 to 1913, in the course of the two biggest wars waged in the Balkan Peninsula between the Vienna War (1684–1699) and the First World War. The evolution of his political attitude towards the Serbian question and the national principle was followed by a general turn in British foreign policy. Paget was sent to Serbia during the first stages of the Great War, this time in the capacity of Commissioner of the British Red Cross. Sir Ralph Paget and his wife Lady Paget, who run the Military Hospital in Skoplje, had probably the biggest influence in all non-military activities of Great Britain in Serbia during the initial phase of the war. During his long career Paget served in ten countries on four continents. His personal influence could be traced in British policy towards Central America at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in Siam (Thailand) during the imperial competition over Southeast Asia, in the Balkans during the Balkan crisis of 1912–1913, and in Denmark in the period of war blockade in the last two years of the First World War. As Assistant Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office, it was Sir Ralph Paget who created the first plan for the political reorganization of post-war Europe.

Sir Ralph Paget's life and activities have not yet been the subject of historical research or analysis. Those of his papers that are preserved in the British Library have been virtually neglected, and his part in British diplomacy from 1896 to 1918 has not been recognised. Although he had a significant influence on the Bal-

kan policy of the Foreign Office from 1912 to 1916, Paget has only occasionally been mentioned in Serbian historiography. The only book related to him indirectly is a commemorative volume dedicated to his wife, Lady Paget, written and published by Serbian emigrants, some of whom were distinguished scholars and politicians.<sup>1</sup> Paget's papers which are preserved in the British Library cover the long period between the 1890s and the late 1920s.<sup>2</sup> Among them are several letters, dispatches and drafts that have not yet been published. The Paget Papers relating to the First World War are preserved in the Cambridge University Library.

Sir Ralph's diplomatic career reached its high point between 1910 and 1918, while he was serving in Belgrade (1910-1913 and 1915), in the Foreign Office (1913-16) and in Copenhagen (from 1916 to 1918). Nevertheless, Paget's diplomatic achievements and even tremendous humanitarian efforts made from 1912 to 1916 did not attract much historical interest. Even in Serbia, the country whose generations of patriots prided themselves on their devotion to the memory and heritage of the First World War, the Pagets remained virtually forgotten. Some historians even confused Sir Ralph Paget with his uncle General Arthur Paget, while others were not able to make a distinction between Lady Paget and a few of her contemporaries of the same name.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, the popular memory of Lady Paget rested on the inspired (though not accurate and honest) description of her given by one of the most distinguished Serbian writers, Miloš Crnjanski.

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<sup>1</sup> U. Stanković, ed., *Spomenica Ledi Pedžet, Srpska Misao*, Year IV, Book 7 (Melbourne, 1959). Hereafter *Spomenica*.

<sup>2</sup> Paget Papers, 51252-51256, Manuscript Department, British Library, London. Hereafter PP.

<sup>3</sup> A. Mitrović, *Srbija u Prvom Svetskom ratu* (Beograd 2004), 150, 161.



# SIR RALPH PAGET 'AN EDWARDIAN DIPLOMAT'

## BACKGROUND AND YOUTH

The Right Honorable Sir Ralph Paget was forty-six year old when he was appointed British Minister in Belgrade. By then (summer 1910) he had already spent twenty-two years in the diplomatic service, serving in seven. countries and on four continents.<sup>4</sup> It was no doubt his perfect record that recommended Paget for the new post, but the Paget family tradition, which had been to a significant extent involved with the Balkans, probably played an important role as well.

The history of the Paget family had commenced some four centuries before – when William Paget was created *Baron Paget of Beaudesert* (Staffordshire) in 1549, thus entering the ranks of the English aristocracy.<sup>5</sup> In 1714, the head of the family was elevated to an earldom, as Earl of Uxbridge.<sup>6</sup> However, the highest honour conferred on the family came one century later, when Henry William, Sir Ralph's great-great uncle, led the British cavalry at the battle of Waterloo. In the fierce combat he distinguished himself with courage and, severely wounded, lost a leg. In consequence of

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<sup>4</sup> 'Paget's Obituary', *The Times*, 13 May 1940.

<sup>5</sup> S. Lee, ed., *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. XLIII (London 1895), 60-61.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 53. K.S. Pavlović gives 1784 as the date of the creation which is obviously a mistake, K.S. Pavlović, *Spomenica*, 8.

this action Sir Ralph's ancestor was promoted in rank and created a Marquess.<sup>7</sup>

Although the Pagets had traditionally served in the Army or Navy, three of them undertook diplomatic missions which brought them into contact with Serbs. Curiously, one Paget witnessed the earliest beginnings of the Serbian national revival. It was in 1807, when Sir Arthur Paget, in the capacity of Ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, supervised Captain Leake's mission to the Balkans. Uncertain about the future of the Ottoman Empire, he sent the captain a letter with instructions in the event of its sudden demise. From the HMS *Thetis* off the Dardanelles Paget asked Leake to explore the inclination of various peninsular rebels against their Ottoman overlords to defend their future independence against France and Russia.<sup>8</sup> One century later, Sir Ralph Paget, a member of the same family, was to witness the real end of Turkey-in-Europe and to experience worries similar to those of his ancestor.

Some thirty years after Leake's expedition, Admiral Lord Clarence E. Paget visited the hilly Serbian land of Montenegro. There he met the celebrated and popular Prince-Bishop and romantic poet, Petar Petrović-Njegoš.<sup>9</sup> Finally, even Sir Augustus

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<sup>7</sup> As Marquess of Anglesey. One century later there were only thirty-nine Marquesses in the whole of Great Britain: Lee, *Ibid.*, 56; Pavlović, *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Paget to Leake, 19 October 1807, H.W.V. Temperley, *History of Serbia* (London, 1917), 202; Lee, *Ibid.*, 45-46.

<sup>9</sup> K.S. Pavlović, *op cit.*, 8; The visit to Montenegro took place in 1843 and lasted just several days. Some recollections from that journey were recorded by one of Paget's associates (Ingram ?). The visitors were impressed by the modest appearance of the Montenegrin capital Cetinje, and horrified by the Turkish heads which were placed on the town's highest tower. The Prince-Bishop treated his visitors with great honour; he described Montenegro as a brave defender of Christianity, which was the cause worth any bravery and cruelty. He even accompanied them on their journey back to the Austrian possessions in Boka giving Paget a rifle ornamented with silver as a farewell present. V. M. Jovanović, "Admiral Padžet kod Njegoša", *Politika*, 19 September 1925, No.6252, 2.

Paget, Sir Ralph's father, while he was British ambassador in Vienna, had many contacts with the Serbs from Austria-Hungary and Serbia. When the first king of modern Serbia, Milan Obrenović, renounced the throne and settled in Vienna, he became a close friend of the British ambassador.<sup>10</sup>

Ralph Spencer Paget was born on 26 November 1864, as the second son. His father, Sir Augustus Paget had by then a distinguished diplomatic career behind him, having occupied several important posts in Italy and Austria-Hungary.<sup>11</sup> Like his elder brother, Ralph Paget went to Eton, to Edmond Warre's house, where he studied from 1877 to 1882. Young Ralph distinguished himself when he won the Prince Consort's prize for German.<sup>12</sup> He was also a good sportsman. As an oarsman, he rowed in the winning Novice Eight of 1881, again in the Procession of Boats on 4 June in the following year, and several months later in his House Four.<sup>13</sup> After leaving school, Ralph Paget studied abroad. Interestingly enough, but very much in the spirit of the time, his biographers do not mention the subject of his studies, or where he was studying. As his study period abroad lasted for more than six years, Paget probably did not stay only in one university. It appears that he studied oriental philology, for in one of his official biographies he was described as 'an Arabic and Turkish scholar'.<sup>14</sup> Proficient in several languages, including at least two oriental ones, and being a member of a family which had produced so many high state officials, Ralph Paget's decision to enter the diplomatic service seems entirely predictable. Ralph Paget was not yet twenty-

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<sup>10</sup> Pavlović, *op cit.*, 8

<sup>11</sup> Paget, Sir Augustus Barkley, *The Concise Dictionary of National Biography: From Earliest Time to 1985*, Vol. 3 (Oxford/New York, 1992), 2277-2278.

<sup>12</sup> *The Eton Register 1871-1880*, compiled for the Old Etonian Association by Spottiswoode 7 Co., Ltd. (London, 1907).

<sup>13</sup> *The Eton Boating Book*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co (London, 1933).

<sup>14</sup> 'Foreign Office Appointment', *The Times*, 15 August 1913.

four years of age when, in April 1888, he was nominated an attaché in the diplomatic service and was sent to Vienna two months later. Vienna was then considered 'the pleasantest post in Europe', and the fact that he served there under his own father could be considered an additional advantage in his first post.<sup>15</sup> In the autumn of the following year, Paget was transferred to Egypt. As a territory of immense strategic importance, Egypt had been under British protection since 1882, and was in reality governed by the British Agent and Consul-General in Cairo. Ralph Paget served under Sir Evelyn Baring (later Lord Cromer), taking part in the first stages of financial reforms and the reorganisation of the country over the course of the next two years. In 1891, the young diplomat was transferred again, this time on a short mission to Zanzibar only recently handed over to the British Crown in return for Heligoland. Although Paget has not left any recollections of the Zanzibar post, it appears that his job there was not strictly tied to diplomacy. The writer of his obituary left just a general remark that, serving under Sir Gerald Portal, young Ralph had an opportunity to see 'the first beginnings of European civilisation in the East of Africa'.<sup>16</sup> A short time later, in June 1892, he was on the move again, this time to Washington. Nevertheless, this new appointment also proved to be brief, lasting only one year.

#### THE PERIOD IN THE FAR EAST

The first more significant post that Paget obtained was the position of *Chargé d' Affaires* in the British Legation in Tokyo. He spent six years in Japan, the last four serving under Sir Ernest Satow, and this period left a strong mark on Paget's career and personality. The length of time that he served there, and importance of the work in which he was engaged, made those Japanese

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<sup>15</sup> Obituary', *The Times*, 13 May 1940.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

years the earliest period from which he preserved some papers and correspondence.<sup>17</sup> The last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was crucial for the development of Anglo-Japanese relations, the steady improvement of which finally led to the 1902 Alliance. So, by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, old commercial treaties which had placed Japan in an unequal and subordinated position had been abolished and re-negotiated.<sup>18</sup> Paget's promotion in rank came in 1895, when he was entrusted with the modest post of Second Secretary.<sup>19</sup> However, it was more due to pure chance that his abilities got fully expressed. P.H. Le Poer Trench, the British Minister in Japan, returned home sick in 1894, leaving the First Secretary of the Legation, Gerard Lowther, to cope with the crisis that had been caused by the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95).<sup>20</sup> However, Lowther, who would later become one of the principal founders of the *Entente Cordiale*, did not enjoy much respect from the influential British-China Association, nor was he considered to carry much weight with the Japanese. For these reasons, the activities of the British Embassy had been run by 'his more locally experienced subordinates' (Paget and Gubbins) until in 1895 Satow was appointed Minister in Tokyo.<sup>21</sup> In this situation, the twenty-nine-year old Paget instantly attracted attention and won the respect of the Japanese public. In August 1893 (a short time after he arrived in Tokyo) an article published in *Nichi Nichi Shimbun* praised the young diplomat for his abilities and for his correct attitude towards the Japanese government. Concluding in an almost poetic manner, the author of the article remarked: 'Mr. Paget has plenty of springs

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<sup>17</sup> PP. 51252-5B.

<sup>18</sup> J. Hoare, *The Era of the Unequal Treaties, 1858-99*, I. Nish and Y. Kibata eds., *The History of Anglo-Japanese relations, Vol. 1: The Political and Diplomatic Dimension, 1600-1930*, London 2000, 121-4.

<sup>19</sup> Foreign Office Appointment *The Times*, 13 August 1913.

<sup>20</sup> N. Brailey, 'Sir Ernest Satow, Japan and Asia', *The Historical Journal*, 35, I (1992), 127.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 127-8.



*Ango-Japanese Alliance,*  
contemporary caricature

*and autumns to come, the future of great promise (is) before him and (he) will certainly make himself a name as a diplomatist of mark.'*<sup>22</sup>

In 1901, Ralph Paget was transferred again, this time to the opposite side of the globe – to Guatemala.<sup>23</sup> Although acting as *Chargé d' Affaires*, Paget was much more on his own as his new legation was also in charge of neighbouring Nicaragua. In these small and remote Central American states, it was mainly the economic interests of the British Empire that needed to be protected. So Paget's activities were to some degree reduced compared to his prestigious Japanese post, being limited to the supervision of debt servicing and the accomplishing of contractual obligations. Nevertheless, his new post could not be described as unvaried at all, for the relations between British investors and the proverbially unreliable local governments were very dynamic.<sup>24</sup> In one of his rare private letters preserved from this period, Paget describes his Central American experiences with much spirit. During his 1901 official visit to Nicaragua, the British diplomat was disturbed and quite annoyed by a unique honour which was paid to him. In virtually every town he visited, brass bands awaited him, persistently playing the British national anthem over and over again. Forgetting for a moment considerations of diplomatic courtesy, Paget eventually even asked not to be honoured in this way any more.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, although Paget was not 'able to tolerate' either the habits of Guatemalans or the climate of their land, his mission in Central America was considered to be very successful. The work he had done for the protection of British economic interests had satisfactory results and, in consequence, the presidents of home chambers of commerce expressed more than once their satisfaction with the accomplishments of the young British diplomat.

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<sup>22</sup> *Nichi Nichi Shimbun*, 22 August 1893, PP, 51252.

<sup>23</sup> The author of his obituary claims that Paget also spent some time in the Cairo Legation for a second time, *Paget's Obituary*.

<sup>24</sup> Paget to President Cabrera, 6 June 1902, P. P., 51252.

<sup>25</sup> Paget to his sister, Managua, 1 November 1901, P. P., 51252.

In September 1902, he was promoted and appointed *Chargé d' Affaires* with the Bangkok Legation. The years he spent in Siam were to be the most significant period for his development as a diplomat. It would be the Bangkok legation where he became the official head for the first time. In Siam, he had an opportunity to take charge of a complex and long process of negotiations, and it was then that, for the first time, he received a high decoration for his service

At the turn of the century, Siam was among those Asian states that were gradually starting to open up to the West. During the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), many Western advisers were engaged to assist in reorganising the administrative and judicial system of the country.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, the international standing of Siam had been gradually enhanced, and this was manifested several times during the 1900s when Siamese princes attended ceremonial occasions such as coronations or royal funerals in London.<sup>27</sup> Initially appointed *Chargé d' Affaires*, Paget was put in charge of all affairs, for almost immediately after his arrival in Bangkok, Reginald Tower, the British Minister there, returned to London. The Foreign Office had considerable difficulty in appointing his successor - allegedly due to the bad climate. It was only after two years (in 1904) that a solution was devised: after serving for a period as the First Secretary, Paget became British Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Siam. Paget held this new post until 1909, and it was the longest period he occupied one diplomatic post.

The main political issue in contemporary British-Siamese relations was the negotiations over a border treaty between Siam and British Malaya. These negotiations, which had commenced shortly before Paget arrived in Siam, were particularly complex, for the border question depended on two other unsolved political

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<sup>26</sup> J. Crosby, *Siam: The Crossroads*, London, 1973, 19.

<sup>27</sup> For the presence of Siamese princes in London, see *The Times*, 21 May 1910 and 23 September 1910.



questions: those of extra-territorial legal jurisdiction and of the railway. Alongside serious Siamese opposition to the agreement, Paget for the first time encountered German rivalry in the region.<sup>28</sup> Although he managed to overcome this formidable competition over the case of Utaradit railway bridge project, the German presence in the region was increasing. Feeling that a new bank, which was being started in Bangkok, as well as several other new investments were only a cover for German capital, Paget was concerned about British prospects in Siam. For these reasons, he expressed genuine anti-German feelings in several letters of the period.<sup>29</sup>

Paget revived the idea of purchase of Siamese rights in two bordering states. Negotiations were long and met with significant internal obstacles in the Foreign Office and British government. Even Lansdowne, concerned about possible French disapproval in the case, advised a moderate approach.<sup>30</sup> The Anglo-Siamese treaty was finally concluded at the beginning of 1909. Its provisions were very beneficial for Britain, involving the cession of Siamese tributaries, the states of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu, to British Malaya. As compensation, Britain promised to renounce some of the ex-territorial rights its subjects had enjoyed in Siam, and to provide a loan for the construction of a railway between Bangkok and Singapore.<sup>31</sup> It appears that in his capacity as *Chargé d' Affaires* and later Minister, Paget had a predominant influence in the course of the negotiations. The patterns for British policy in this issue had already been suggested by Paget in 1905, when he

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<sup>28</sup> Paget to Morrison, 5 April 1906, G. E. Morrison Correspondence, Mitchell Library, Sydney, Vol. 51.

<sup>29</sup> It is interesting that Paget's mother was German /A.B. Paget, *John Bull in Italy, A Warning by Ichabad* (London, 1878), 15. However, like several other British diplomats from the period (e.g. Sir E. Satow and Sir E. Crowe) who were of German origins, he came to express strong 'anti-German feelings'.

<sup>30</sup> J. Chandran, 'Britain and the Siamese Malay States 1892-1904', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 15, 483.

<sup>31</sup> J. Crosby, *op cit.*, 58.

defined the new British policy towards Siamese Malay States as a 'policy of open door'.<sup>32</sup>

In the course of the negotiations, and especially when, at the end of 1908, they entered a particularly sensitive stage, Paget had to deal with obstacles both in London and Bangkok with transparent even-handedness. The British Cabinet had not taken a firm stand over the range of concessions on the question of jurisdiction, right up to the very end of the talks.<sup>33</sup> In September 1908, Paget had to explain his policy in a special memo. The British side was very doubtful over the issue of court jurisdiction in Siam. Ralph Paget argued that the modernisation of Siamese courts was obvious, while the contest with other Great Powers made the solution he proposed the only feasible one. He compared the cases of Siam and Japan stating that the proposed policy had successful precedents.<sup>34</sup> On the other side, the King of Siam was so reluctant in the matter of the cession of the southern states that the topic resurfaced even when he received Paget for his farewell audience.<sup>35</sup> The Foreign Office was opposed to any thought of partition of Siam by Britain and France even though Paget later advocated it.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, the final Anglo-Siamese agreement established Britain's position in Siam in the form in which it existed throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although contested by Germany immediately

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<sup>32</sup> Paget to Lansdowne, Bangkok, 7 September 1905, FO 371/131 POLITICAL.

<sup>33</sup> Memo of Meeting in the Foreign Office, 31 October 1908, PP, 512551.; "Britain and Siamese Malay States 1892-1904", *Historical Journal*, Vol. 15, 483.

<sup>34</sup> In 1907 the British influence in Siam was predominant: 125 Britishers lived in the Far-Eastern Kingdom, while there were only 40 Germans, 11 Dutchmen and 5 Frenchmen. Sir Ralph Paget, *Memorandum on Draft Treaty with Siam*, Foreign Office Miscellaneous Papers, 1906-1909, 20 September 1908.

<sup>35</sup> Paget to Campbell, 1 May 1909, PP., 512552.

<sup>36</sup> "Britain and Siamese Malay States 1892-1904", *Historical Journal*, Vol. 15, 483.

before the outbreak of the First World War, the British influence remained very strong and eventually attracted Siam to the side of the Triple Entente.<sup>37</sup>

Success was accomplished and reward followed: as well as being promoted in rank to Minister, Paget also, in 1907, received the C.V.O.<sup>38</sup> The year 1907 proved to be an *annus mirabilis* for the British Minister. Soon after, he married Louise Margaret Leila Wemyss Paget (his cousin, the daughter of his uncle General Sir Arthur Paget), and thus his reward was followed by personal happiness.

In the summer of 1909, Paget was about to leave Bangkok. In the farewell letter which he sent to the King of Siam, he described the years he and his wife had spent in Bangkok as 'one of the happiest periods' in their lives. Surely, this was not entirely an act of formal courtesy.<sup>39</sup>

#### IN THE CENTRE OF WORLD POLITICS

In his biography of King Edward VII Sir Sidney Lee claims that in 1908 Ralph Paget was considered by the Foreign Office as a candidate as Ambassador to Berlin.<sup>40</sup> If true, this meant that Paget was already perceived as part of the first echelon of British diplomats. Nevertheless, his next destination was Munich, the capital of Bavaria, merely a part of the German Reich, and a huge step in hierarchy below the ambassadorial post. Paget's new appointment signified his return to Europe, then the centre of world politics, which he had left at the beginning of his career. Now, he was

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<sup>37</sup> Crosby, *op cit.*, 58.

<sup>38</sup> Was appointed "Commander of the Royal Victorian Order".

<sup>39</sup> Paget to King of Siam, Draft, May 1909, PP, 51252. According to G.E. Morrison, Paget had been very pessimistic about his future career and even considered leaving the diplomatic service. Cf. J. Tilley, *From London to Tokyo* (London, 1942), 97.

<sup>40</sup> S. Lee, *King Edward VII*, Vol. II (London 1927), 619

to remain on the old continent throughout the crucial decade in the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Europe was politically divided, and was passing through the tranquil but decisive period between the Bosnian and Agadir crises. However, as all affairs of significance were being dealt with by the British Ambassador in Berlin, Paget's activities remained confined mainly to consular duties and matters of protocol, or mediation in matters of scientific and cultural exchange.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, only a month after Paget had settled in Munich, probably partly in consequence of his Siamese feats, King Edward VII knighted him.<sup>42</sup>

According to Zara Steiner, although Paget was running a politically not very influential legation, his relatively mild reports aroused the dissatisfaction of Charles Hardinge, the powerful Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.<sup>43</sup> Steiner argues that Hardinge became such a formidable obstacle to Paget's further career that it only became possible for him 'to come back in Foreign Office' three years later, when Hardinge had already become Viceroy in India. Derived from Hardinge's correspondence, this conclusion is probably over-stated. In his rare official reports on the political situation in Bavaria, his supposed pro-German affiliations are by no means apparent. The only trace of sympathy towards Germans (or rather Roman-Catholic Bavarians) is the report Paget made to Edward Grey, which was sent only two months before he left Munich. There, the British Minister remarked that a recent Papal encyclical imbued with anti-Protestant feelings had failed to make any stron-

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<sup>41</sup> Paget to Podewils-Duerniz (Dürniz), Munich, 13 June 1909, FO 149/142.

<sup>42</sup> He was conferred the 'Knight Commandership of the Order of St. Michael and St. George' (or K.C.M.G), thus becoming Sir Ralph Paget, Paget to baron Von Podewils-Duerniz (Dürniz), Munich, 26 July 1909, FO 149/142.

<sup>43</sup> Z. Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914* (Cambridge 1969), 102; Z. Steiner, "The Foreign Office under Sir Edward Grey 1905-1914", in F.H. Hinsley (ed) *British Foreign Policy under Sir Edward Grey* (Cambridge 1977), 25.

ger appeal to the Bavarian population.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, a letter that was written by the new King George V has been preserved in the correspondence of the Munich Legation. This letter, addressed to the Prince Regent of Bavaria, is by its tone and content considerably more than the polite notification about the transfer of a diplomat. Also, it is the only such document about Paget that has been preserved.<sup>45</sup> The Siamese, or later the Serbian, kings were not notified about Paget's departure by the King of England personally, and even though he was frequently commended by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, this was a unique case where the King himself praised Paget for 'zeal, ability and fidelity'.

Sir Ralph Paget moved to Belgrade in July 1910. The political situation he found in Serbia did not promise any excitement to an able foreign diplomat. After the stormy year 1908 that witnessed the Young Turks' revolution, the Bosnian crisis and the proclamation of Bulgarian independence, all Balkan countries returned to a state of apparent tranquillity. However, in all of them the process of armament had already started, causing many internal crises and bringing further complications in their relations with the Great Powers. Paget was appointed Minister to Belgrade at a delicate time, when British newspapers and certain circles in the war industry were trying officially to involve Britain in Serbian affairs, thus throwing it into further dispute with other Powers. The instructions that the new British Minister received, on the other hand, were very resolute: he was supposed to continue the policy of strict neutrality which his predecessor J.B Whitehead had maintained devotedly, notwithstanding 'possible personal financial interests'. This task was especially sensitive, for Great Britain was perceived as an ally in Belgrade.

Even though Sir Ralph Paget managed to establish strong political contacts and to make several friendships, it is obvious,

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<sup>44</sup> Paget to Grey, Munich, 10 June 1910, FO 149/143.

<sup>45</sup> King George to the Prince Regent of Bavaria, London, 30<sup>th</sup> July 1910, FO 149/143.

according to the available sources, that his Belgrade post was in no way pleasant or delightful for him. The new British Minister to Belgrade had not seemed eager about his new post from the very beginning: in the three years Paget ran the legation, he spent almost a year on leave. Even so, he did win the confidence of many Serbian politicians, as was the case with Jovan Jovanović, the Secretary General of the Serbian Foreign Office, while Lady Paget established many valuable social contacts.<sup>46</sup> Sir Ralph never kept secret his contempt for Serbia and especially Serbian politicians.<sup>47</sup> For Paget, Belgrade remained a 'remote post' whose main disadvantage was that 'there is absolutely nowhere one can go for a few days' change'.<sup>48</sup> In spite of such an attitude, Sir Ralph gradually acquired the experience to assess the political situation in the Balkans with a great deal of accuracy. Just after the unexpected outbreak of the First Balkan war, in October 1912, he unmistakably recognised the real significance of the situation and the imminent danger of a European War. For that reason, and particularly for the role he played during the London conference and crises over Skadar (Scutari), Paget was to be promoted and brought back to London just after the crisis was over.

Heading the Belgrade legation, Sir Ralph Paget not only successfully maintained the British position during the Balkan crisis, but on two important occasions revealed to Sir Edward Grey a conception of the future British policy towards the Balkans. In a dispatch of 30 November 1912, Sir Ralph points out that it 'would be the most desirable state of affairs in the Balkans' if Serbia became completely independent of Russian and Austrian influences, while remaining closely united with, or rather controlled by, a strong

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<sup>46</sup> She became the Chairman of the Serbian Association for the Protection of Animals and during the war established and ran the war hospital in Skoplje (Uskub, Skopje).

<sup>47</sup> Once he even described them as 'an eminently uncouth and unmannerly lot', Paget to Grey, Belgrade 3. July 1912, FO 371/1472.

<sup>48</sup> Paget to Tyrrell, 27 January 1913, PP. 51253.



Pig and Politics: Servian MP's Taking Home Living Pigs for the Christmas Dinner, *The Illustrated London News*, 26 December 1908.

Bulgaria.<sup>49</sup> Perceiving the existing Balkan conflict as the dangerous final combat between Austria-Hungary and Slavdom, the British Minister anticipated imminent war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. Paget was convinced that the outcome would be either the creation of a Southern Slav kingdom or the incorporation of Serbia and Montenegro into the Habsburg Empire.<sup>50</sup> As the policy that would be most beneficial for British interests, he advocated firm support for a new alliance between Romania, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire. Its main aim would be to serve as a barrier between Russian and Austrian influences, but also as a check on Serbian aspirations. However, after the outbreak of the First Balkan War, Sir Ralph was among the first British diplomats to put the major blame for the enmity between Serbia and Austria-Hungary on the repressive regimes that had been established by Vienna in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

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<sup>49</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade, 30 November 1912, in P.P; B.D., No. 313, 234.

<sup>50</sup> Paget to Grey, 6 December 1912, *BD IX 2*, No. 347, 257.



# PAGET AS BRITISH MINISTER IN BELGRADE

## GREAT BRITAIN AND SERBIA 1837-1910

Diplomatic relations between Serbia and Great Britain had been established on 5 June 1837, when Colonel George Lloyd Hodges handed his credentials to Prince Miloš, thus becoming the first British General-Agent in the Principality of Serbia.<sup>51</sup> The fact that the Foreign Office sent a diplomatic representative to a small Balkan principality in which autonomy had only recently been confirmed was more a manoeuvre in the contest between the Great Powers than an act of support in favour of Serbian emancipation from the Ottoman Empire. Thus Hodges' activities were mainly aimed at supporting the autocratic Serbian monarch in his opposition to the influence of St. Petersburg and Constantinople. Nevertheless, as it was a period when Russian influence on the Porte was in the ascendant, and as Miloš's misrule was meeting formidable resistance in Serbia, British diplomacy failed in its efforts. Finally, Prince Miloš was forced to abdicate, and the first British diplomatic representative in Serbia, finding his position untenable, left the country as well.

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<sup>51</sup> S. K. Pavlowitch, *Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Serbia, 1837-1839* (Paris 1961), 45.

The next British diplomatic representative in Serbia was T. G. de Fonblanque. This time, British diplomacy decided to avoid any trouble and that was the reason why the new General-Agent arrived in Belgrade only after the final triumph of the new regime of the Constitutionalists. Nevertheless, Fonblanque was not impressed by the regime established in Serbia: he despised the weakness of Prince Aleksandar Karadjordjević and pointed out in his dispatches the high levels of corruption in the powerful oligarchy assembled in the State Council. Above all, he never got used to Serbia and he maintained a hostile attitude towards the Serbs.<sup>52</sup> Paradoxically, although alienated and inimically disposed, Fonblanque was virtually forgotten in Belgrade for almost eighteen years. The British General-Agent was spending much of his time in the Austrian border town of Zemun (Semlin) becoming more active only during crises.

After the 1848/9 revolution in Hungary, he helped to effect the escape of its leader Kossuth, and so attracted the personal enmity of the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph.<sup>53</sup> When, at the outbreak of the Crimean war, Russia and Austria threatened to occupy Serbia, it was Britain that temporarily won the greatest influence on Serbian affairs. But, as the Paris Peace settlement did not significantly enhance the position and status of the Principality of Serbia, British prestige promptly decreased.<sup>54</sup>

Restoration of the Obrenović dynasty in 1858 did not bring much change in Anglo-Serbian relations. During the 1860s Serbia was trying to win complete independence and to liberate neighbouring districts. The next British consul, Langworth (1860-1875), perceived Serbia as a battlefield for the two equally dangerous movements for the European balance of power: Pan-Slavism

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<sup>52</sup> Ž. Djordjević, 'Slučaj engleskog konzula Fonblanka 1858 godine, *Istorijski glasnik*, 1-2, Beograd 1978, 113-121.

<sup>53</sup> Fonblanque to Canning, Belgrade 15 January 1852, FO 78/ 896.

<sup>54</sup> R. Ljušić, *Knjiga o Načertaniju. Nacionalni i državni program Srbije (1844)*, (Beograd 1993), 88.

and South-Slavism. When, in the Eastern Crisis Russia defeated the Ottoman Empire and Pan-Slavism appeared to be triumphant in the Balkans, Great Britain stood up as the last protector of the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, the crisis opened a formidable rift between the approach of British politicians to the Balkans and the attitude of the public. Some politicians, as was the case with Disraeli, were motivated by political pragmatism to support the Porte, and at the same time were almost completely without interest in the Ottoman reform and the position of Christian subjects in the Ottoman Empire. On the other side were the Liberals, strongly supported by the British public, who became very sensitive to any news about unrestrained oppression in the Ottoman Empire. The most famous proponent of this policy was Gladstone.

The 1880s and 1890s were a period during the course of which Serbia and Romania, although formally independent since 1878, were gradually becoming politically and economically dependent on Austria-Hungary. Even though, in 1886, the British diplomatic representative in Belgrade was promoted in rank to Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, direct political interest in Serbia was in a process of decline. At the turn of the century the situation changed to a certain degree. The Macedonian uprising of 1903 and the assassination of the Serbian Royal couple attracted the attention of the British public and government. The Macedonian uprising triggered European mediation and the joint reforming action of the Great Powers towards Turkey-in-Europe. On the other side, the brutal murder of King Aleksandar Obrenović and Queen Draga left a long-lasting mark on the relations between London and Belgrade. Diplomatic relations were broken for three years, and remained estranged until 1913. The British Government's conditions for their restoration involved the elimination from public life of the officers who had played major roles in the conspiracy. As the new regime and the Karadjordjević dynasty were still weak, and relied heavily on the support of the army, genuine normalisation required considerable time. Before that could happen, the economic rivalry and political dispute between Serbia and

Austria-Hungary had already started, while Britain did not take part in the first stages of the economic contest between the Great Powers over the provision of loans for Serbia and the establishment of an armament programme for the Serbian army. So when in 1906 a new British Minister, John B. Whitehead, was appointed, Britain was lagging behind the other Great Powers as far as influence on Serbian affairs was concerned. The British position improved somewhat during the Bosnian crisis of 1908, but British diplomacy limited the signs of its new benevolence towards Serbia strictly to moral support. Serbia became interesting to the Foreign Office mainly because Serbia's adversary was Austria-Hungary, the devoted ally of Germany.<sup>55</sup> Beyond that fact there was nothing about Serbia that was attractive for British diplomacy. Serbia was not perceived worth considering as a possible future ally. The obvious instability of the Karadjordjević dynasty, the fragility of the new parliamentary political system, and the questionable virtues of the Serbian army all raised concerns that internal crises in Serbia might well affect relations between the Great Powers in the future.

Sir Ralph Paget arrived in Serbia on 21 September 1910, two months after he had been formally appointed. On the basis of the official correspondence, it does not appear that the new post attracted much of his enthusiasm, and after only few weeks he asked for five months' leave for reasons of health.<sup>56</sup> The leave was generously granted from 1 December, thus giving him just a short period of time during October and November as a unique opportunity to familiarise himself with Serbian affairs. Nevertheless, although Belgrade was to be at the centre of a Balkan and world crisis in four years' time, none considered it necessary to explore the politi-

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<sup>55</sup> D. Djordjević, *Milovan Milovanović, Likovi iz novije srpske istorije*, (Beograd 1997), 172-174.

<sup>56</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade 3 November 1910, FO 371/982 SERBIA, inute Chief Clerk, 8 November 1910. He had taken several spells of sick-leave while stationed at Bangkok.

cal situation there any more deeply than had been the case in the previous years and throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

From the point of view of the British legation, conveniently placed alongside the University building, in the very centre of Belgrade between the Royal Palace and the Kalemegdan Fortress, the political situation in Serbia was perceived as a tense but internal oriental intrigue. Thus even the first dispatch Sir Ralph sent from Belgrade contains several completely wrong estimations and inaccurate perceptions. Reporting on what at first glance was a not particularly important centenary celebration of the Battle of Varvarin in which Serbian rebels and a Russian army defeated the Turks, he gave an entirely vague picture of the event.<sup>57</sup> Although the celebration was also a demonstration of the close relations between Serbia and Russia, Paget was certain that Russian influence, which had suffered a serious set-back after the Bosnian crisis, was still at a very low level. So, writing about the Russian General O'Rourke, who attended the ceremony as guest of honour, Paget mentioned a scandal in Venice in which the General's daughter (Countess Taranowska) had been involved, but failed to notice the connection between the chief guest and his namesake who had led the Russian reinforcements at the Battle of Varvarin a hundred years earlier.

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<sup>57</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade 29 September 1910, FO 371/982 SERBIA.

BRITISH DIPLOMACY  
AND SERBIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Reports sent by Sir John Whitehead, Paget's predecessor in the post of British minister, and Colville Barclay, the First Secretary in the British legation in Belgrade, describe Serbia as a state whose foreign relations were burdened by serious misunderstandings. It was not expected that such a state would be able to maintain a consistent foreign policy - not to mention disturbing the peace in the Balkans. In April 1911, when Sir Ralph started following Serbian foreign affairs continuously, he was certain that the active foreign policy run by King Peter and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Milovanović was directed solely at enhancing their political position in the country. Assessing the results of King Peter's missions to St. Petersburg and Constantinople in March and April 1910, the British legation in Belgrade relied on reports in Serbian newspapers and on diplomatic dispatches. And when, during the King's visit to Russia, the Tsar himself assured Milovanović that a future war for the common cause was inevitable, the Foreign Office instead paid attention to a distracting tactic in the Russian press which announced an alliance between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>58</sup> The reading of signals from the Bosphorus was even more problematical. The Sublime Porte, confident that its state, during the first fragile stages of reform, was in a much better condition than its petty Balkan neighbours, remained firm in denying any concession to Serbia. Nevertheless, Gerard Lowther, now the British Ambassador in Constantinople, was aware that the Young Turks had announced their negative response to Macedonian reform, and had delayed the question of the Adriatic railway, he was still ready to point out that the establishment of a Balkan confederation was possible and would very likely be the outcome

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<sup>58</sup> D. Djordjević, *Portreti iz novije srpske istorije, Milovan Milovanović* Beograd 1997, p 236; C. Popov etc., *Istorija Srpskog naroda*, VI-1, Od Berlinskog kongresa do ujedinjenja, 1878-1918, Beograd 1994<sup>2</sup>, p 183; Nicolson to Grey, St. Petersburg 29 March 1910, FO 371/982.

of the alleged Serbo-Ottoman rapprochement.<sup>59</sup> The Serbian Government was trying to reinforce this impression in diplomatic circles, but because he considered Great Britain and France as allies, Milovanović did not hide the true intentions of official Serbia. According to Barclay's dispatch of 19 April, the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs had pointed out the connection between Serbo-Ottoman relations and the situation in Macedonia. Serbian benevolence towards the Porte was thus nothing more than 'a credit', which would not be extended if the situation in Macedonia were to remain unchanged. Barclay was surprised at Milovanović's certainty that good relations with Constantinople were basically only temporary. The Secretary of the British legation believed that the general change in Serbian policy stemmed from the completion of Russia's military reorganization, but his impressions did not cause much anxiety in the Foreign Office.<sup>60</sup>

King Peter's diplomatic activities in 1911, and their results, gave even more reason for belief that the situation in the Balkans would remain tranquil. Following the Serbian newspapers, Ralph Paget was led astray by the fact that the King and the Karadjordjević dynasty were under severe attack from the opposition almost as much as was the government.<sup>61</sup> On top of that, the

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<sup>59</sup> In his dispatch he transmitted the writings of the influential Young-Turks Ismail Hakki and Hussein Djavid in *Tanin*. Lowther to Grey 18 April 1910, FO 371/982, C. Popov etc, 184.

<sup>60</sup> Barclay to Grey, Belgrade 19 April 1910, FO 371/982. The campaign for by-elections in the southern regions of Serbia at the beginning of 1911 also gave Barclay reason for concern as the announced and allegedly unwanted turn in relations was described as a great event, Barclay to Grey, Belgrade, 5 January 1911, FO 371/1219.

<sup>61</sup> In summer 1911 a forged interview with King Peter and Prince Djordje appeared in the Belgrade daily *Novo Vreme* which was openly hostile to the dynasty and Old Radicals. In the comment on the dispatch, Edward Grey expressed his surprise at why the newspapers had not been suppressed by then, Paget to Grey, Belgrade 17 August 1911, (Minute 21 August 1911), FO, 371/1219; Ö. Popović-Öbradović, *Parlamentarizam u Srbiji od 1903 do 1914 godine* (Beograd 1998), 107, 450.

King's planned visits to Rome, Budapest and Paris were obvious failures. The carefully planned meeting with the aged Austro-Hungarian Emperor was cancelled - allegedly due to the state of his health, while the reasons communicated to the Foreign Office were much more political. The Serbian side, though eager to enhance the prestige of the Karadjordjević dynasty, refused a civil reception for its Monarch, thus causing new diplomatic complexities.<sup>62</sup> In France, whose influence was at the time predominant in Serbia, the royal visit turned out to be a complete disaster. The sudden death of the French Minister of War and the illness of the President of the Council, which both coincided with King Peter's arrival, ruined the schedule and the political effects of the visit.<sup>63</sup> Despite a well-prepared campaign in Serbian and French newspapers, which praised the supposed results of the visit, the *débâcle* which the visit meant for the Serbian monarch was more than evident to British diplomats. Soon after this an article appeared in Serbian newspapers which alleged the desire of King Peter to visit the Court of St. James, but Paget and the Russian Minister Hartwig agreed that such a blatant hint was just an Austro-Hungarian intrigue. The British legation in Belgrade published its reaction soon afterwards, but it resembled more an apology than an explanation.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Cartwright to Grey, Vienna 26 April 1911, TEL. FO 371/1219 and Cartwright to Grey, Vienna, 3 May 1911. V. Čorović argues that the visit was rejected because the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, notorious for his behaviour during the Agram trial, was to be present at the reception, V. Čorović, *Odnosi između Srbije i Austro-Ugarske u 20. veku* (Beograd 1992<sup>2</sup>), 337.

<sup>63</sup> Bertie to Grey, Paris, 22 May 1911 FO 371/1219; Paget reported superstitious rumours in Serbia. The accident was there accounted for as being due to King Peter's evil influence ('evil eye'). Paget to Grey, Belgrade 24 May 1911, FO 371/1219. Edward Grey's conclusion similarly underestimated the results of the King's efforts in foreign policy. Bertie to Grey, *op cit.*, MINUTE.

<sup>64</sup> In its reaction, the British legation in Belgrade emphasised the fact that even though the meeting of the two Kings was out of the question, the personal relations between them had been good since they had met at Cetinje some fifteen years before. At the time, the



BRITISH DIPLOMACY  
AND SERBIA'S INTERNAL CRISES

The diplomatic efforts of King Peter and the Serbian Government gradually enhanced the position of the country in the region and in Europe and ultimately contributed to the establishment of the Balkan alliance. However, the fact that Paget and British diplomacy did not attach much importance to them was not entirely due to their erroneous perception of Serbian affairs. Paget's knowledge of Serbian politics relied on the country's lively but still rudimentary parliamentary life, which was almost entirely limited to Belgrade. As the British Government was the last to recognize the new dynasty in Belgrade, the British legation was considered especially favourable towards all malcontents. Even Paget's choice of daily papers for the Legation gave advantages to opposition or to independent newspapers.<sup>65</sup> So it was not at all unexpected that Paget should adopt the attitude of Serbian Liberals and Progressives who claimed that the parliamentary political system introduced in Serbia after 1903 was the principal source of instability and crisis. Although in Serbia the Government was responsible to the National Assembly, the belief that the King lacked the power and ability to deal with and restrain the political parties gradually became Paget's opinion as well. He considered that for this reason the entire foreign policy of Serbia was nothing more than a device to bolster the prestige of the unstable Karadjordjević dynasty. According to Sir Ralph, King Peter's reputation as a pariah among European royalties contributed to his inferior position in his own kingdom.<sup>66</sup> Being nothing more than a figurehead and a powerless

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one was just a pretender to the Serbian throne and the other a young prince who was just the second in succession to the throne of England; Paget to Grey, Belgrade 5 May 1911, FO 371/1219. The meeting was not mentioned by the most prominent biographer of King Peter, D. R. Živojinović, *Petar I Karadjordjević, Život i delo, u izgnanstvu 1844-1903* (Beograd 1988).

<sup>65</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade 4 October 1910, FO 371/982.

<sup>66</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade, 25 April 1911, FO 371/1219.

symbol in the rivalry between politicians and army, King Peter also faced a crisis in the survival of his dynasty and the lowest point in his relations with neighbouring monarchs.

More than a year before Sir Ralph was appointed Minister in Belgrade, the Crown Prince of Serbia, Djordje, had renounced his rights to the throne. The scandals related to the eccentric and temperamental Prince became more frequent and, as he was imbued with genuine nationalism, even more unpleasant for King Peter. The new heir apparent, Prince Aleksandar, attracted much more sympathy among the foreign diplomats, but at the end of 1910 he was seriously ill and Paget thought it necessary to reconsider the possible heirs to the Serbian throne. The British Minister therefore suggested the king's 17-year old nephew Prince Pavle to the Foreign Office as the only possible successor to the throne.<sup>67</sup> When a short time later Prince Aleksandar recovered and was appointed Inspector General of the Serbian army, Paget was nevertheless convinced that the new post was mainly a sign of the weakness of the Karadjordjević dynasty.

The most formidable obstacle to the normalization of relations between Serbia and Great Britain was the question of those officers in the Serbian army who had been involved in the May Cou Until 1913, all political events were overshadowed by the question of the regicide. The Serbian army was the main pillar of the regime established in 1903, and although the period up to 1912 had been peaceful, the influence of the army increased substantially when armament became the main issue in internal Serbian politics. For Paget and the Foreign Office, the roots of Serbian problems lay in the complex entanglement comprising army officers who were too influential, politicians who were too corrupt and a sovereign who had less power than any of them. In March 1910, Colonel Gojković was appointed Minister of War, and although this was

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<sup>67</sup> Paget described Prince Pavle as a reserved young man inclined to lead a not very reputable life. Paget to Grey, 25 October 1910, FO 371/982.

potentially a most influential appointment in the context of army reform and orders for armaments, the Foreign Office was more interested in whether or not he had been involved in the regicide.<sup>68</sup> However, a year later the competition between France and Germany over the orders for military equipment reached its highest point and this placed the Minister of War in a sensitive political position which would influence the foreign policy of Serbia. Being disinterested about the issue, British diplomacy at once realized that a dangerous crisis in relations between Serbia and Germany could indirectly affect the strategic interests of Great Britain as a Great Power. On the other hand, as the British legation kept its distance from the Serbian army, British diplomacy appeared as that of a less influential Great Power during the crisis.<sup>69</sup> The crisis arose after Colonel Gojković had tried to explain the reasons why Reichenau, the German Minister in Belgrade, was better informed about the decision regarding the purchase of armaments than the deputies of the National Assembly. Gojković's clumsy explanations were not enough for the opposition, and seriously damaged relationships with Germany, personally offending the German Minister. Diplomatic relations were on the verge of an official break, and at one point Reichenau even left Belgrade.<sup>70</sup> Finally, the Minister of War resigned and the entire affair appeared to have been nothing more than a storm in a teacup, which paradoxically demonstrated the fragility of the situation in Serbia and real influence of all the Great Powers on it.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Whitehead to Grey, Belgrade 31 March 1910, FO 371/982.

<sup>69</sup> Barclay to Grey, Belgrade 2 March 1911, FO 371/1219.

<sup>70</sup> Barclay to Grey *ibid.*(?), Minutes.; 'The Servian Government and Messrs. Krupp', *The Times*, 26 February, 1911 and 'Germany and Servia', 'Colonel Goikovitch's resignation', *The Times*, 2 March 1911.

<sup>71</sup> Relying exclusively on the records of the National Assembly of Serbia Olga Popović-Obradović argues that Gojković's resignation was a result of parliamentary pressure, however according to dispatches from British diplomats, the reason given was just adopted as a convenient explanation for the public, Popović-Obradović, *op. cit.*, 393.

In the midst of crises and corruption scandals, the first information about secret military societies, especially the *Black Hand*, which was to be accused of being the organization behind the Sarajevo assassination, came in to the Foreign Office only in spring 1912. Even then, the intelligence was not entirely accurate. Younger nationalistic officers were allegedly dissatisfied with the civil authorities and with the slow development of the army, but this was no obstacle to British diplomats in their belief that the society was led by a figure no less important than the new Minister of War General Stepanović and by the Prime Minister Milovanović.<sup>72</sup> The report caused considerable alarm in the Foreign Office, making Arthur Nicolson and Tilley remark that 'these secret societies are likely to get Serbia into trouble'.<sup>73</sup> Although this conclusion can be understood as a kind of prophecy, it is not likely that British policy makers really attached much importance to it. Anyway, there were numerous clandestine military organizations in the region of south-eastern Europe at the time.<sup>74</sup> Thus General Stepanović, although an alleged leader of the *Black Hand*, was in other circumstances described as a not particularly able officer, who was connected with political parties and who had disgraced himself during the Bosnian crisis when he had occupied the same post.<sup>75</sup> Thus, according to British spectators, he was allegedly both the leader of the dissatisfied officers and the main cause of their dissatisfaction.

The official perception of Serbian politics was even gloomier. During the period when Paget was head of the British legation

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<sup>72</sup> According to Djordjević, the British diplomat was right, but the connection between *Black Hand* and the Prime Minister had been established just three months before, D. Djordjević, 242; Barclay to Grey, Belgrade 1 February 1912, FO 371/1472; D. Mekenzi, *APIS* (Beograd 1989), 80.

<sup>73</sup> Minutes on Barclay to Grey, *Ibid.*.

<sup>74</sup> S. Pavlowitch, *A History of the Balkans, 1804-1945* (London 1999), 174, 187.

<sup>75</sup> Barclay to Grey, Belgrade, 16 March 1911, FO 371/1219; O. Popović-Obradović, *op. cit.*, 394-8.

in Belgrade, four cabinets were replaced and the Government was usually able to count on only a very narrow margin in the National Assembly.<sup>76</sup> Despite the fact that during this period two parties contested the leading position in the Government, British diplomats did not find any great distinction between them. Finally, National and Independent Radicals emerged from the very same party which had benefited most from the 1903 revolution. Their bitter rivalry marginalized all the other parties and finally established a strange balance of power during which the stability of Serbia rested on their coalition. That kind of stability was not to be achieved during the period when Paget occupied the post of the British Minister in Belgrade. In July 1911 the Cabinet, headed by Nikola Pašić, the old and influential leader of the National Radical party whom Paget described as very 'able and sly', resigned after its opponents had revealed a corruption scandal.<sup>77</sup> A new Government was formed instantly, but the Minister who had been accused of being the main protagonist of the affair was appointed again.

Paget was convinced that the new Prime Minister Milovan Milovanović, who had retained the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs, was only a temporary and inconsequential solution. In November 1911 heavy attacks and serious accusations against the Government became so frequent that the British legation depicted the Milovanović Cabinet as doomed. Paget was certain that the opposition, the secret military organizations, and factions inside the ruling party would eventually unite to overthrow the unpopular Government. In the National Assembly, the Prime Minister was accused of being a 'boursier who was scarcely any more Servian and who had made money out of the Bosnian crisis', while military circles were allegedly dissatisfied with his lack of patriotism and vision in his foreign policy.<sup>78</sup> But, although in the Foreign Office any alternative to Milovanović's government was considered to be worse and more dangerous for British interests in the region, by

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<sup>76</sup> O. Popović-Obradović, *op. cit.*, 379, 398.

<sup>77</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade 4 July 1911, FO 371/1219.

<sup>78</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade 21 November 1911, FO 371/1219.

the end of 1911 the numerous reports about Milovanović's dubious honesty were considered to be both reliable and relevant.<sup>79</sup> The crisis continued until January 1912, when Milovanović resigned. Paget was then again on leave, but while crises in Serbia appeared to go on longer than his periods in Serbia, the time required for the complete turn of the events was certainly shorter than his annual absences from Belgrade. After only ten days, the mandate was again entrusted to Milovanović. As General Stepanović was confirmed in his post, Barclay reported to the Foreign Office that the outcome of the crisis was more a victory for the army than a success for Milovanović.<sup>80</sup> However, by then the attitude of the Foreign Office had been somewhat changed. The news about the resignation only attracted the comment that Milovanović anyway had enjoyed a longer term of office than most Serbian statesmen, and after the formation of the new cabinet, Grey and Nicolson remarked indifferently that there had not been 'anything better to put in his [Milovanović's] place'.<sup>81</sup>

In spring 1912, when long, difficult negotiations resulted in the creation of the Serbo-Bulgarian alliance, the cornerstone of the Balkan alliance, Paget's reports became especially pessimistic. At its first meeting, the newly elected National Assembly provided Milovanović with a majority of only two.<sup>82</sup> The British Minister then correctly estimated that in case of any sudden development in Albania or Macedonia, the more powerful and authoritative Pašić would replace Milovanović. Nevertheless, when just a few weeks later two influential ministers (Finance Minister Protić and War Minister Stepanović) resigned, Paget was again certain that Serbia would not be eager to take part in any external crisis that might occur.<sup>83</sup> At the same time, Edward Grey was completely

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid. Minutes written by Grey, Nicolson and Tilley.

<sup>80</sup> Barclay to Grey, Belgrade 15 February 1912, FO 371/1472.

<sup>81</sup> Barclay to Grey, Belgrade 18 January 1912, FO 371/1472, Minute; and Barclay to Grey, Belgrade 15 February 1912, F. O. 371/1472, Minute.

<sup>82</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade 7 May 1912, FO 371/1472.

<sup>83</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade 23 May 1912. FO 371/1472.

convinced of Serbia's inability to wage a war. In a minute written on 28 May he briefly concluded: 'Servia must be nearly ready for a Revolution'.<sup>84</sup>

Thus only a year before Serbia was considered to be the strongest of the Balkan allies, British diplomacy had perceived its internal weaknesses to be the greatest obstacle to any common action by the Balkan states. This image of Serbia on the eve of the Balkan Wars was not just a product of its internal situation. Serbia's foreign relations appeared to be even worse, for the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires, its powerful neighbours, both treated the small kingdom with a mixture of suspicion and disparagement.

#### 'SERBIA BETWEEN THE HAMMER AND ANVIL'<sup>85</sup>

In 1910, the plans of the Balkan alliance, including the Ottoman Empire, resurfaced.<sup>86</sup> However, this alliance was openly directed against Austria-Hungary, whose aspirations for the Ottoman possessions in Europe seemed to have been satisfied after the Bosnian crisis, which appeared to be a sufficient enough reason for the Young Turk government not to consider such an alliance to be particularly profitable.<sup>87</sup> Any rapprochement between Belgrade and Constantinople was linked to the construction of the Danube-Adriatic railway, planned as the most direct and profitable outlet for Serbian trade to the sea.<sup>88</sup> The Porte delayed the issue, trying to

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., Minute.

<sup>85</sup> Barclay to Grey, Belgrade 18 August 1910, FO 371/982, Minute by Tilley.

<sup>86</sup> Serbian historiography has not given much attention to those plans, but the motives of the Serbian government were apparent, V. Ćorović, *op. cit.*, 350.

<sup>87</sup> In the Foreign Office, the readiness of the Ottoman government to improve the position of its Christian subjects came into serious doubt after 1910. J. Heller, *op. cit.*, 34-5.

<sup>88</sup> W.S. Vucinich, *Serbia Between East and West, The Events of 1903-1908* (Stanford/London, 1954), 210-11.

make Serbia dependent on Ottoman goodwill for its foreign trade and armament. After 1903, when Austro-Hungarian pressure had been steadily rising, Serbian policy became gradually more and more directed towards the Ottoman Empire.<sup>89</sup> However, fortunately for the Serbian government, the Young Turk regime did not pay much attention to Serbian pretensions towards Sandžak, Kosovo and Metohia, and Macedonia. In comparison with the Bulgarian and Albanian threats, Serbia seemed to be a minor evil and thus it was possible that, on the one hand, the Ottoman government stopped the construction of the railway and the occasional transit of armaments, while at the same time allowing the creation of the third Serbian Bishopric in Macedonia and handing several monasteries back to the Serbian Orthodox church.<sup>90</sup> On the other hand, the underlying strata of Serbian foreign policy were imbued with far-sighted plans and the Serbian public was very dissatisfied with the condition and treatment of Serbs in the Ottoman Empire. In January 1910, Spalajković, Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, agreed with Whitehead that the situation in Macedonia was worse than it had been under the Abdul Hamid regime. Even so, the Serbian official admitted that Bulgaria was more concerned in the matter than Serbia.<sup>91</sup> British diplomats did not notice any systematic activity in Macedonia that could be attributed to the Serbian Government, so Serbia's occasional claims to the region were usually considered to be unrealistic and were therefore neglected. However, in Macedonia and Kosovo-Metohia the situation was far from peaceful. Reports about ill-treatment of Serbs became widespread in the summer of 1910, when allegations about torture and murders committed by the regular Ottoman army in several Macedonian villages caused excitement in Belgrade.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, Paget understood that the policy of the Serbian govern-

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<sup>89</sup> *BDoFA, Annual Repor for 1910*, 371, 377.

<sup>90</sup> Barclay to Grey, Belgrade 13 April 1910, FO 371/982.

<sup>91</sup> Whitehead to Grey, Belgrade 10 January 1910, FO 371/982.

<sup>92</sup> Whitehead to Grey, Belgrade 6 July 1910, FO 371/982; P.P. de Sokolovitch, 'The Albanian Question', *The Fortnightly Review*, ed. by W.L. Courtney, vol. XCII, July to September 1912, 458.



ment towards the neighbouring Ottoman provinces inhabited by Serbs was motivated more by the internal divisions between the political parties than by any genuine national aspirations.<sup>93</sup> Uprisings by Albanians in Malissor and in Kosovo-Metohia, which became annual events after 1910, added to the concern of the Serbian public, and also reinforced the British diplomats' impression that, officially, Serbia was not truly interested in the rights and liberties of Serbs in the Ottoman Empire. This attitude did not come into question, even when the Ottoman Government made the strongest demonstration of its resolution not to break with misrule in the Kosovo-Metohia region. It had been not much more than a year before the outbreak of the First Balkan War that Sultan Muhammad V had visited the Kosovo field and attended the solemn assembly of 100,000 Muslims held on the day of the Kosovo battle.<sup>94</sup> An overt insult to the Serbian bishop on the railway station in Skoplje and the real motivation behind the Sultan's visit were not recorded by British diplomats, who were more interested in the reasons why the Crown Prince of Serbia did not meet the Ottoman sovereign on his way to Kosovo.<sup>95</sup>

In the summer of 1912, the Ottoman Empire was seriously shaken by the Tripolitanian war and by the success of the Albanian rebels who temporarily conquered Skoplje, but even then British diplomats tended to take for granted the friendly intentions of Serbia towards the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, the Foreign Office still regarded ill-defined reforms in Macedonia as a reasonable and manageable precondition for the establishment of the Balkan federation chimera that would include the Ottoman Empire.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade 25 May 1911, FO 371/1219.

<sup>94</sup> V. Trbić, *Memoari, kazivanja i doživljaji vojvode veleškog* (1912-1918 i 1941-1945), Vol. 2. (Beograd 1997), 266-7., Not accurately described by Noel Malcolm; N. Malcolm, *Kosovo, A Short history* (London 1998), 244.

<sup>95</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade, 8 June 1911, FO 371/1219.

<sup>96</sup> O'Beirne to Grey, St. Petersburg, 27 June 1912, FO.371/ 1472, MINUTE by A. Nicolson and J. Tilley.

Sir Ralph Paget shared the opinion of his predecessor that relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia were the most sensitive area of the whole Balkan imbroglio. During the course of the Bosnian crisis, the British Government sided with Russia, but Serbia, whose interests in Bosnia were believed to be only indirect, received just moral support.<sup>97</sup> Relations between Vienna and Belgrade, which had passed through several different phases between 1910 and 1913, were perceived by Sir Ralph solely as part of a broader contest between Slavdom and the Teutonic nations. In that conflict, Great Britain had no natural allies: the Serbian protector Russia was in alliance with Great Britain, but it was Germany, and not Austria-Hungary, not to mention the Ottoman Empire, that Britain perceived as the common enemy.<sup>98</sup> Importantly, the Russian Minister in Belgrade, Hartwig, had been the Russian Minister in Persia during the period of Russo-British rivalry in the Middle East, and was notorious as a proponent of the Pan-Slav faction in Russian policy.<sup>99</sup> Thus, although officially neutral, British diplomacy was in fact deeply involved in Balkan affairs. The official goal was to avoid any crisis in the region that would inevitably throw Great Britain into the general war between the Great Powers.

In the summer of 1910, negotiations for the resumption of commercial relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary had been renewed and aroused high hopes among British diplomats in Belgrade.<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, although economic relations between the two countries were gradually being improved, the political consequences of the customs war and the Bosnian crisis still prevented their complete normalization. At the end of 1910, Milan Vasić, once one of the witnesses of the staged Agram trial, was interrogated in Belgrade. Vasić's confession and the testimony of the distinguished

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<sup>97</sup> D. Djordjević, *op. cit.*, 172, 184.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>99</sup> Whitehead to Grey, Belgrade 23 June 1910, FO 371/982.

<sup>100</sup> Barclay to Grey, Belgrade, 21 July 1910, FO 371/982, V. Čorović, *op. cit.*, 337.

Professor Tomaz Massaryk both pointed to the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade as the main organizer behind the forged documents that had been used in the trial.<sup>101</sup> Officially, Vienna was outraged and demanded the resignation of Miroslav Spalajković, the Secretary-General of the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as satisfaction for this alleged indiscretion.<sup>102</sup> However, even the amicably disposed foreign diplomats were not convinced about Austro-Hungarian innocence in the case. Three months earlier, a dispatch sent from the British legation in Belgrade described the entire Austro-Hungarian policy towards Serbia as very provocative, accusing Steinhardt, the special correspondent in Belgrade for several Austrian newspapers, of mounting an abusive campaign against Serbia.<sup>103</sup>

Spalajković was finally replaced, and was sent as the Serbian Minister to Sofia. As this restless diplomat was his main contact in the Serbian Foreign Office, Paget regretted his departure.<sup>104</sup> But the relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary were so strained that the days of the Austrian Minister in Belgrade, Count Forgach were also limited. Soon afterwards, he was replaced and sent to Dresden, so that Sir Ralph lost the only diplomatic colleague who spoke English fluently. The appointment of a new Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade was interpreted by Paget as a deliberate and careful withdrawal by official Vienna. According to Paget's sources, Count Aehrenthal, the Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, appointed D'Ungron as head of the legation in Belgrade, proclaiming it a sign of good will and of the readiness of Austro-Hungarian diplomacy to forget the past and to start another page in relations between the two countries. How-

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<sup>101</sup> *BDofA*, p 370, V. Ćorović, *op. cit.*, 333.

<sup>102</sup> Barclay to Grey, Belgrade 16 March 1911, FO.371/1219.

<sup>103</sup> Steinhardt was described as a person with 'the worst reputation' who once had been accused even of white slave traffic, Barclay to Grey, Belgrade 1 September 1910, FO 371/982.

<sup>104</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade 27 April 1911, FO 1219.

ever, neither Paget nor the Foreign Office put much confidence in Aehrenthal's intentions. Count Forgach, whom Sir Ralph had described as being largely responsible for the friction between the two states, now seemed to become a scapegoat, since the instructions that had allegedly been given to his successor gave little doubt that tensions would disappear in the near future.

‘... if [the] Servians show any sign of an intention to pursue the impertinences and provoking tactics of the past two years, M d'Ungron would at once state to the Servian Government that Austria-Hungarian interests being paramount in these regions, Austria is the mistress, and intends to remain so, that it is not in conformity with her dignity to submit to unnecessary annoyance from [a] small and unimportant country like Servia, and the Servian Government would therefore continue an aggravating policy at their own risk.’<sup>105</sup>

Despite information about the Austro-Hungarian attitude, Paget was still relatively optimistic about future Austro-Serbian relations; this attitude was not shared by the Foreign Office. Arthur Nicolson even believed that D'Ungron would not be much more successful than Count Forgach.<sup>106</sup>

In 1912, incidents between Austria-Hungary and Serbia became more frequent. Despite the high hopes that were aroused after the appointment of Count Berchtold as head of Austro-Hungarian diplomacy, nothing had changed in the Balkans until the First World War commenced.<sup>107</sup> A visit of some Croatian students to Belgrade ended with an ovation to King Peter, who was publicly hailed as King of the Southern Slavs. Explanations given to the Austro-Hungarian Minister by the Serbian Government were unconvincing, especially when an industrial exhibition from Austria was openly boycotted in Belgrade.<sup>108</sup> Although Sir Edward Grey

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<sup>105</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade 23 June 1911, FO 371/1219.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, Minute 10 July 1911.

<sup>107</sup> H. Nicolson, *Sir Arthur Nicolson, Bart, First Lord of Carnock, A Study in the Old Diplomacy* (London, 1937<sup>4</sup>), 360-1.

<sup>108</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade 24 April 1912, FO 371/1472 .

depicted these incidents as 'petty', the relations between the two countries deteriorated further until, on the eve of the First Balkan War, tension became unbearable. In August, the Serbian Orthodox church in Hungary, whose autonomy in the Habsburg dominions had been recognized in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was placed under the authority of the Hungarian Ministry of Education.<sup>109</sup> Simultaneously, while the followers of Isa Bolietini, generously supported with Austro-Hungarian money and rifles, occupied almost all the Ottoman territory to which Serbia could claim any pretension, the Austro-Hungarian army seized a strategically important island on the Danube.<sup>110</sup> The preventive war which Conrad, the Chief of Staff of the Austro-Hungarian army, had not managed to implement against Italy only a year before was now considered to be imminent. The Serbian government made representations to the British Foreign Office, and Jovan Jovanović described the situation to Paget in very dark colours. In the Foreign Office, however, Serbian anxiety that the Austro-Hungarian army would occupy the Morava valley, the strategic backbone of Serbia, did not provoke the expected reaction. Edward Grey and Arthur Nicolson agreed that the Austrian measure was nothing but rational.<sup>111</sup>

More than two years had passed between Sir Ralph Paget's arrival in Serbia and the outbreak of the First Balkan War, during which period Serbia's relations with Great Britain did not undergo any change. Officially, Britain remained relatively uninterested in Serbian affairs, and the British Minister felt capable of judging the situation in the country on the basis of his official contacts with the Secretary-General of the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as articles published in a few, mainly opposition, newspapers. However, if British diplomacy did not attribute much importance

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<sup>109</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade, 3 August 1912, FO 371/1472.

<sup>110</sup> Grey to Paget, London, 5 July 1912, FO.371/1472.

<sup>111</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade 16 July 1912, FO 371/1472; Austro-Hungarian military measures were accompanied by diplomatic action aiming to isolate Serbia., V. Corović, *op. cit.*, 384-5.

to the Balkans, its allies, Russia and France, most definitely had long-term political and economic interests in the region. Aware that its position in the Entente would not allow it to remain aloof, Great Britain was still half-hearted in regard to Serbia and the Balkans. Side by side with political and economic motives, one important reason why British diplomacy neglected Serbia stemmed from the traditional British attitude that small Balkan states were not able to play any independent role in its foreign policy. Burdened with the legacy of the 1903 regicide, riddled with internal intrigues and possessing an apparent lack of foreign influence, Serbia was perceived as a good proof of such an attitude. At the beginning of 1912, successive internal crises and lack of obvious results in foreign policy gave the impression that Serbia, however willing, was not capable of acting other than as someone else's tool. When in January of the same year, in Vienna, the grave of Prince Aleksandar Karadjordjević, King Peter's father, was desecrated and his remains mutilated, the Serbian public believed that it was the deed of the fanatical dynastic opposition. This incident was a good enough reason for British diplomats to conclude that another regicide was very probable.<sup>112</sup> Nevertheless, although the internal situation in Serbia was anything but tranquil, and despite the unpromising history of the region, many years of slow development and the lack of any continuity in policy affected the perceptions of British diplomats in Belgrade. Even after the two years spent in Belgrade and despite the fact that he was considered as the representative of a Great Power ally, Paget was not particularly well informed and occasionally showed a lack of awareness of and interest in Serbian affairs. Thus, British diplomats in Belgrade also believed that Professor Živojin Perić, an isolated member of the Progressive parliamentary club, was the leader of the opposition and the main proponent of its unification.<sup>113</sup> Paget's opinion of Prince Pavle Karadjordjević,

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<sup>112</sup> Barclay to Grey, Belgrade 4 January 1912, FO 371/1472.

<sup>113</sup> Whitehead to Grey, Belgrade 17 March 1910, FO 371/982; O. Popović-Obradović, *op. cit.*, 309.

who was talked of as the possible successor to the Serbian throne, had diametrically changed between 1910 and 1912 - but even that was not enough for Lord Onslow, at the time very influential in the Foreign Office, who still believed during the London Conference that the young Prince was the third son of King Peter.<sup>114</sup>

This attitude was to be altered during the Balkan Wars and especially after the Serbian successes in 1913, but although Sir Ralph's opinion also changed significantly, the change was not initiated by a general enthusiasm towards the Serbian victories and was far from being a Copernican turn.

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<sup>114</sup> Onslow to Paget, London 20 February 1913, PP 51253.



Louise Margaret (*Lady Paget*)  
Leila Wemyss Paget



# CRISIS AND ARMAMENT

## THE HIGHEST RISE AND INSIGNIFICANT PRESENCE

The initial peaceful three-years during which Sir Ralph Paget occupied the post of British Minister in Belgrade was a time of forced tranquillity in Serbian foreign affairs and of tense crisis in the internal politics of Serbia. In 1910, a period of intensive armament of the Serbian army began, and as the country was not financially strong enough to meet all the projected expenses, a new, wide-ranging involvement of foreign capital in Serbia was inevitable. This created financial competition between the Great Powers for dominance over the country, and was a quiet prelude to the Balkan Wars and the First World War.

For Serbia, the question of army modernisation became the burning priority after the report by Colonel Mašin, submitted to the Serbian Government in 1907, which reviled the Serbian army not only for lagging behind its mighty imperial foes, the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary, but for lagging behind Bulgaria as well.<sup>115</sup> Another impulse came with the humiliating Annexation

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<sup>115</sup> *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: reports and Papers from the Foreign Office, Confidential Print*, Gen. Editors, Kenneth Bourne and D. Cameron Watt, Part I, From the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the First World War, Series F, Europe, 1848-1914, editor J.V. Keiger, Vol. 16., University Publications of America, 1989, Whitehead to Grey, General Report on the Kingdom of Servia for the year 1907, Belgrade 2 April 1908, 291-293, further referred as *BdoFA*.

Crisis and the Austrian actions in Sandjak, Malissori and the Kosovo-Metohija region. Alongside military issues, Serbia had felt strong economic pressure from its mighty neighbour Austria-Hungary. The period after 1903 had witnessed an increasing economic contest between the two countries, which culminated in the Custom War in 1906. An economic outlet onto the sea of one of its neighbours thus became the principal political obsession of Serbian politicians and capitalists, usually identified with the independence of the country. As has already been mentioned, 1910 was the year when the idea of a military and political alliance between the Balkan countries once again attracted the attention of the local politicians. Whether such an alliance would be anti-Austrian, anti-Ottoman, peaceful, or aggressive, was being kept an obscure secret, for Balkan politicians were fully aware that their freedom of action would be mainly due to the complex circumstances of the balance between the Great Powers.<sup>116</sup> Successful reform and armament of the Serbian army was the main precondition for effective negotiation of such an alliance, and for the fulfilment of Serbian interests within it.

When Sir Ralph Paget arrived in Belgrade, economic relations between Great Britain and Serbia were twofold. The range of potential financial and commercial activities in Serbia was limited, and that was why it only attracted small and not particularly influential British companies. Although occasionally raised very loud, their voices had only a modest effect on the Foreign Office, which found many political obstacles to a broader involvement of British capital in Serbia. Animosity towards the Serbian army, in which the detested regicides preserved much of their previous influence, was still alive, as was an undisguised contempt for corrupt Belgrade politicians and the feeble Karadjordjević dynasty.<sup>117</sup> The Balkans

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<sup>116</sup> D. Djordjević, *Milovan Milovanovic*, Beograd 1997. Ch. Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, 1912-13*, London 1938.

<sup>117</sup> Many authors consider xenophobia and corruption as the main reason for modest involvement of foreign capital in Serbia; M. Palaret, *The Balkan Economies, c. 1800-1914*, Cambridge 1997, 331 and 333.

were also a region in which Britain did not have any direct political or economic interests, but this was not the case with Britain's imperial allies and adversaries. In this context, the region had a disproportional importance for British foreign policy. So it was natural that British diplomats defined Britain's economic relations with Serbia in vague terms. They had tried to explain the apparent political obstacles and pressures for a more considerable involvement of British capital in Serbia by the absence of any major British investment or any already-existing economic presence.<sup>118</sup>

Above all, Great Britain was very interested in the destiny of the Ottoman Empire, and was naturally anxious about the pro-Ottoman feelings of a hundred million of its Muslim subjects in India.<sup>119</sup> Relations with Russia were also the source of considerable unease for Great Britain and made it very reluctant to become involved. In 1907, an alliance was concluded between the two old adversaries. However, while Persia had been the last and most formidable obstacle to overcome before that alliance was concluded, the Balkans, which were to be the centre of the two major crises that ushered in the First World War, were not particularly discussed. When, around 1910, Great Britain tried to move closer to Austria-Hungary, the Foreign Office did not consider that a common stand with Russia over the Balkans was necessary.<sup>120</sup> On the other hand, France, the closest British ally, was eager to take the place of Austria-Hungary as the financial patron of Serbia. The bids to provide Serbian loans thus turned out to be a contest between French and German capital and ultimately resulted in a compromise, which

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<sup>118</sup> Paget expressed dissatisfaction with the value of commercial exchange between the two countries, although aware that they had the potential for steady increase. *BdoFA*, s. F, Vol.16, 405.

<sup>119</sup> J. Heller, *British policy Towards the Ottoman Empire (1908-1914)*, London, 1983, 58.

<sup>120</sup> Russia tended to reinforce its political influence on the Balkans with economic involvement; however, after the 1905 revolution and the redefinition of its foreign policy aims, this ceased to be a priority. Just before the Balkan War, Russian Balkan policy became greatly limited and dependent upon the Straits question.

finally imposed French economic supremacy in Serbia. The participation of France in two major loans that Serbia raised in 1909/10 and 1913 was so significant that France became the owner of more than three-quarters of all the debts of the Serbian State.<sup>121</sup> In the struggle to give loans, Great Britain, having restored relations with Serbia in 1906, was a newcomer. British diplomats did not believe that any expected profits could be worth even the slightly possible deterioration of Britain's otherwise good relations with France.

Although the issue was not important enough to provoke rivalry between Britain and France, the Serbian loans were still a very tempting and attractive investment. The Serbian political elite considered armament and the Danube-Adriatic railway to be matters of urgent and necessary need, crucial for the survival of the state. This was the reason why the Serbian government was not willing to become economically dependent on Germany or, especially, on Austria-Hungary. So it was almost entirely up to financial syndicates from the countries of the Triple Entente to define conditions and impose them, without expecting many difficulties. Successive loans of 150 and 250 million francs had been taken mostly by France. Their conditions were so unfavourable that in the case of the second loan the total sum designed to be repaid by 1963 was supposed to reach 677.5 million francs.<sup>122</sup> Aware that its efforts to preserve political independence could have the possible effect of making the country highly dependent financially on France, the Serbian Government tried to attract at first Russian and British capital, and then to involve industrial investments from both countries, in order to make the French pressure lighter.

The Serbian Government had not been completely frank about its real aims. Although French predominance in Serbian

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<sup>121</sup> Of all loans that Serbia had raised in the period between 1867 and 1913, the French share was 79%, while the Austro-German was 21%, Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, *Odnosi Srbije sa Francuskom i Engleskom 1903-1914*, Beograd 1965, 812/ /The Relations between Serbia, France and Great Britain from 1903 to 1914, Belgrade 1965.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 350.

loans and armament had already been decided before Ralph Paget was appointed British Minister in Belgrade, the efforts of Serbian diplomats to attract British capital did not cease right up to the beginning of the First World War. However, despite all the promises, British capital was largely not involved, and only few of the smaller orders for military material were placed in Britain. After a while, the real aim of Serbian politicians became obvious to the representatives of the British legation in Belgrade: British financial syndicates and military industry were frequently pursued only with the purpose of using them to negotiate down French conditions, in case they were too harsh. In reality, British support was rarely seriously considered as an alternative.<sup>123</sup> This made British representatives in Serbia ever more suspicious of and resistant to potential offers, even when, as was the case with Sir J.B. Whitehead, Paget's predecessor, they were personally interested.<sup>124</sup>

At the beginning of 1910, British diplomacy made major efforts to acquire a share of the 30-million franc loan that the Serbian State Mortgage Bank was negotiating with French creditors. Under the burden of previous loans concluded in France, and despite very unfavourable conditions, the Bank finally gave priority to Paris again.<sup>125</sup> As the conclusion of the loan was immediately followed by negotiations for the orders of armaments, British diplomacy was trying to negotiate its involvement directly with the French. The negotiations began informally in Paris, where the British ambassador Sir Francis Bertie received the representatives of the French Bank group, who recommended that he should inquire

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<sup>123</sup> After one such case in February 1910, the British minister made an official protest, but the Serbian Bank did not abolish the concluded loan, or reassume negotiations, Whitehead to Grey, Belgrade, 1 March 1910, FO 371/982. Indicative was the reaction in Foreign Office: Sir Edward Grey, after a meeting with the Serbian Charge d' Affaires, remarked that the negotiations were not 'a matter in which HMG could intervene diplomatically'. Grey to Whitehead, London, 4 March 1910, Minute.

<sup>124</sup> Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, *op. cit.*, 324.

<sup>125</sup> Whitehead to Grey, Belgrade 17 February 1910, Serbia FO 371/982.

of the French government whether there was any possibility of part of an artillery order being placed in Great Britain.<sup>126</sup> The share that the French bankers promised to Bertie was moderate but appeared to be satisfactory, for out of 44 million francs reserved for military purchases (of the 150-million franc loan), Britain was promised 5½ million.<sup>127</sup> However, although first reactions from Serbia were very optimistic<sup>128</sup>, the British plans came to nothing when they met the resolute opposition of French diplomacy and, more surprisingly, the joint resistance of the Serbian governing parties.<sup>129</sup> Subsequently, Whitehead tried to save some smaller orders, namely machine guns, for the Vickers, Sons and Maxim Company. Even so, neither the British minister nor his superiors harboured any illusion that the final decision would be in favour of the British applicant.<sup>130</sup> That impression was confirmed only three weeks later, when the efforts of another British applicant (the Armstrong, Whitworth Company) to sell 32,000 rifles to Serbia met the same fate.<sup>131</sup>

On the other hand, sometimes the British government appeared to be the main obstacle to the immediate interests of the British military industry. Sir Ralph Paget had already been formally appointed British minister to the Court of Serbia when a 'Dreadnought affair' attracted the attention of a sensitive British public. In June 1910, Major Maunsell visited Belgrade as the representative of the Vickers, Sons and Maxim Company. Maunsell

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<sup>126</sup> Bertie to Grey, Paris 10. January 1910, FO 371/982.

<sup>127</sup> Caillard to Bertie, Hotel Chatam, Paris, 10 January 1910, FO 371/982.

<sup>128</sup> Whitehead to Grey, 13 January 1910, FO 371/982

<sup>129</sup> In conversation with the Serbian Prime Minister Pašić, Whitehead naturally got assurances that the heaviest blame for the rejection was on Pašić's coalition partners, the Independent Radicals. Whitehead to Grey, 18 January 1910, FO 371/982.

<sup>130</sup> Hardinge remarked that the British 'only play the part of letterbox in the entire affair', *Ibid.*, Minute.

<sup>131</sup> Whitehead to Grey, 29 March 1910, FO 368/456.

offered the Serbian Government an opportunity to purchase 'one or two powerful gunboats' for service on the Danube and the Sava rivers.<sup>132</sup> As the border between Serbia and Austria-Hungary was an ambiguous issue, so was the defence of the Serbian capital, and the Foreign Office promptly denied any help or support to the British visitor. Bridge suggests that Whitehead, despite his family ties with one of the company's owners, strongly warned Grey that the £120,000 contract, however beneficial it might have been for British industry, could cause a serious deterioration in relations with Austria-Hungary.<sup>133</sup> The presence of a British major, and his activities in Belgrade, aroused the suspicion of Austrian diplomats. The British ambassador in Vienna was asked for an explanation, while the Austrian minister in Belgrade made it known to his British colleague that the entire operation was being carefully monitored.<sup>134</sup> The reaction of the Foreign Office was very tense. As the Serbian government had just asked for some expertise, a form of assistance which the British government had usually given willingly, the response now was negative, and any official connection with Maunsell was again denied.<sup>135</sup>

The contract was not concluded. The already-familiar pattern was repeated, but this time it was motivated by British diplomatic priorities. However, the British press, another important factor, interfered almost immediately. The entanglement surfaced in Vienna, where no one expected it would, when Henry Wickham

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<sup>132</sup> Whitehead to Grey, Belgrade, 6 June 1910, FO 371/982.

<sup>133</sup> F.R. Bridge, *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary 1906-1914*, London 1972, 152-3, BD VII, 696.

<sup>134</sup> Count Forgach even mentioned them as 'dreadnoughts', adopting the same term that had been used in the offer to the Serbian government, Whitehead to Grey, Belgrade, 6 June 1910, FO 371/982.

<sup>135</sup> Edward Grey remarked: 'We can not urge... to help Serbia in arms against Austria and it is perfectly futile for her to attempt to do it. Two gunboats on the river, however good, would not save Belgrade from the Austrian army. *Ibid.*, Minute.

Steed, the Austrian correspondent of *The Times*, made a carefully premeditated effort to embarrass the British government. Steed, already well-known as an eager supporter of Balkan Christians, pursued the campaign against Austro-Hungarian policy towards Crete in June 1910, which had greatly embarrassed Whitehall.<sup>136</sup> This time, probably provoked by the failure of Maunsell's mission, Steed transmitted in full an otherwise unnoticed article that had originally appeared in *Tagblat*. The Austrian newspaper had written that official relations between Serbia and Britain had been strained owing to the alleged refusal of the Serbian government to give orders for war material to British firms, and even announced a rupture between the two countries. For Cartwright, the British ambassador in Vienna, it seemed obvious that Steed's main intention was to suggest to the British public that Austria-Hungary had inspired the rumour. Steed's manoeuvre was also obvious and unpleasant for the Serbian government, which not only hastened to publish a refutation, but preferred to do so in *The Times*.<sup>137</sup>

So, for the sake of good relations with Austria-Hungary, the Foreign Office withheld the contract worth a quarter of the annual British export to Serbia, and thwarted its conclusion. Even so, in his Annual Report for 1910, the Secretary of the British Legation in Belgrade put the entire blame for the symbolic British presence in the Serbian economy on the 'rotten system of placing army contracts in Serbia'.<sup>138</sup> But, while France managed to become the main creditor of the Serbian state, its part in the much more modest Serbian commercial world remained insignificant.<sup>139</sup> When, as a result of recovery after the Annexation Crisis, Serbian imports in 1910 increased by 24%, it was the increase in the British share

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<sup>136</sup> Bridge, *op. cit.*, 155.

<sup>137</sup> Having in mind possible consequences, Grey was outraged. For him, Steed was nothing more than 'a mischievous person'. Cartwright to Grey, Vienna, 7 July 1910, FO 371982, Minute.

<sup>138</sup> BDoFA, 369.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.* 376-77.



in it that proportionately outstripped the increases of other Great Powers.<sup>140</sup> The decline in commercial exchange with Austria-Hungary, which came as a consequence of her customs war with Serbia, made the rise in Serbian exports to Great Britain much more spectacular. After Serbia had chosen the British outpost of Malta as the transit station for the export of its cattle, the total amount of Serbian exports to the United Kingdom increased by 7500% (from a fairly modest £695 to £52,173). The Serbian enthusiasm for foreign commerce was only temporary, since it was inspired by the strong influence of the Annexation Crisis. However, despite the constantly tense political relations with Austria-Hungary, by 1912 the neighbouring monarchy had again become the principal buyer and supplier of Serbia, and only the Balkan War and the First World War stopped that trend. That was why Sir Ralph Paget considered the British share in Serbian commerce to be unsatisfactory, although in comparison with 1909 its increase was evident.<sup>141</sup>

Despite all this, any increase in commerce with Serbia was to a very high degree related to the readiness of foreign countries to extend credit to the Serbian state. In 1911, the Ethelburga (Financial) Syndicate competed for a Belgrade municipal loan of 40 million francs.<sup>142</sup> As might have been expected, the proposal was rejected even though it was the lowest bid. British diplomats suspected the unwritten provisions and 'provisional arrangements' with French financiers as a main reason for this new defeat of British interests. On the other hand, as was the case with the military industry, although it was officially interested in involving British

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<sup>140</sup> Rising by almost 70%, from £212,538 to £368,276, the increase in British trade with Serbia can be compared only with that of Germany. *Ibid.* 377.

<sup>141</sup> The imports from the United Kingdom had risen by 78% in 1912 in comparison with 1909, while the rise was just 3% in comparison with 1910. At the same time, the tremendous Serbian export rise of 7500% recorded in 1910 was replaced with a modest and more realistic, but statistically still fantastic, 500% *BdoFA*, s.F, Vol. 16, 377 and 405-6.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 385.

capital in Serbia, the Foreign Office did not show a great deal of intention to support commercial initiatives politically and to harmonise political activities with the fruitless efforts of British capitalists. In 1911, it became apparent that the Ottoman government was going to reject Serbian proposals for the construction of the Danube-Adriatic railway. Requested to support the representation to the Porte, Foreign Office declared that it 'did not care to take the initiative in any steps at the Porte to promote the enterprise in which it (?) is not directly interested'.<sup>143</sup> The attitude would soon be seen to be regrettable, for only one year later British diplomacy had to stand behind a British company which was seeking the contract to construct the port of Prahovo (one planned terminus of the Danube-Adriatic Railway). The company was J&W Stewart (Mc Laughlin), which specialised in concrete constructions and was trying to compete for the contract against the Russian-backed Taburno. There was something minimalist in the approach that the British company assumed. Having alleged backing from certain circles in the British government, J&W Stewart did not even succeed in establishing a good contact with the British legation in Belgrade. This was despite the fact that Sir Ralph Paget was tirelessly trying to win over the Serbian Prime Minister Pasić's support for the application. His efforts were sincere, but Paget, on the grounds of previous experiences, did not, even for a moment, have any doubts that the final response would be negative.<sup>144</sup> Again the British company had offered the lowest price and better conditions, but Paget was strongly convinced that the open favour the Serbian government showed towards Mr. Taburno would be decisive. Paget did not become any more optimistic even when the Serbian parliament rejected Taburno's offer. The course of events proved him right, because after the outbreak of the First Balkan War the entire Danube-Adriatic Railway project was abandoned.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> BDoFP, 391.

<sup>144</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade, 23 September 1912, FO 368/724.

<sup>145</sup> BDoFA, 400.

On the eve of the First Balkan War, it appeared for a moment that British financiers had finally decided to take a firm position in Serbia by establishing an Anglo-Servian Bank. The sum of £800 000 (20 million francs) that was offered as initial capital seemed to be a firm assurance that the concession would eventually be granted. This time, however, Sir Ralph Paget had more doubts than just about the frankness of the Serbian negotiators.<sup>146</sup> The talks were very long and were ultimately interrupted by the war; nevertheless, at the very beginning, even before he had received instructions from the Foreign Office, the British minister was not particularly eager to give any assistance to Mr. Neff, the representative of the British trust (a financial syndicate). Paget's wariness was ultimately justified, for his initial qualms about Mr. Neff were reinforced by intelligence that the British trust was merely a smokescreen for Hungarian capital.<sup>147</sup> Between October 1912 and August 1913, the Ottoman Empire, one of the four European empires that met their demise in the First World War, had started to crumble. The Balkan wars were the first Imperial crisis that ushered in the First World War, which had a direct impact on the European states. The armies of the small Balkan states, which, owing to previously unimaginable efforts, brought about the end of Ottoman mastery in the Balkans, had been financed and armed by the Great Powers. In the complicated balance between the Great Powers, those countries achieved importance only when their united armies reached a size that even some of the Great Powers were not able to raise two years later.<sup>148</sup> Serbia was the greatest surprise of the Balkan War for Austria-Hungary, but the Serbian army could never have risen to become a first-rate power on the peninsula without French loans and armaments. Among the Great Powers, Great Britain had the weakest economic ties, and only indirect political interests, with

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<sup>146</sup> Paget to Grey, 16 September 1912, FO 368/724.

<sup>147</sup> *BdoFA*, 400.

<sup>148</sup> A.J.P. Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848–1918*, Oxford Clarendon Press. ?, 484.

Serbia. That fact enabled Britain to act as the main mediator in the crisis and to make a crucial contribution to peace negotiations. As has been already mentioned, the main factors in the rapprochement between Great Britain and Serbia were a consequence of the needs of general and internal British policy. The British public, and to a lesser degree British diplomacy, had already become hostile towards the Turks and were to some extent anti-Austrian. However, British diplomacy had many reasons not to become pro-Serbian. The difference between the British and French attitudes rested mainly on the fact that France was economically involved in the region. The absence of economic interests, however, did not exclude the economic factor from British policy towards the Balkans. British industry had interests in expansion in Serbia, and although those interests were still developing before 1912, they most certainly existed.<sup>149</sup> But while British involvement was insignificant, the influence of Sir Ralph Paget on the development of economic links between the two countries during the period that he was at the head of the British legation in Belgrade had a much wider importance. The main characteristics of Paget's economic policy towards Serbia were caution and restraint. He was careful not to run the risk of competition with Britain's ally - France, and was far too suspicious of Russia to encourage British rivalry with Germany and Austria-Hungary.

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<sup>149</sup> In the *Annual Report for 1913*, the Chargé d'Affaires in the British legation, Dayrell Crackanthorpe, expressed his belief that Serbia, which in the War had 'proved herself capable of acquiring a solid position among European nations', would manage to weaken the predominant economic influence of France and Germany on her economy, BDoFA, 411-412. As Serbia had spent a sum of its three annual budgets (370 million dinars) during the Balkan wars, it seems obvious that the country could become only more economically dependent, M. Cornwall, 'Serbia', in K. Wilson ed, *Decisions for War, 1914*, (London, 1995), 58.

# SIR RALPH PAGET AND THE BALKAN WARS

## THE OUTBREAK OF THE FIRST BALKAN WAR

The Tripolitanian War between Italy and the Ottoman Empire commenced in September 1911. The conflict was a direct consequence of the Agadir crisis. Seriously concerned about the balance of power in Europe and interested mainly in the future affiliation of Italy, the Great Powers failed to stop the war and save the Ottoman Empire.<sup>150</sup> However, the one-year struggle revealed the fatal weaknesses of the Ottoman army and encouraged the hopes of the small Balkan countries. British diplomacy did not attribute much importance to the preparations of the Balkan countries for war. Being pre-occupied with their efforts to reproach Germany, British representatives misinterpreted the plans of the Balkan allies. When in March 1912 Henry Bax-Ironside, the British Minister in Sofia, was informed about the conclusion of an alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria, this was done with the overt intention of the diplomats of the two Balkan states of linking the alliance as closely as possible with the Entente.<sup>151</sup> Officially, Russia showed consid-

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<sup>150</sup> Harold Nicolson *op cit.*, 359-360.

<sup>151</sup> There were two sources through which the Foreign Office was informed about the Agreement. The Bulgarian Prime Minister Gueshoff had showed its final text to the British minister presenting it as mainly defensive, while a short time later in St. Petersburg Sazonoff

erable sympathy for their wish, France remained reluctant, while Britain was nominally opposed to any change in the region in practice staying disinterested in the entire affair. The British legation in Belgrade had already noted frequent diplomatic contacts between Serbia and Bulgaria in February 1912. Afterwards, in April, Paget returned to Belgrade and on several occasions received accurate information about the alliance, but was just not sure whether or not it was formal.<sup>152</sup> Although he did not attach much importance to such news, Paget usually transmitted it to the Foreign Office. The British government, however, did not share its knowledge of the Balkan Alliance with Paget, and only involved him in the narrow circle of the fully informed just after the sudden death of the Serbian Prime Minister Milovanović.<sup>153</sup>

On the eve of the crisis, the Foreign Office and the British Legation in Belgrade were still convinced that war was not likely to happen. Even when, in September, the Serbian government prohibited the export of cereals, Sir Edward Grey strongly rejected Paget's suggestion that mobilisation would follow.<sup>154</sup> Three weeks

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informed O'Beirne about the secret provisions for a future territorial settlement. Lj. Aleksić-Pejković wrongly argues that he does not mention that territorial provisions were known to British diplomacy. Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, *op. cit.*, 518; E.C. Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars 1912-13* (Cambridge, 1938), 61-2. In July 1912 the British government knew that the Greek-Bulgarian Alliance was also concluded and even that Serbian diplomacy was not aware of it. Heller argues that information about the Serbo-Bulgarian alliance was the first hint about the Balkan Alliance known to the Ottoman authorities. J. Heller, 57. Nevertheless, the Foreign Office was actually warned by the government in Constantinople much later, and was alarmed when it received reports about political and ecclesiastical negotiations between Bulgarians and Greeks. Onslow to Paget, Foreign office, 26 July 1912, PP 51253.

<sup>152</sup> The source was the Italian minister in Belgrade, Barclay to Grey, Belgrade, 28 March 1912, FO 371/1472.

<sup>153</sup> Onslow to Paget, Foreign office, 26 July 1912, PP 51253.

<sup>154</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade, 9 September 1912, F.O.368/724, *Commercial Minute*; 'Servian Preparations', *The Times*, 2 October 1912.



Montenegro Breaking Relations with the Ottoman Empire, the  
Montenegrian Minister Waiting on the Step of the Sublime Porte for  
the Carriage After Having Demanded his Passport,  
*The Illustrated London News*, 12 October 1912.

before the beginning of the war, Sir Ralph Paget had a covert conversation with Nikola Pašić. While Paget's conclusions probably gave British policy makers fresh reasons to believe that Serbia was very reluctant to enter the war, the old Serbian politician, who had become the premier, tried simply to define its best justification.<sup>155</sup>

Two weeks later everything changed. On 7 October, although the war had not yet commenced, the whole subterfuge became obvious to Paget. He thought that war was imminent, and further manoeuvres by the Balkan Allies were not enough to deceive him any longer.<sup>156</sup> The British minister defended his obviously wrong estimations with much spirit, explaining that although he felt some responsibility, those who 'ought to know', such as the King of Romania, had also been misled. Paget felt able to point out the three politicians who were mainly responsible for the impending war. According to Sir Ralph, among them was Spalajković, whom he described as 'a born intriguer and agitator', but he did not share Barclay's high estimations of his influence. So, he concluded that Spalajković had accomplices in the persons of the far abler Jovan Jovanović and the Bulgarian minister Tosheff, while the role of Hartwig remained limited to skilful work preventing any Austro-Russian understanding.

Sir Ralph Paget still believed that the Serbian government had been forced into the war and thus would welcome the intervention of the Great Powers. As the demands of the Balkan countries could in such a situation be excessive, Paget believed that only a resolution imposed by the Great Powers could prevent the impending conflict. The British minister suddenly realised that a Balkan war could have a disastrous impact on vital interests of the British Empire. He became certain that the dismemberment of the

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<sup>155</sup> Resume of Conversation between M. Pashitch and Sir Ralph Paget and Observations, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> September 1912, PP 51253, Complete text See *Appendix II*.

<sup>156</sup> Paget to Nicolson, 7 October 1912, PP 51253.



Ottoman Empire was likely to arouse uncontrollable discontent among the Muslims in India.<sup>157</sup> Otherwise calm and reasonable, Paget for a moment lost his self-possession:

‘I fear the demands they (Bulgaria and Serbia) could put forward would be excessive, also keep well with Turkey and with our one hundred million Muhammedan subjects in India [is far more important] to us (I should say) than a few thousand Bulgarian, Serbs and other Christians. There seems no other way than to talk to these people [than] with a club.’<sup>158</sup>

With the Great Powers in deadlock, the Ottoman army remained the only factor on which it was possible to rely. The weakness of the Serbian army was something on which Serbia’s enemies and adversaries depended. A report on the state of the Serbian army produced by Colonel Lyon, military attaché to the British Legation in Belgrade, was a crystallised justification of this attitude. Colonel Lyon described the Serbian army as a badly clothed and ill-nourished militia, put into the field without any serious political plan and commanded by corrupt and unreliable officers. Lyon was convinced that even its traditions were no asset to the Serbian army; in his opinion the period since the war independence 1878 contained no ‘glorious pages’, but included defeat by the Bulgarians in 1885 and the regicide in 1903.<sup>159</sup>

Soon after the commencement of the war the victories at Kirk-Kilisse and Kumanovo were more than unexpected for British diplomacy. On 17 October 1912, Onslow wrote to Paget about how certain he was that Austria-Hungary would try to avoid a conflict with Serbia. Even the Russian ambassador in London had allegedly expressed his conviction that in the event of a Serbian defeat, there would be an outburst of Russian popular sentiment that would compel even the reluctant Sazonoff to side with the Balkan

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<sup>157</sup> Paget to Nicolson, 7 October 1912, PP 51253, A. Nicolson expressed similar concern six months earlier. J. Heller, *op. cit.*, 58

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Lyon to Paget, Belgrade, 20 September 1912, FO 371/ 1472; ‘The Balkan Allies’, *The Times*, 2 October 1912.

Christians.<sup>160</sup> Only ten days later, the 108-year-long struggle for the liberation of the Balkan nationalities was decided. For the few British diplomats in Belgrade, the events of October and November 1912 happened so fast that they hardly managed to follow them. At the end of November Paget sent a private letter to William Tyrrell, and he was neither able nor willing to hide his feelings:

‘I really cannot think what is going to happen. I fear that this is the end of Turkey-in-Europe. I am very sad for the Turk with all his faults and abuses was a gentleman while these people (are) common to a degree (just peasants /overwritten by Paget/) and they are the reverse of gentlemen.’

As he was sure that the Serbs would not accept any pressure to withdraw from the territories they had just liberated, he expected more crises in the near future.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Onslow to Paget, 17 October 1912, PP 51253; E.C. Helmreich, *op. cit.*, 156.

<sup>161</sup> Paget to Tyrrell, 27 October 1912, PP 51253.

## SOLDIER FOR PEACE IN A DIPLOMATIC WAR

The Ottoman defeat was sudden and complete. After a month of struggles which ousted it from its Balkan possessions, the government in Constantinople remained in control of just four strongholds, including the capital itself. Sir Ralph's anxiety about the behaviour of Russia in the event of Ottoman victory changed to worry over the Austrian response to the final division of Sandžak and Macedonia, and to Serbian demands for an outlet on the Adriatic Sea. Sandžak, the tiny region that had separated Serbia and Montenegro since the Congress in Berlin (1878) and which provided the Ottoman and Habsburg empires with a common border, had been under Austro-Hungarian control immediately before the Annexation. In the complex diplomatic contest during 1909 and as a result of divisions within Austro-Hungarian diplomacy, this strategically important strip of land was abandoned and became Turkish for the last time. In October 1912, when the Serbian and Montenegrin armies finally entered Sandžak, this became a crucial test for Vienna. Asked for his opinion on how the Serbian government would respond if Austria-Hungary were to impose an ultimatum demanding the evacuation of Sandžak, Paget answered that in such a case war would be inevitable.<sup>162</sup> However, while the perpetually contentious Serbian politicians had reached complete unity over the necessity of a struggle to the bitter end, Sir Ralph found the Viennese position far more difficult to assess. He wrote to Nicolson that 'the obscure' situation left Austria-Hungary a very hard choice between whether to attack Serbia and almost certainly spark off a European War, or not only to give up all its aspirations but to expose itself 'to endless worries as to her own Serb provinces'.<sup>163</sup> Paget saw the approaching imbroglio as inevitably fatal, for he was convinced that neither Serbia nor Russia

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<sup>162</sup> Paget to Nicolson, 2 November 1912, P.P. 51253, BD IX-2, No 104, 84.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

could prevent future agitation and intrigues. The British Minister in Belgrade believed that a far more important crisis would emerge over the possession of the eastern shore of the Adriatic, and this was an accurate estimation. It was obvious that harder times were to come, which was the reason why the Balkan allies tried to reap some gain from the discord between the Great Powers. The day before Paget sent a letter to Nicolson, the Serbian Deputy-Minister of Foreign Affairs communicated to him the Serbo-Bulgarian plan to hand Salonica to Great Britain and also to neutralise the Straits. Although this offer was at first sight a blow against Greece, it was principally an attempt of the two main participants of the Balkan alliance to align themselves with the Triple Entente.<sup>164</sup> Sir Ralph transmitted the offer to his minister, but in a letter to Grey he expressed his contempt for it and even mentioned that after Jovanović had approached him with the offer, he had made him repeat it twice.<sup>165</sup>

Paget had already been informed on 5 November that Austrian diplomacy had started separate political negotiations with the Serbian government. Although he knew about Professor Redlich's mission only through secondhand sources, he was sure that Vienna would not be ready to accept Serbian control of any part of the coastline unless it previously achieved a significant measure of control over Serbia.<sup>166</sup> The Serbian government, however, did not just reject the proposal of a customs union, but only a day later the Serbian Minister in London informed the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs that the acquisition of the entire coastline between Sv. Jovan Medovski (San Giovanni di Medua) and Drač (Durazzo) was Serbia's war aim.<sup>167</sup> Strangely enough, when faced with such

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<sup>164</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade 1 November 1912, BD XI-2, No. 86, 71.

<sup>165</sup> Paget to Nicolson, 7 November 1912, PP 51253.

<sup>166</sup> Paget to Grey, 5. November 1912, BD IX-2, No.125, 97; D. Djordjević, *Izlazak Srbije...*, 65.

<sup>167</sup> Grey to Paget, 6 November 1912, BD, IX-2, No. 142, 108; 'Servian Territorial Claims, Macedonia and the Adriatic', *The Times*, 9 December 1912.



Plans for the dissolution of the Austria-Hungary (1917),  
PRO, MPI 1/397

extensive demands, Sir Edward Grey expressed Britain's resolution not to deprive 'the victors of the fruits of their victories', emphasising at the same time the desire of the Foreign Office for a peaceful settlement. Interestingly, no mention of the question of Albanian nationality had been made during the conversation. However, Grey's carefully weighed diplomatic answer was followed by an enquiry which was directed at all the British diplomatic representatives in the capitals of the Great Powers. With the exception of Russia, all the Great Powers were clearly negatively disposed towards the Serbian designs. The policy which British diplomacy was about to adopt in the impending crisis was thus obvious: its aims were to avoid a war at almost any cost and, if possible, to contribute to the achievement of a compromise. Until then the reserved position that Austro-Hungarian diplomacy had taken after the outbreak of the war gave way to bitter opposition to any Serbian outlet to the sea. In an unexpected reversal of roles, Austro-Hungarian diplomacy denied any Serbian rights in Albania on the grounds of the nationality principle, while Serbian diplomacy defended its rights primarily by arguing that they were in the state's interests.<sup>168</sup>

The crisis reached its peak at the end of November, when the Serbian army reached the coast and took possession of Drač.<sup>169</sup> While the Serbian army had completely fulfilled its war aims, Serbian diplomacy was now faced with a problem of tactics. At the beginning of the conflict, the government had described Serbian aspirations as purely economic, but after the early eclipse of Ottoman military power in the Western Balkans, new, more widespread aims were adopted.<sup>170</sup> Paget was very concerned about the situation which had arisen: anxious that the Serbian government could become the hostage of aroused public patriotism, he was certain that the influential Russian minister (who he argued was

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<sup>168</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade, 11 November 1912, BD IX-2, No. 176, 133.

<sup>169</sup> D. Djordjević, *op. cit.*, 53.

<sup>170</sup> Pasić's interview in *The Times*, D. Djordjević, 74-5

more Austrophobe than the Serbs themselves) would not advise moderation. An Albanian state would, according to Paget, inevitably become the focus for Austro-Hungarian and Italian agitation and in future conflicts with Serbia would become a permanent source of tension in Europe. On the other hand, the alternative of Serbian rule over the Northern Albanians, whom the British consuls there had recently described to Paget as 'an unruly turbulent lot', appeared an even worse solution.<sup>171</sup> The day after the Serbian army entered Drač, Paget, in a very frequently quoted dispatch, estimated that the enthusiasm of the Serbian public had reached the level of fanaticism.<sup>172</sup> But the British minister did not ascribe too much importance to the Serbian public; he suspected that the 'cunning' Pašić was simply sheltering behind it and that the crisis had already become an issue between Austria-Hungary and Slavdom. On these grounds, the British minister believed that Russian influence would eventually distract the Serbs from the littoral, for Hartwig had confided to him that in only a few years' time, Austria-Hungary would break up and that therefore the Serbs should be patient. In an effort to establish the Serbian question as a part of the broader rivalry between the Great Powers, the Russian minister argued that Serbia had not been defeated by Austro-Hungarian pressure, but had just complied with the demands of the Triple Entente.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Paget to Grey, 22 November 1912, PP 51253.

<sup>172</sup> 'They [Servians] do not want a commercial outlet [to the sea] but have set their heart upon a Servian port – and they have visions of the blue seas and Servian ships in the offing bringing home the wealth of the Indies', Paget to Grey, 30 November 1912, PP 51253, B.D. IX, No. 313, 254.; Serbian dignitaries even believed that Drač in Serbian hands would in future take over primacy in sea-commerce from the Austro-Hungarian port Trieste, then the fourth port in the Mediterranean, General Popović to N. Pašić, Drač 29/November/12 December 1912, M. Vojvodić, ed. *Dokumanti o spoljasnjoj politici Kraljevine Srbije, V/III* (Beograd, 1986), 544; 'A Dangerous Suggestion', *The Times*, 9 December 1912.

<sup>173</sup> Paget to Grey, 6 December 1912, PP 51253; Djordjević, *op.cit.*, 89.

That Sir Ralph was right became obvious only a week later, when all the signs revealed Serbian readiness to step back. Nevertheless, the prognosis of the British minister had not become any more optimistic, for he was convinced that even Serbian willingness to negotiate directly with Austria-Hungary would not resolve the feud between the two countries. The British Minister in Belgrade was convinced that the oppressive regimes in the Slavic provinces of Austria-Hungary were the true generators of discontent, and argued that only reforms could stop Serbian agitation.<sup>174</sup>

In the meantime, Britain and France, acting as mediators, proposed the convocation of a conference of the belligerent states and the Great Powers. The London Conference of Ambassadors assembled the representatives of the Great Powers under Grey's presidency, while the delegations of the Balkan states and the Ottoman Empire met separately. Many years later, Harold Nicolson was to point to the London conference as a major achievement of British diplomacy which had prevented a general war and he expressed his regret that the World War had not been prevented in the same way.<sup>175</sup> Although successful, the London Conference was not an easy accomplishment at all.<sup>176</sup> The obstacles appeared to be very formidable and although all the major issues were successfully settled, the conference required more time than was to be the case with the Paris Peace conference of 1919. Probably the three most critical points in the course of the negotiations were related

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<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*; Although Austria-Hungary did not take part in the Balkan Wars, the cost of the military pressure on Serbia and Montenegro was very high and reached an amount estimated as higher than 16.5 million pounds. The Austro-Hungarian expenses were considered enough even for limited military intervention. 'Austro-Hungarian Defence Estimates Cost of the Balkan Crisis', *The Times*, 6 October 1913.

<sup>175</sup> H. Nicolson, *op. cit.*, 386-7.

<sup>176</sup> '... It was said that Cambon (French Ambassador to London), when asked about the progress of the Conference, had replied that it would continue till there were six skeletons sitting round the table.' E. Grey, *Twenty five years, 1892-1916* (London, 1925), 265.



to Serbia and Montenegro: the question of a Serbian outlet to the sea, the settlement of the borders between Serbia and Albania, and the Skadar (Scutari) question. On the matter of a Serbian port on the Adriatic, British diplomacy tried to remain neutral and suggest compromise solutions, but it seems that during the December crisis British understanding for Austria-Hungary had significantly decreased. Thus, Paget was able to explain Austro-Hungarian eagerness to provoke Serbia purely as her desire for a preventive war against a neighbour which, after it had extended the territory of its state and doubled its population in another three or four years, would become 'a very formidable people to tackle'.<sup>177</sup>

Austro-Hungarian pressures coincided with the growing discontent of Hungarian politicians opposed to imports from Serbia. It also seems that Austro-Hungarian diplomacy sought an opportunity to demonstrate the strength and unity of the Empire by generating a state of high excitement. Such an opportunity came when, after the Serbian army had entered the region of Kosovo-Metohia, the Austro-Hungarian vice-consul in Prizren staged an incident which brought the two countries to the brink of armed conflict. For about two weeks, the fate of vice-consul Prochaska had been unknown, but when the truth was revealed, it was Serbia from which a formal apology was demanded.<sup>178</sup> Although the Prochaska incident had not attracted much attention from British diplomats, Paget sent a dispatch to Nicolson remarking that the consul was wrong.<sup>179</sup>

After the centre of negotiations had been transferred to London, Sir Ralph's position lost some of its influence. Following a period of frequent misunderstanding with the Serbian govern-

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<sup>177</sup> Paget to Nicolson, 17 December 1912, PP 51253; E.C. Helmreich, *op. cit.*, 251-2.

<sup>178</sup> D. Djordjević, *op. cit.*, 93.

<sup>179</sup> Later even Austria-Hungary confirmed Prochaska's share of the responsibility by transferring him to the remote, and for Vienna not so important, post in Rio de Janeiro.

ment, he was the first to notice their willingness to abandon their comprehensive demands. Although in the Serbian government's decision to appoint Stojan Novaković as chief of the delegation to the London Peace Conference, he recognised Pašić's manoeuvre in order to avoid future public odium, Paget described the old conservative politician as the best choice that could have been made.<sup>180</sup> Sir Ralph was ill-disposed towards the Serbian war designs on the grounds that Russia was entirely behind the war and he was worried about the consequences of the Ottoman defeat, but he realized in January 1913 that all the reasons for his anxiety had gradually disappeared. The Serbian public showed a very obvious disappointment at the very symbolic Russian support during the crises over the outlet to the sea and in the border dispute over the towns of Djakovica, Peć, Prizren and Debar. It appears that the Serbian government also reacted much more benevolently to Grey's friendly advice than to the reluctant and unpremeditated official policy of Russia.<sup>181</sup> Even the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade did not hide his surprise at the sudden change and admitted to Paget that Great Britain was the power with the greatest influence on the Serbian government.<sup>182</sup>

At the end of February 1913, British influence was put to the test when the negotiations collapsed as a consequence of the fall of the regime in Constantinople. After ten months spent in Belgrade, Paget was suddenly called back to the Foreign Office for consultation.<sup>183</sup> The break in the negotiations had further complicated the dispute over the eastern and northern borders of the new

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<sup>180</sup> Paget to Nicolson, Belgrade 10 December 1912, PP 51253.

<sup>181</sup> Great Britain was the last of the Great Powers to express its attitude as to Serbian acquisitions on the Adriatic coast. For these reasons Belgrade tended to perceive London as benevolent and even well-disposed towards Serbian pretensions; Grujić to Pašić, London 9/22 November 1912, M. Vojvodić, *op. cit.*, 387 and the same, 16/29 November 1912, *Ibid*, 434.

<sup>182</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade 18 January 1913, BD IX-2, 425.

<sup>183</sup> Paget to Peckham, Belgrade 21 February 1913, PP 51253.

Albanian state. The deadlock that existed in the matter of future sovereignty over Skadar, which was now besieged by Serbian and Montenegrin forces, initiated the Austro-Hungarian resolution to link that question to the settlement of whole border issue.<sup>184</sup>

Sir Ralph Paget was obviously aware that the war in the Western Balkans was prolonged because of the Montenegrin resolution to continue the siege of Skadar. As well as the military alliance, Serbia was linked to Montenegro by the conviction that other territorial disputes were inevitably related to the settlement of the Skadar question. Austria-Hungary, however, was the champion of the newly-proclaimed but not yet established Albanian state in order to increase the pressure on Serbia. Concerned both to retain their prestige and to avoid a general war, all the Great Powers were involved in this issue. Paget was outraged: '... it does seem ridiculous that a pantaloon [?] like King Nicolas should be allowed to defy Europe and perhaps provoke a European war.'<sup>185</sup>

At the beginning of the spring of 1913 when Skadar remained the last besieged Ottoman fortress in the Balkans, the contest between Montenegro and the other European Powers reached its climax. This small state, whose population did not even exceed that of Manchester, united the Great Powers for the last time before the outbreak of the First World War. In order to preserve the balance of power and to prevent Austria-Hungary from making a unilateral intervention, a united fleet of the Great Powers was sent to the Adriatic under the command of a British admiral. However, the crisis gave new importance to the Belgrade Legation and to Sir Ralph Paget. His goal was to separate Serbia from Montenegro and at the same time to preserve the unity of the Great Powers. Reading correctly the signs of dissatisfaction of the Serbian

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<sup>184</sup> At the end of February Paget had a long conversation with Pašić about Djakovica and Debar which revealed the Serbian resolution not to abandon the important strategic towns. Paget to Grey, Belgrade 22 February 1913, BD IX-2, 527.

<sup>185</sup> Paget to Onslow, 25 February 1913, PP 51253.

government with the Montenegrin resolution, Paget believed that the offer of honourable retreat would be more useful than further pressures on Serbia. However, the perpetually wily Pašić and the unstated interests of some of the Great Powers were permanent obstacles to the realisation of his plans.

Only two weeks before the withdrawal of the Serbian troops from the siege of Skadar, Paget presented Pašić with the joint initiative of the Great Powers inviting the Serbian government to raise the siege. When Pašić objected to the form of words regarding the protection of Roman-Catholics, Sir Ralph made a bold step and on the spot proposed a slight change to the original text.<sup>186</sup> Pašić agreed to the proposal, but Paget's colleagues were not all enthusiastic about his decision, and they were even less satisfied with his unilateral action. A few days later, the Italian Chargé d' Affaires told Paget that according to intelligence from the Italian Embassy in London, Sir Edward Grey had been 'much annoyed' after he had been informed about Paget's action.<sup>187</sup> Although the entire communication of the Italian minister had all the hallmarks of an intrigue, Sir Ralph was genuinely concerned and he tried to explain himself to Sir Edward Grey. Ultimately, within just two weeks his action was officially approved.

The withdrawal of the Serbian army did not make the Montenegrin government give up the siege. Persistence brought victory to the besiegers for at the end of the month the starving city finally surrendered. From the very beginning of the crisis, Paget had tried to convince the Serbian government that even in the event of it falling into the hands of the allies Skadar would eventually be taken from Montenegro and handed to Albania. The prognosis proved to be accurate, but for the Montenegrin Court it was

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<sup>186</sup> Paget consented to replace the formulation that the 'protection des populations catoliques' with the much more neutral 'protection des libertés de culte', Paget to Nicolson, Belgrade 31 March 1913, PP 51253. (Not mentioned by E. C. Helmreich).

<sup>187</sup> Paget to Tyrrell, Belgrade, 5 April 1913, *op cit*.

impossible to end their military operations and to abandon their aspirations unless major international pressure obliged them to do so. This pressure reached its climax in days that preceded the Montenegrin victory. Skadar remained in the possession of Montenegro for only several weeks, without ever becoming its capital as had been planned.

A LESS KNOWN LEGACY  
OF THE WAR – ATROCITIES

‘The city (of Gnjilane /Gjilan/) seems like the Kingdom of Death.’

Lazer Mejda (Roman-Catholic Archbishop of Skoplje) on the massacre of Albanians, 24 January 1913, N. Malcolm, *op. cit.*, 254.

‘Except where they have intermingled with the Slavs and other races the Shkypetars (Albanians) are tall and fair.’

Wadham Peacock (Private Secretary of British Consul-General in North Albania), *The ‘Wild Albanian’, The Fortnightly Review*, W.L. Courtney, ed. Vol XCIII, N.S., London, January-June, 1913, 333.

The new borders were a legacy of the Balkan Wars that has lasted until the present day. The policy of the triumphant Balkan states towards minorities made a bitter impression upon the British public. Even after eighty years the long-lasting image helped George F. Kennan to find a convenient but not very accurate explanation for recent Yugoslav wars and to depict the region as helplessly condemned to violence.<sup>188</sup>

The British public was generally better disposed towards Serbia and the other Balkan countries than was the case with the official British diplomacy. The Bulgarian horrors of 1876, the massacres of Armenians in the 1890’s and the brutal suppression of the Macedonian uprising of 1903 all presented the Ottoman Empire as a state dependent upon oppression. After the Young Ottoman Revolution, that attitude changed, but only temporarily. The new regime soon proved to be just as unable as its predecessor to reform the country and continued to indulge in similar methods towards the Christian subjects of the Sublime Porte.<sup>189</sup>

In the years that preceded the First Balkan War, reports of the mistreatment of the Christian inhabitants of Macedonia

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<sup>188</sup> M. Todorova, *Imaginarni Balkan* (Beograd 1999), 19.

<sup>189</sup> Heller, 67; ‘Macedonian Outrages’, *The Times*, 1 February 1912; P. Sokolovitch, *op. cit.*

and Kosovo-Metohija became frequent, and caused considerable alarm in the British press.<sup>190</sup> In the summer of 1912, the massacre of eighty inhabitants of the town of Kočane in Macedonia and the alleged massacre of Serbs in Sjenica both made a major contribution to the creation of an atmosphere of war in Serbia and Bulgaria and, finally, caused the British public opinion to side with the enemies of the Turks. Although reports of the Sandžak massacre proved to be very exaggerated, it seems that Sir Edward Grey was much more concerned about the pro-Montenegrin reports of M. E. Durham, who was on the spot in Sandžak, than about the carefully written but not particularly well-informed dispatches sent by Paget.<sup>191</sup>

After the outbreak of the war, news about splendid victories for the allies were fairly quickly replaced by rumours about atrocities committed against the Turkish and Albanian populations of the liberated regions. The metamorphosis of the image of the Balkan states from champions of the oppressed to brutal oppressors was sudden. Durham herself reported bitterly on the horrors which the Montenegrin army inflicted on the Albanian population of Metohija. At the same time, Peckham, British vice-consul in Skoplje, lost his temporary enthusiasm for the Serbian army and became more hostile towards the Serbs than he had been before the war. Unaware of the provisions of the Serbo-Bulgarian agreement of alliance, his disapproval was aroused by the prompt establishment of civil authorities in the region under the control of the Serbian army. Soon his reports that the atrocities included even the

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<sup>190</sup> Durham to Lowther, Montenegro, 3 September 1912, FO 371/1497.

<sup>191</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade 6 June 1913, SERVICIA, Annual Report, FO 371/1748. Noel Malcolm neglects or highly underestimates this information. In case of M.E. Durham's reports, he virtually ignores them. In regard of some pre-war atrocities against Serbs, he even argues that the Serbs committed these themselves. N. Malcolm, *op. cit.*, 250 and 253-4.

execution of wounded Turkish soldiers from the Skoplje hospital provoked a widespread outcry for a quick reaction by the British government.<sup>192</sup>

Even Sir Ralph Paget, who had been reluctant to accept earlier reports about Turkish atrocities in Berane and Sjenica, now accepted and transmitted unconfirmed news that the Serbian army had killed no less than 15,000 civilians in Sandžak.<sup>193</sup> Nevertheless, it does not seem that the information he received made Sir Ralph any more personally involved. Thus, a few weeks later, he related in a dispatch the opinion of the Austro-Hungarian military attaché, who remarked, though full of praise for the Serbian victories, that the ultimate aim of the Serbian campaign was the extermination of the entire Albanian population.<sup>194</sup> As the British military attaché was still somewhere at the front, a visit to a camp for prisoners of war was the only way for Paget to check the horrific news he was receiving. Reports on the terrifying conditions of the prisoners of war were frequent and deeply affected the British public.<sup>195</sup> After a visit he had made to a camp established near Belgrade, Paget found the conditions in it to be agreeable. With the exception of overcrowded barracks and a lack of tobacco, the British minister remarked that the prisoners lived in much the same conditions as the Serbian army.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> *Ibid*, 254-5, In her biography of Mother Teresa, Anne Sebba quotes the report on the executions in the Skoplje hospital as the unbiased result of Peckham's investigation. However, his dispatches were written on the basis of a report by the Catholic Curé of Uskub; A. Sebba, *Mother Teresa – Beyond the Image* (New York, 1997), 3, <http://www.nytimes.com/books/first/s/sebba-teresa.html> (Visited, 2. 9. 20002)

<sup>193</sup> Paget to Nicolson, 7 November 1912, PP 51253.

<sup>194</sup> Paget to Nicolson, 26 November 1912, PP 51253.

<sup>195</sup> Reports published in *The Illustrated London News* in Spring 1913, about an island in the Black Sea where captured Turkish soldiers were left to die of starvation shocked the magazine's readership; *TILN*, 26 April 1913, sketch drawn by George Scott.

<sup>196</sup> Paget to Nicolson, 26 November 1912, PP 51253.



On the other hand, the locally based British consuls in Skoplje and Bitolj (Monastir) were able to produce an entire report on the mistreatment of non-Serbs in the newly annexed regions. At the end of February 1913, Peckham presented a detailed overview under the title *Memorandum on Massacres of Albanians*.<sup>197</sup> Although ready to admit that his sources were by no means impartial (his source was the pro-Albanian *Catholic Curé of Uskub*), and that some of the actions of the Serbian army had been limited acts of retaliation, he accepted the presented estimation of civilian casualties, which already exceeded 8000.<sup>198</sup> The reaction of Paget and the Foreign Office to these numerous and embittered reports was particularly strange. When Paget returned from London, where he had been summoned for consultation during February 1913, he thought it necessary to warn Peckham that too realistic reports with so many unpleasant details would not necessarily add any force to the idea he had intended to convey.<sup>199</sup> Within the Foreign Office, political expediency was too formidable an obstacle to be overcome simply by ethical considerations. Despite their readiness to place some confidence in Peckham's sources, especially after they had received some similar reports from Bitolj and Salonica, the British foreign policy makers limited their reaction to a simple 'unofficial question' to the Serbian government.<sup>200</sup>

Sir Ralph Paget was somewhat amused by the swift change in attitude towards Serbia displayed by British journalists and travellers. One such, Louis Cahen, who had worked in the *Macedonian Relief Fund* for four months, visited the British legation in Belgrade on his way back to London. Once openly pro-Serbian, Cahen now asked the British Minister for a meeting with Wil-

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<sup>197</sup> Paget to Grey, Belgrade, 7 March 1913, FO 371/1782, Enclosure No 1 and No 2.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, Enclosure No 2.

<sup>199</sup> Paget to Peckham, Belgrade 21 February 1913, PP 51253.

<sup>200</sup> Minute, London, 26 February 1913, FO 371/1782.

liam Tyrrell, Grey's influential private secretary, in order to inform him of the situation and to demand a British protest and the appointment of an international commission to explore the matter. Sir Ralph's answer to Cahen was indicative:

'I have told him I have protested on several occasions but that it is not much good unless we have absolutely unimpeachable evidence. I very much doubt the utility of a commission though its presence in Macedonia might stop the perpetration of further outrages.'<sup>201</sup>

British diplomacy was pragmatic, but at the same time was far from impartial. At the end of April 1913, the Serbian army announced its evacuation of the Albanian littoral.<sup>202</sup> In a letter addressed to the British Admiral, General Bojović described the Serbian retreat as concession to the amicably disposed Great Powers, at the same time complaining that the withdrawal of the Serbian army had been followed by the murders of Serbs and Christians in Central Albania. Grey and Nicolson's minute to this letter, translated and transferred to the Foreign Office, was devoid of any compassion. British foreign policy makers denied even the possibility that religious antagonism could be a pretext for enmity among the Albanians. They asked: '... And, if it comes to that, how many Albanians have the Servians massacred?'<sup>203</sup>

An Albanian insurrection in the region of Debar in 1913 contributed to the Serbian government's decision not to apply the Serbian constitution in the newly annexed regions. The military authorities were administering these regions and official decrees were being issued as a replacement for the Constitution. The system established created considerable problems for Serbian diplomacy and caused serious opposition from many sides, starting with interna-

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<sup>201</sup> Paget to Tyrrell, 15 March 1913, PP 51253.

<sup>202</sup> General Boiovitch to Vice-Admiral Burney, San Giovanni di Medua, 22 April 1913, FO 371/1782.

<sup>203</sup> *Op cit.*, Minute.

tional humanitarian organisations and ending with the minority in the Serbian National Assembly.<sup>204</sup> Sir Ralph Paget had already been appointed Assistant Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office when an interesting dialogue found a place in the correspondence between the Secretary of the British Legation in Belgrade and a high official in the Foreign Office. Trying to find a justification for the policy of the Serbian government, Crackanthorpe argued that it was necessitated by the backward state of the new provinces. Nevertheless, his opinion was not shared in the Foreign Office. One remark was imbued with genuine irony: 'If many of these decrees are like the specimen we have already had before us, the new Serbia will be a jolly place to live.'<sup>205</sup> At the same time, Grey and Nicolson were prepared to adopt some of Crackanthorpe's views:

'Theoretically, the Servian position is not only sound, but corresponds with what every other state has done in similar circumstances.

The real difficulty begins when the contents of the decrees have to be considered. In that respect the Servians made a bad beginning and we have told them so.'<sup>206</sup>

The moral dimension of the Balkan Wars was a very important issue for the contemporary European public. As a prelude to the impending world war, the Balkan conflict opened all the ethical issues that were to arise after 1914. The change of roles between the Ottoman Empire and the victorious Balkan states challenged the validity of the principle of nationality, the major principle of the coming world war.

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<sup>204</sup> Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, DIE, Publication No. 4 *Report of the International Commission To Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* (Washington, 1914), thereafter, R.I.C., 158. On the Serbian atrocities in central Albania see the correspondence between Aurbey Herbert M.P. and Al. V. Georgevitch (Serbian Chargé d' Affaires in London) in *The Times* of 22 September and 25 September 1913.

<sup>205</sup> Crackanthorpe to Grey, Belgrade 18 November 1913, FO 371/1748.

<sup>206</sup> *Op cit.*, Minute.

Divisions between Great Powers and the lack of reliable sources from the field were the main reasons for the absence of any significant reaction to the atrocities that were committed. A report of the *International Commission*, published by the *Carnegie Endowment*, pointed to the atrocities committed by Bulgarian and Greek soldiers as the main crimes in the Balkan wars.<sup>207</sup> Although the Memorandum of the *Catholic Curé* was available to the report's authors, it was not used.

The unrealistic and extensive claims of the Serbian government, which, in its desire to gain an outlet to the sea, had put aside all considerations regarding the national principle of nationality that was the major justification for the war and used brutal methods in dealing with ethnic minorities, made all parties forget the ethnic composition of the Northern Albanian population. In vain was the fact that the British public had already been informed that just in the Vilayet of Skadar (Scutari) Serbs (Muslim and Christian) made up about one third of total population.<sup>208</sup> Unnoticed too passed the appeal of 524 ladies from Drač who, in a telegram addressed to the Empress of Russia and the Queen of England, asked for the permanent presence of the Serbian army in their town.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> The authors put much more weight on violations of the human rights of the native population. R.I.C., 158-192.

<sup>208</sup> *TILN*, 16 November 1912, 708.

<sup>209</sup> Dames de Durazzo to Grey, Antivari, 29 January 1913, FO 371/1778 (see Appendix II). Drač had 9000 inhabitants at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who were predominantly Muslims and Albanians. Nevertheless, an active Orthodox and pro-Serbian minority were acting before the Serbian army reached the Adriatic seashore. Nevertheless, today Central and Northern regions of Albania are ethnically purely Albanian; R. Bankin, *The Inner History of the Balkan War*, Vol. I (London, 1914/1930), 340-1. (Herders *Konversations Lexicon* of 1902 estimates the population of Drač at just 1500. If the telegram was genuine, about 2/3 of women population of the town was benevolent towards Serbian rule; *Herders Konversations Lexicon*, I, A bis Bonaparte / Freiburg im Breisgau, 1902./, 996-7 /table/).

## SERBO-BULGARIAN RIVALRY AND WAR

With the resolution of the Skadar crisis, the First Balkan War was virtually over. However, Paget's humorous estimation that the complicated Balkan imbroglio would last at least until August, when all the diplomats 'want to go their respective c(o)urses' proved to be accurate.<sup>210</sup> Too distrustful about the prospects of the Balkan alliance and sceptical about the ability of Serbia to win the war, he was proved right in his assessment of the relations between Serbia and Bulgaria.

After the outbreak of war, he had frequently noticed signs of distrust and enmity between the two countries, which became very serious when the Ottoman army had been driven out of Macedonia. The agreement of the alliance foresaw that Serbia should annex the regions of Sandžak, Kosovo-Metohija, and the strip of land which gave an outlet to the sea and which was not a clearly defined part of Macedonia. The 'contested' part of Macedonia had been put aside and left for the future arbitration of the Russian Emperor. The course of the war made all sides unsatisfied with the proposed territorial settlement. The Serbian army occupied almost the whole of that part of Macedonia populated by Slavs, and helped the Bulgarians in besieging Adrianople, which was considered to be well beyond its obligations. When permanent possession of Northern Albania and the coastline was denied to Serbia, the Serbian government tried to get some compensation in Macedonia. The motive of liberation was thus modified by the idea of the balance of powers in the region.

At the beginning of December 1912, while Serbia and Bulgaria were still allies on the battlefield, Sir Ralph Paget had a conversation with the Bulgarian Minister in Belgrade, Tosheff. The Bulgarian minister did not hide his disappointment and bitterness at the present situation and advocated a future alliance between

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<sup>210</sup> Paget to Tyrrell, Belgrade, 15 March 1913, *ibid.*

Romania, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire as a check to Russia and Austria-Hungary.<sup>211</sup> In his designs against Russia, the traditional protector of Bulgaria, Tosheff, a former Bulgarian nationalist who had once fought in Macedonia as a paramilitary, was seeking an alliance with an ancient and bitter foe, as well as the support of Great Britain. But his designs proved to be very hard to put into practice. While all Paget's proposals were planned in order to facilitate the achievement of a peaceful solution, Tosheff was not much concerned about peace, believing that in an alliance with Bulgaria, Romania could find compensations in the Austro-Hungarian province Transylvania.<sup>212</sup>

Tosheff became a useful source for Paget, who had regularly reported on their contacts until the outbreak of the Second Balkan War. The relationship between the two diplomats ultimately resulted in friendship.<sup>213</sup> Sir Ralph relied very much on the information the Bulgarian minister was giving him, convinced of his close ties with the Bulgarian court and government. However, although he was pleased that Russian influence in Bulgaria was certainly lessened, Paget also understood that the Bulgarian government and diplomatic service were not only imbued with discontent but also bitterly divided.<sup>214</sup>

Gradually Sir Ralph came to believe that a Serbo-Bulgarian conflict could benefit British interests in the region. While the Balkan alliance was considered a triumph of Russian diplomacy, its dissolution appeared to represent its failure. Success in the arbitration of the dispute which had been entrusted to the Russian

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<sup>211</sup> Paget to Grey, 6 December 1912, PP 51253. Not mentioned by Heller.

<sup>212</sup> Paget to Nicolson, 8 January 1913, PP 51253.

<sup>213</sup> In 1916 Tosheff asked Paget, then British Minister in Denmark, to help search after his son who had disappeared on the Southern front. Paget to Mery del Val (Mr), 1 January 1917, PP 51255A.

<sup>214</sup> Tosheff complained that even the Bulgarian representative in London, Madjaroff, was an open Russophile. Paget to Tyrrell, 15 April 1913, PP 51253.

Emperor had already ceased to be a sign of supremacy, becoming 'a not enviable job instead'.<sup>215</sup> In 1913, it seemed that Russia and Austria-Hungary, the two Powers between which a contest over the Balkans had been a constant threat to peace in Europe, had finally lost their prestige. Vienna had missed the opportunity to start a war against Serbia before it managed to incorporate new territories, and St. Petersburg proved incompetent in the dispute between the Balkan allies.<sup>216</sup>

Sir Ralph had no reasons at all to choose a side in the impending war, for while he considered the Bulgarian rights over the Slavonic part of Macedonia to be superior, he was aware of the political and military reality of the situation.<sup>217</sup> The Serbian government found itself in a very sensitive position, for any concession to Bulgaria would have compromised their common border with Greece, making commercial access to the sea more remote and indirect. The possible resentment of the army and the population was considered an even worse outcome and the British Minister in Belgrade was convinced that in the event of a withdrawal of the Serbian army from Macedonia, a crisis of the government and the constitution would be inevitable.

Powerful enemies and disinterested friends among the Great Powers forced Serbia and Greece to unite against the Bulgarian demands. The balance in the Balkans was thus changed to the disadvantage of Sofia, which at the end of June broke the deadlock and attacked its former allies. This was a war in which all Balkan states united against Bulgaria. British diplomats considered both the war and the Bulgarian defeat as a regrettable outcome, but one

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<sup>215</sup> Paget to Nicolson, Belgrade 15 June 1913, *ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> Bridge, 203; A.J.P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848-1918* (Oxford, 1988), *op. cit.*, 498-500; B. Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan entanglements, 1806-1914* (Cambridge, 1991), 247-8.

<sup>217</sup> Paget to Nicolson, 15 June 1913, PP 51253; 'The Servian Case Against Bulgaria', *The Times*, 9 June 1913 and 'Cabinet Council in Belgrade', *The Times*, 10 June 1913.

which, all the same, happened to be a convenient final solution for the Balkan peninsula. The supremacy of any power, local or European, was avoided. Ottoman rule over the central Balkans was not preserved, but the prestige of the Porte was to some extent restored after the recapture of Adrianople. The Ottoman Empire was now much more likely to focus its attention on the Middle East, which was particularly important for British interests in that region. That was the reason why so few of Paget's dispatches from the period give anything more than a simple overview of the current situation. Military operations were just over and peace negotiations had begun when Sir Ralph was summoned to London and promoted.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Paget left Belgrade on the 4 August 1913, Crackanthorpe to Grey, Belgrade, 5 August 1913, FO 371/1748.



# IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

## THE HUMANITARIAN

Now considered an expert on the Balkans, Paget was first appointed Assistant Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, as the successor to Louis Mallet, who had been sent to Constantinople.<sup>219</sup> During the second half of 1915, Sir Ralph Paget temporarily left the Foreign Office and moved to Serbia where he became the British Commissioner for the Red Cross and Relief Work. There he joined his wife, who had already re-established the war hospital in Skoplje and continued her humanitarian work which had been started in 1912-1913. After many



Sir Arthur Paget

hardships and the death of her cousin and companion, Lady Paget was one of the first victims of the typhoid fever that raged across Serbia in the first months of 1915. Sir Ralph thus left Britain in the capacity of British Commissioner for the Red Cross and Re-

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<sup>219</sup> 'Foreign Office Appointment', *The Times*, 15 August 1913.

<sup>220</sup> Lady Paget's father.

<sup>221</sup> A. Paget to Kitchener, 29 March 1915, British library Add 51250.

lief Work. Nevertheless, when Leila Paget recovered, he decided to stay in the country of his previous diplomatic service.

It was General Sir Arthur Paget<sup>220</sup> who recommended Sir Ralph Paget for a special mission with Colonel Hunter in the service of the War Office as the adviser on medical issues.<sup>221</sup> The General visited Serbia on a secret mission. Officially, he came in order to confer a high decoration onto the King of Serbia, but his mission also had a diplomatic character as well.<sup>222</sup> Sir Arthur visited Belgrade and Sofia, where he met Serbian and Bulgarian dignitaries.<sup>223</sup> However, Sir Ralph was not willing to accept official duties from the Foreign or the War Office, instead staying throughout nine months in the capacity of simple humanitarian. He spent that period organizing humanitarian activities and co-ordinating the work of several British medical missions. Paget's old connections in the Serbian government were more than helpful in all his efforts. His work had thus some diplomatic importance as well. It was Ralph Paget who personally supported the Allies' diplomatic pressure on the Serbian government. In a conversation with high officials of the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he expressed dissatisfaction because the Serbian army had not launched an offensive against Austria-Hungary, arguing that British naval and humanitarian units in Serbia could be withdrawn after an entire year of inactivity.<sup>224</sup>

When in September 1915, Austro-Hungarian and German armies attacked Serbia for a third time, Serbian defences started to crumble after a couple of weeks. Serbian defeat was neither imminent nor catastrophic; however, despite persistent defence, it seemed that the Germans and Austro-Hungarians joined by the Bulgarians were going to overrun and destroy Serbia. Even British

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<sup>222</sup> Graz to Grey, Nish 26 March 1915, FO 371/2253, No. 107.

<sup>223</sup> Sir Arthur Paget to Lord Kitchener, *Situation in Serbia*, Nish, 9<sup>th</sup> February 1915, CAB 37/124/18.

<sup>224</sup> Graz to Foreign Office, Nish 6 June 1915, FO 371/2249, No 190.

diplomats and soldiers in Serbia quarrelled in despair. In the midst of the great Serbian retreat across Albania it was the British Military Attaché in Serbia, E. F. Phillips, who bitterly accused the British Minister in Belgrade Sir Charles des Graz, and Sir Ralph Paget of a pro-Serbian attitude and support of the inactive and self-centred interests of the Serbian government. He also added that the treatment of the hundreds of English nurses by the Serbian government “was disgraceful”, which was the responsibility of Sir Ralph Paget, who, according to Phillips’s opinion, “sees through his wife’s eyes, to a large extent”.<sup>225</sup> Sir Ralph made significant efforts to hold all British humanitarian missions together and to organize their gradual withdrawal. A detailed report he wrote about the mission in Serbia was submitted to the Foreign Office at the end of January 1916.<sup>226</sup> Since the Bulgarian government had proclaimed armed neutrality, Paget tried to convince the Serbian military authorities to prepare a withdrawal of the British hospital units. Paget did not meet with understanding from the Serbian authorities when he argued that on the eve of the third great enemy offensive against Serbia it would be far better if hospital units were retreated from the border and concentrated in the Serbian heartland (around the towns of Kragujevac and Kraljevo). When in October his worst expectations were confirmed and Bulgaria joined the Central Powers in their invasion, the great retreat became hasty. Two individuals were wounded, while all the units were moved southward to Mladenovac. Their commander, Admiral Troubridge, sent his staff further south to the city of Niš, the war capital of Serbia, under Paget’s charge. The opinion prevailed that an eventual Bulgarian attack on Serbia would be concentrated in the northern parts of

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<sup>225</sup> *Private from the Military Attaché in Serbia*, Phillips to Backley, Scutary, 7 December 1915, WO 107/55, 8.

<sup>226</sup> Paget, *Report on the Retreat of Part of the British Hospital Units from Serbia*, October–December 1915, FO 371/2615. (submitted on 28 January 1916), see Appendix III.

the country, while the sole aim of the limited offensive would be the territorial joining of the Central Powers. Thus, Paget thought that the most advisable policy should be the concentration of hospitals and sanitary material in the southern part of the country and along the main railway line. Paget and Colonel Sondermeyer, the surgeon chief inspector of military hospitals, then urged Colonel Genčić to allow an organized withdrawal of hospitals and sanitary units to Skoplje and further to Monastir. However, it was as soon as 15 October that the Bulgarian army cut the main railway line between Niš and Skoplje. Telegraph and telephone lines became unreliable since the Germans and Austro-Hungarians occupied Belgrade. Concerned for Lady Paget's safety, Sir Ralph decided to reach the city of Skoplje in his motor car. After a long and difficult journey that lasted many hours, Paget had to pass through Prokuplje, Kuršumlija, Priština and Ferizović (Uroševac) before he entered Skoplje. By then Lady Paget had been placed in charge of the entire civil affairs in Skoplje as the Serbian command and administration was about to retreat from the city. Bulgarian forces were already just 15 miles away. Even though Lady Paget had been trying to move the hospital with all the wounded to Pristina or Monastir, all her efforts were in vain. Neither the Serbian authorities nor the British command in Salonica were able to provide the necessary transport. Thus Lady Paget decided to remain in Skoplje. Finally, after consultation with his wife and Dr Maitland, Sir Ralph left Skoplje in order to organize the evacuation of other British hospital and humanitarian units to Britain. It was on 22 October, only one day after Sir Ralph had left for Niš, that the Bulgarians took Skoplje. Imminent danger turned into a family drama. Several letters from this period vividly but only partially depict the despair that overcame Sir Ralph. Shortly before the fall of Skoplje, he asked Sir Edward Boyle to communicate with some of 'his influential friends' in Bulgaria, who were able to arrange that Lady Paget's unit be treated with consideration.<sup>227</sup> Nevertheless,

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<sup>227</sup> Paget to Eliot, 15 October 1915, Draft, PP 51253.



General Popović and Lady Paget at Railway Station of Skoplje 1915.

Lady Paget and her staff were detained as virtual prisoners of war, but since they were under the powerful protection of the Bulgarian Queen, who happened to be an acquaintance of Lady Paget, their situation was very favourable.<sup>228</sup>

After the fall of Skoplje and Vranje the position of the city of Niš as the war capital of Serbia became unsustainable. Sir Ralph sent some units to Vrnjačka Banja (The Spa of Vrnjci) while he himself went with the Serbian government to the town of Kraljevo. After a conversation with Prime Minister Pašić, Paget decided to prepare all British humanitarian units for a long retreat. In the general confusion part of the British equipment and foodstuff were sent from Niš, but just three out of five trucks reached Kraljevo. In the chaotic circumstances of total retreat southward, the approximately fifty-mile-long journey from Kruševac to Kraljevo took some 22 hours. Along the narrow gauge railway some 3000 trunks awaited to be captured by the Austro-Germans. After he met other Britons in charge of humanitarian activities, Paget offered two options: to retreat through Sadžak and Montenegro to the Albanian coast, or to stay where they were and be captured by the enemy. Only those who were capable of military service were strongly advised to join the retreat. A majority decided to retreat with Paget. Paget sent part of his units on some twenty carts to Novi Pazar, while he himself joined the Serbian government in Kosovska Mitrovica on 5 November. The retreat involved numerous hardships, with many refugees starving and panic-stricken. Despite the fact that the Serbian military authorities declined him full support, Paget managed to accomplish a safe and complete retreat toward Serbia's southwestern borders. He tried from Mitrovica to run his activities in Raška and other parts of Serbia which had not yet been occupied. However, the road conditions were very bad and one unit leader even died in a car accident. On 15 November, part of the British mission left Mitrovica for Uroševac. Some 120 Britons and

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<sup>228</sup> Lady Paget, *With Our Serbia Allies*, Second Report (London 1916), 94.

Frenchmen reached Monastir via Prizren, Ljum-kula and Debar. As the railway communications were endangered by the Bulgarian advance, it was just one day later when Paget and almost all the British humanitarian units left Mitrovica in order to reach the Albanian border near the town of Prizren. While they waited in newly-built cholera sheds to start the same journey to Monastir, the Serbian headquarters issued the order for a change in the route. Owing to the insecurity, the retreat was redirected towards Montenegro, through Peć and Podgorica. There were five lorries and forty cattle carts in the column that abandoned Prizren two days later. That was the second part of the British mission to leave Serbia. Paget went ahead together with the Montenegrin Minister in Serbia. Some arrangements had already been made regarding the provisioning and accommodation in Djakovica, Peć and Podgorica. The British Minister to Montenegro was even instructed to find out whether there would be any ship ready to embark the units somewhere on the Adriatic coast. Sir Ralph disabled and abandoned his car in Djakovica. In Peć he found a huge number of refugees, with the local Montenegrin authorities unable to provide any help to his mission. A journey fraught with hardship started from Peć and Dečani. Paget described it in grim words:

“Immediately on leaving Ipek (Peć) the road becomes a mere mountain path, at times scarcely two feet wide, with a high wall of rock on the side and a precipice and mountain torrent on the other. This path, which underfoot is rocky and uneven, winds up a mountain gorge, rising continuously. The higher the altitude the more difficult becomes the progress, as the track during most months of the year is covered with frozen snow, and both for ponies and pedestrians foothold becomes increasingly precarious. When at length after some eight or ten hours strenuous marching the path emerges from the gorge, there rises before one the actual pass, with the path winding up in zig-zags, some two thousands feet higher, and here the conditions for both man and beast become positively dangerous.

“Some distance short of the summit which is over 5000 feet above sea level, there exists a small Khan built of wood named Bi-

cluka which usually constitutes the halting place at the end of the first day march. The Khan consists of one room capable of sheltering perhaps some thirty travelers. There is no other sleeping accommodation than this floor, and nor can any refreshment except tea be obtained.”<sup>229</sup>

After many hours of “heartbreaking climbing and descending in the teeth of bitter wind” Paget and his mission reached Andrijevića. When after several days of marching through snowstorms and deep mud Paget’s mission finally reached the Montenegrin capital of Cetinje, they needed four days of rest. Paget was there received by King Nikola of Montenegro, who promised to provide all necessary provisions for the British humanitarian units. It was on 29 November that Paget reached the Albanian city of Skadar, where all the British humanitarian units were ordered to assemble. The Albanian ports were then very near and Paget made all the necessary arrangements with the British Ambassador in Rome in order to transport his staff to Italy. Seventy beds in different hotels in Skadar awaited members of the British humanitarian units. However, Paget was already faced with a considerable shortage of food. With the agreement of the Serbian authorities, he tried to establish a soup kitchen for thousands of Serbian civilian refugees who had crowded into the city. At last Paget was able to exchange a cheque for five hundred pounds for silver currency with the Serbian Minister of Finance, as it was the only way provisions could be bought.

Finally, on 11 December, Paget left Skadar at the head of a caravan of about 180 British and Russian soldiers, who were followed by 45 cattle carts, 80 pack ponies and 6 horse carriages. In the Adriatic port of Medova (Saint John of Medova, Sv. Jovan Medovski), the mission decided to separate, and while forty British and Russian troops proceeded to Drač, Paget and others finally

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<sup>229</sup> R. Paget, *Report on the Retreat of Part of the British Hospital Units from Serbia*, October–December 1915, FO 371/2615. (submitted on 28 January 1916), 29.

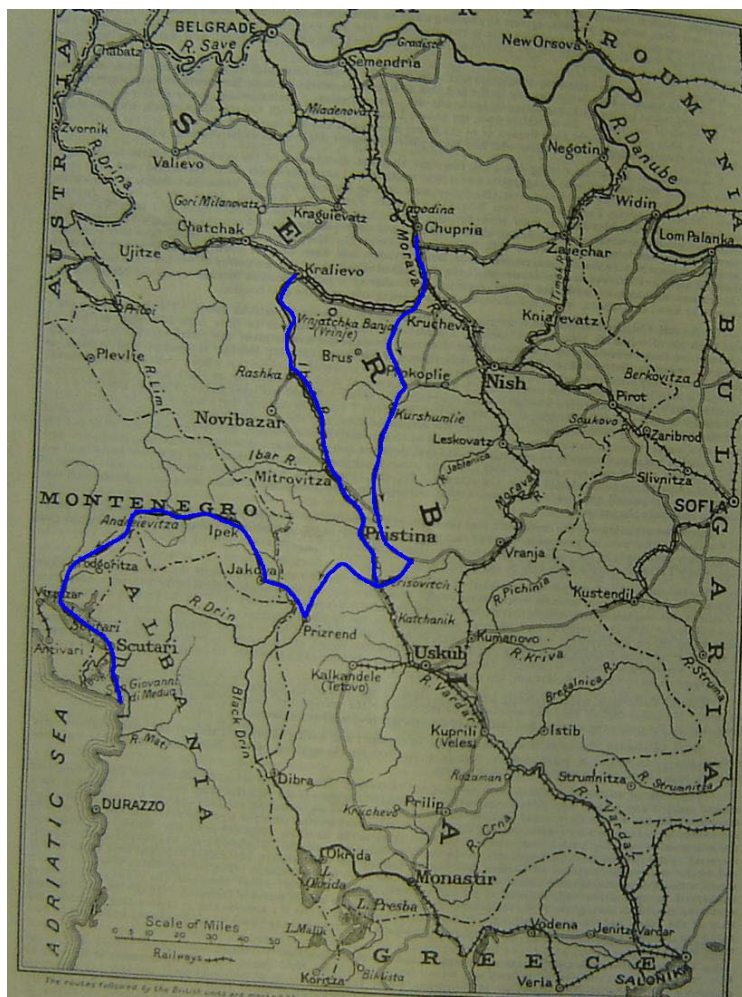


got on board of the Italian steamer “Brindisi”. In the small Italian ship there were about four hundred Italians, refugees, and members of the British and Russian humanitarian units. It was the end of Paget’s last Balkan adventure.

During the month of the retreat the uncertain destiny of these British subjects attracted the attention of the British public. The issue was raised in the Palace of Westminster, where Lord Robert Cecil had to reassure distressed MPs of Sir Ralph Paget’s ‘trustworthy abilities’.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> ‘Refugees from Serbia’, *The Times*, 21 December 1915.



The Route of Retreat Through Serbia, Montenegro and Albania

THE FOREIGN POLICY MAKER

On his return to London, as Assistant Under - Secretary in the Foreign Office, together with Sir William Tyrrell, secretary to Sir Edward Grey, Paget produced a memorandum which was the first and, as Erik Goldstein argues, the most distinctive among several projects for the post-war political reconstruction of Europe.<sup>231</sup> This memorandum was the first British official document to take the principle of nationality as the supreme parameter for the creation of future European states. The account, described by Lloyd George as 'an impressive document... bold and far-seeing', proposed the establishment of independent Polish, Czech and Yugoslav (Jugo-Slav) states and the adjustment of future boundaries, not only at the expense of the hostile Central Powers but at the expense of the Allies (especially Russia, naturally) as well. The settlement envisaged for the Balkans was obviously inspired by Paget's recent diplomatic experiences in the Balkans. Regardless of whether the outcome of the war would be victory or a separate peace agreement, the memorandum recommended the dismantling of Austria-Hungary and establishment of a Greater Romania, Yugoslavia, Hungary and a distinct Austria instead. Aware of its importance for the future balance of power, the authors suggested that the greater part of Macedonia should be included in the future Bulgaria, while, as compensation, two outlets to the Adriatic should be given to Serbia.<sup>232</sup> The memorandum certainly represents a further elaboration of the idea that Paget had hinted to the Foreign Office four years before. In future, the continental empires (the Central Powers and Russia) would be dissolved and the new national states would serve as a constraint on their possible future

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<sup>231</sup> E. Goldstein, *Winning the Peace: British Diplomatic Strategy, Peace Planning and the Paris Peace Conference, 1916-1920* (Oxford 1991), 10, Paget-Tyrrell, Memorandum, 7. August 1916. FO 371/2804/18051. See Appendix 4.

<sup>232</sup> Z. Steiner, *The foreign Office under Sir Edward Grey, 1905-1914...* 58.

restoration. The explicit consent of Russia was to be bought by securing its ancient imperial goal, the Black Sea Straits and Constantinople, which had long ago lost their old strategic importance for the British Empire.

Probably the most interesting proposals in the memorandum are those relating to future relations between the Great Powers. Formally, after the abolition of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, the degradation of Germany and the limitation of Russia to the status of a strictly peripheral European power, a League of Nations was considered a sufficient instrument for maintaining world peace. Nevertheless, although the authors suggested that the existing military alliances should be dissolved after the war, they recommended that an alliance between Great Britain, France and Belgium should be established instead.

Of the four posts Sir Ralph Paget held during the First World War, his period as Assistant Under-Secretary and later as a British delegate to the Paris Peace Conference (January-June 1919) represents the zenith of his career. In 1914 his predecessor Louis Mallet was transferred to Constantinople, where the place of ambassador had already been considered a 'second prize'. It seemed that the pro-German party won in the Foreign Office: Crowe's promotion to Arthur Nicolson's position was expected.<sup>233</sup> But Paget took on the American and Treaty departments.

Eventually, at the beginning of 1916, Paget had finally regained British soil. For the next few months, he had been occupied working on the Memorandum and then, as one of the most important British foreign policy makers, he had been appointed a member of a Foreign Office committee on war aims. In his letter of 2 October 1916 Paget outlined Britain's official attitude towards

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<sup>233</sup> Louis Mallet and William Tyrrell worked with him on the committee; M. Ekstein, "Sir Edward Grey and Imperial Germany in 1914", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 131; Z. Steiner, "The Foreign Office and the War" ... 525.

the official Germany. The following words were going to mark the British policy in the next two decades:

“... Of course, everything depends on whether we are able to dictate terms to Germany, but we must go on until we can do so, otherwise we may consider the war as practically lost. We should get into endless difficulties if we started negotiations and bargaining, and moreover it would mean that the military party in Germany still possessed life and its thought would be to prepare for a war of revenge.”<sup>234</sup>

However, Paget’s important, but not so visible, role in policy making before and during 1914-18 War did not bring him much fame. Even the author of his obituary completely failed to mention these years. The very opposite was the case with the other two of his posts.

By the end of August 1916 Sir Ralph had already left the Foreign Office again. This time he was appointed Minister to Copenhagen.<sup>235</sup> He went to his new post together with his wife, who after two months spent in the Bulgarian capital as an honorary captive had arrived in London together with fifty-four members of the ‘Serbian Relief Fund’. Already decorated with the highest Serbian order that had ever been earned by a woman, Lady Paget became the heroine of the day, enthusiastically welcomed at King’s Cross station and received by the King.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Paget to Findlay, 2 October 1916, PP 51256.

<sup>235</sup> The only contraction of staff during the war took place in the American and Far Eastern department. Z. Steiner, “The Foreign Office and the War”, 523.

<sup>236</sup> ‘Return of Lady Paget’, *The Times*, 4 April 1916.

BETWEEN WAR AND PEACE  
– DENMARK AND BRAZIL

The First World War was entering its third year when, in August 1916, Sir Ralph and Lady Paget arrived in Denmark. The kingdom of Denmark was one of the few neutral countries in Europe. It was due to its strategic position as a link between Germany, Russia and Western Europe that this small Scandinavian country became important and remained peaceful throughout the War. The political attitude of the Danish government had a decisive influence on whether the blockade that had been imposed on the Central Powers would be successful or not.<sup>237</sup> At the Copenhagen legation, Paget succeeded Sir Henry Lowther, whose careful and measured policy of balance he was to continue during the next two years. The political task that British diplomacy was concerned with was to limit Danish exports to Germany but, at the same time, to maintain good relations with the Danish Government.<sup>238</sup> In his efforts, the British Minister had the vocal, but not so steady, support of the East Asiatic Company, the Danish enterprise still strong in Siam and the East, whose director, H.N. Andersen, aspired to become the major middleman in post-war relations involving commerce and the reconstruction of Russia, Great Britain and Germany.<sup>239</sup>

At his Danish post, Paget found himself involved in a conflict between the Admiralty and the Foreign Office. Some obvious signs of discord had already appeared in June 1917, when he faced an open rift in his relations with the British Naval Attaché, Captain Consett.<sup>240</sup> Consett was advocating a firm policy of naval blockade of Denmark, Norway and Sweden in order to stop their

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<sup>237</sup> Patrick Salmon, *Scandinavia and the Great Powers 1890-1940* (Cambridge, 1997), Chapter 4, 2, <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/history/xread/Chap4a.htm>, accessed on 17 May 2002.

<sup>238</sup> Cecil to Paget, 18 January 1917, PP 51255A

<sup>239</sup> Andersen to Runciman, December 1915, PP 51253.

<sup>240</sup> Cecil to Howard, 20 June 1917, Register, Denmark, FO 566/1119.



commerce with Germany. According to him, the war option was also open and even advisable, especially in the case of Sweden.<sup>241</sup> As probably the strongest link between Berlin, Copenhagen and London, H. N. Andersen and the East Asiatic Company became the object of intrigues and mutual attacks between the Foreign Office and the Admiralty.<sup>242</sup> Paget tried to settle the issue with Consett, but the antagonisms among British policy makers seemed too strong. By the middle of 1918, relations between the East Asiatic Company and the British Government had deteriorated, and Lord Robert Cecil made it clear that certain circles in the Admiralty had to be blamed for this.<sup>243</sup>

On the other hand, Paget later started to believe that the blockade ultimately produced significant results. In June 1917 he reported to Hardinge that despite the situation in Russia and its suspected negotiations with the United States, Germany was on the verge of collapse.<sup>244</sup> Perhaps it was because the United States finally entered the War, at the beginning of 1918, that Sir Ralph found himself gradually confined merely to protocol duties. On top of all this came illness and melancholy caused by the harsh and depressive Danish climate.

Even in Denmark the Pagets did not lose their interest in Serbian affairs. During the Salonica Trial in 1917, Sir Ralph and Lady Paget used all their influence to save some of the alleged conspirators against the Prince-Regent Aleksandar Karadjordjević. In a letter sent to Sir Ralph Paget from Salonica in October 1917, the Prince-Regent vividly depicted the entire situation. Trying not to

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<sup>241</sup> Paget to Hardinge, Copenhagen 25 November 1916, HARDINGE PAPERS 27, VOL 6. 1916.

<sup>242</sup> Hardinge to Paget, Foreign Office, 16 January 1917, Private, HARDINGE PAPERS 29, VOL 1, 1917. Andersen had originally made his name in trade with Siam.

<sup>243</sup> Cecil to Paget, 8 June 1918, PP 51256.

<sup>244</sup> Paget to Hardinge, Copenhagen, 8 June 1917, HARDINGE PAPERS 33 VOL V.



show any lack of respect or gratitude for their earlier deeds, he simply stated that he did not share their good opinion about the imprisoned General Damijan Popović. Aleksandar of Serbia was sure that after the trial and execution of the Black Hand leaders, the Serbian army was to stronger and better prepared for continuation of the war.<sup>245</sup>

Lady Paget was especially interested in political relations between Bulgaria and Serbia. Her informal diary reveals her indirect contacts via Bern (Switzerland) with a Bulgarian diplomat attached to the Red Cross which took place in August and September 1918. Even though the Bulgarians gave some signals of their readiness to abandon the cause of the Central Powers, it was the Allied offensive in September 1918 that sealed the outcome of the war in the Balkans.<sup>246</sup>

When finally, in September 1918, Paget was offered the newly established post of British Ambassador to Brazil, it seemed that the new appointment met his highest hopes. Although the end of the war was not yet on the horizon, for Sir Ralph the new appointment meant that it was virtually over.<sup>247</sup> However, the end of the World War delayed his journey to Rio. He had to attend the Paris Peace Conference, where almost all the crucial solutions which had been proposed by the Paget-Tyrrell Memorandum were in essence adopted.<sup>248</sup>

It was the summer of 1919 when the Pagets left Great Britain again, this time for South America. Nevertheless, it seems that by then Paget had lost much of his earlier eagerness for the Em-

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<sup>245</sup> Prince Alexander to Ralph Paget, Salonica 1/14 October 1917, *Lady Paget's Papers Add.* 51255.

<sup>246</sup> "Diary", Paget Papers, Add. 51255 B. Jovan Jovanović Pižon, *Dnevnik*, 6 I 1917, 29, III 1918 ( 452); 26 XI 1918 ( 117); unpublished source The Archiv of Yugoslavia.

<sup>247</sup> 'What I really long for in my innermost heart is an old cotton shirt, an old pair of pants, a good horse and open prairie or desert.', Paget to Russell, 23 July 1918, PP. 51256.

<sup>248</sup> Paget's presence at the Conference has passed almost unnoticed in historiography. Temperley and Mitrović do not even mention him. A. Mitrović, *Jugoslavija na konferenciji mira 1919-1920* (Beograd 1969).

bassy in Rio. At one moment, even before he set sail for Rio, he had officially expressed his wish to resign the posting. Sir John Tilley, then a high official in the Foreign Office, recalls in his memoirs a conversation with Sir Ralph in which the issue had arisen, not failing to present it as an amusing anecdote. According to Tilley, when he was reminded that to be an Ambassador had been his lifelong goal, Sir Ralph responded that the goal was fulfilled when he had been formally appointed.<sup>249</sup> So it came as no surprise that the first British ambassador in Brazil spent only a little more than a year in his long-desired post. Nevertheless, despite the general tranquillity that marked the relations between Great Britain and Brazil in the early 1920s, it appears that Sir Ralph Paget was devotedly trying to inject some of his personal enthusiasm into economic relations between the two countries. His efforts to initiate a completely new era in commercial ties with Rio de Janeiro 'won' him the honorary presidency of the British Chamber of Commerce in Brazil. Even so, the British government decisively overruled some of his initiatives. Thus his plan for the emigration of people from Great Britain to Brazil, was rejected by the *Overseas Settlement Office*.

Ultimately, at the end of 1920, after thirty-two years of service, it was mainly bad health that forced Sir Ralph Paget to put an end to his diplomatic career.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Tilley, *op. cit.*, 96-97.

<sup>250</sup> 'Coming Retirement of Sir Ralph Paget', *The Times*, 10 August 1920. One of Paget's letters reveals that bad health was followed with depression and misunderstanding with his superiors. His efforts to take an early retirement were perceived as his ambition to make further advance in the Foreign Office hierarchy. Thus Sir Ralph was very irritated and had even to make apologies to Hardinge and to explain himself to Lord Curzon. HARDINGE PAPERS, 43, VOL 2 1920, Paget to Hardinge, 2 August 1920.

## RETIREMENT

Sir Ralph Paget was only 56 years of age when he retired. This diplomat who had distinguished himself by his steady advance through the ranks of the Foreign Office had not reached the prestigious post of Ambassador to one of the Great Powers, or entered the political arena as the Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. The reasons for Paget's early retirement were mainly related to his poor health, but they rested partly on his perception of what made a successful diplomatic career. Sir Ralph was by no means a political partisan or an idealist. He was a professional diplomat and a patriot, but as a descendant of an old aristocratic family he did not allow himself to mix those feelings with mere ambitions or jaundice. However, the absence of those latter characteristics probably deprived him of the strongest desire on which almost all great careers in history have been built - the ambition to enter historical textbooks. Sir Ralph's character, his upbringing and his attitude to life led him in a different direction. This was why he remembered his posts in Siam and Japan as the most successful and happiest periods of his life. On the other hand, his lack of aspiration to greatness by no means excluded Sir Ralph from the highest cohort of those most important diplomats whose vision, influence or ambitions had led Europe into and through the First World War. During the Balkan Wars, his role in the crisis can best be demonstrated by the number of his reports that were later included in the collection of *The British Documents*.<sup>251</sup> Paget's steady and devoted care for British interests during the Balkan wars helped him stay neutral, and not become either partisan towards any side in the conflict, or determined to spread further his 'anti-German feelings'. This attitude made him entirely suitable for Edward Grey's plans according to which Great Britain acted mainly as a mediator in the crisis, and later allowed him to become a co-author of the first official British political agenda in the First World War.

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<sup>251</sup> Paget's reports comprise about ten percent of the related volume IX 2 of the *British Documents* (BD).

After 1920 Sir Ralph Paget lived a further twenty years in the obscurity of private life. At last, he managed to take care of his health.<sup>252</sup> The few letters from this entire period preserved among Paget's papers testify that among the numerous foreigners he had met while serving as a diplomat, he remained in touch only with several friends from Siam.<sup>253</sup> Despite his neutral benevolence while he occupied the post in Belgrade, along with Lady Paget's large-scale humanitarian work during the wars, it appears that the Serbian public, too preoccupied in the tense inter-war years, virtually forgot the Pagets. Nevertheless, Lady Paget never forgot Serbia. When in October 1934 the Yugoslav King Aleksandar was assassinated, she visited Belgrade and was present at his funeral.

On the other side of the world, Brazil, a society with an entirely different cultural background and proud of the honour bestowed on it by the promotion of the British legation into an embassy, has tried with enthusiasm to inspire a fuller appreciation of its modest memory of Sir Ralph Paget. Thus an episode in a recent television soap-opera involved Sir Ralph Paget in an imaginary search for Colonel Fawcett, who disappeared in the Amazon jungle in 1935.<sup>254</sup> In an unconscious error, the screenplay writer placed the event in 1944, when Sir Ralph had already been dead for four years. On 11 May 1940, just few days before German armies invaded France, Sir Ralph Paget died at St. Raphael.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> From 1914 he was a regular in 'Ripaso', a nature cure and country club established near Hastings; Heiner Gillmeister, *English Editors of German Sporting Journals at the Turn of the Century*, *The Sports Historian* Number 13, (May 1993), <http://www.umist.ac.uk/sport/gilmeist.html>, accessed on 1 June 2002.

<sup>253</sup> With his Siamese friend, prince Damrong, for example; Damrong to Paget, Bangkok, 24 February, 1920, PP 51256.

<sup>254</sup> *Dos Romances a Bola Cristal*, 17 Episodo, *Miss Jones a Secretaria de Indiana Jones*, Brazil, [http://www.alentejodigital.pt/correrdapena/miss\\_jane/epis\\_17.htm](http://www.alentejodigital.pt/correrdapena/miss_jane/epis_17.htm).

<sup>255</sup> Lady Paget outlived her husband by nineteen years. During the Second World War she became a protector of numerous Serbian



Lady Paget and Slobodan Jovanović (Serbian Scholar and Former Yugoslav Prime Minister in Exile)

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refugees. She was a donor to the Church of St. Sava in Leicester Square in London and a supporter of dozens of Serbian political emigrants who remained in Britain after the Allies recognised the Communist regime in Yugoslavia. She was remembered as a generous lady, one among the few who continued to show some favour towards exiled Yugoslavs. In order to help them she even decided to sell her luxurious country estate Warren House. Lady Leila Paget died in 1959; U. Stanković, ed. *Spomenica Ledi Pedžet, Srpska Misao*, year IV, book 7 (Melbourne, 1959).

## APPENDIX 1

*RESUME OF CONVERSATIONS  
BETWEEN MONSIEUR PASHITCH AND SIR R. PAGET  
on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1912. with observations. (PP 51253).*

*Mons. Pashitch:* Austria is responsible for the present Balkan crisis. All the Balkan States fear C<sup>t</sup>. Berchtold decentralisation proposal will lead to the autonomy of Albania. This would mean an end to our national aspirations. We must strike now or give up hope altogether. Austria's policy is not strong forward. She stopped the Turks taking drastic measures against the Mallissoris. The excitement in Bulgaria is serious but if no fresh incidents such as Kotchane takes place and if Powers will seriously try to help us to get reforms the situation may be saved. The condition of our compatriots in Turkey is intolerable and oft.[enly] repeated advice to remain quiet will no longer be of effect. We are nevertheless urging patience and restraint upon the Bulgarian gov.[ernment] and we requested them to remember that our position is somewhat different to this as we have the menace of Austria to consider.

*Sir R. Paget:* Surely you have Austria to think about, Bulgaria on her side has Roumania to fear that should make her reflect.

*Mons. Pashitch:* (Oh, no !) Roumania will certainly not move at least not until there is a question of Bulgaria acquiring fresh territory. Bulgaria knows that and is not hampered. As the matter of fact I do not believe that Austria would move against us,

she would fear an European War. But, even granting this we do not want war. The country requires peace; our armaments are not completed we shall not be quite ready for another two years. We shall therefore, I assure you, not move unless Bulgaria does so.

*Sir R. Paget:* You seem to leave entirely out of account the possibility of defeat at the hands of Turkish army. Furthermore, that after the warnings you have received, you can expect no help from Russia and that you will not even be allowed to propt. /?/ by any success.

I fear there is an idea in Servia and Bulgaria that Russia will not act up to her warning but would be forced by public opinion to come to the rescue to Slav states. Surely, this is a somewhat dangerous impression.

*Mons. Pashitch:* That impression certainly exists both here and in Bulgaria, it seems incredible. If by chance Russia does find means to eradicate it we shall look for other friends.

*Sir R. Paget:* If you mean Austria I do not think that you would gain much.

*Mons. Pashitch:* Possibly Servia might not, but Bulgaria could make quite a profitable arrangement with her.

*Sir R. Paget:* There appears to be no excitement in Servia, why should you therefore think it necessary to follow Bulgaria into war blindly and be towed into an adventure.

*Mons. Pashitch:* It is true, there is no excitement but an account of our claims in Macedonia and other reasons we can not afford to let Bulgaria move without us. Any Government which tried it would have to face revolution.

#### *Additional remarks*

Mons. de Hartwig who is a close friend with Mons. Pashitch is not helpful. He complains that his warnings are not believed. Nevertheless, he thinks that Serbian government works for peace

in Sofia. He remarks that Balkan states are weaker (in numbers) than Turkey and only base of avoiding war are reforms. Economical interest of Serbia /.../ against war.



## APPENDIX 2

DAMES DE LA VILLE DURAZZO TO SIR EDWARD  
GRA[E]Y, Antivari, 29 January 1913, (FO 371/1778)

'SIR EDWARD GRA[E]Y = NOUS AVONS HONNEUR VOUS  
INFORMER QUE NOUS AVONS ENVOYEZ A SA MAJESTE  
REINE ANGLETERRE SA MAJESTE IMPERATRICE RUSSIE LES  
TELEGRAMMES SOIGNES PAR 524 DAMES ORTHODOXES DE  
DURAZZO: TEXTE TELEGRAMMES EST SUIVANT LES DAMES  
ORTODOXES DE DURAZZE CONVAINCE QUE L AUTONOMIE  
DELALBANIE LOIN DE GARANTIRLE DEVELOPPEMENT LIBRE  
ET PROSPERE DE LA NATION ALBANAISE NE SERA QUE LE  
SANCTIONNEMENT DE LA VIEILLE ANARCHIE QUI RUINERA  
COMPLETEMENT LA GRANDE MAJORITE DU PEUPLES S  
ADRESSE A VOTRE MAJESTE AVEC LA PLUS HUMBLE PRIERE  
D EMPECHER LA REALISATION DE CE PROJET FATAL ET DE  
LAISSER L LABANIE AUX ETATS BALCANIQUE ALLIES DONT  
LES ARMEES VICTORIEUSES LUI ONT APORTE LES BIENFAITS  
DE L ORDRE ET LIBERTE – AMALIE TERCA CHYSANTE MOISSI  
VASILIQUE DOUSNIC DANIZA GIURACHKUVITCH OURANIE  
LECCA VIRGINIA TROUIA ANNETTE MIMAI ANNE PICHON  
MARIE DROUYA DELE DOLANI ET 514 DAMES DE LA VILLE  
DURAZZO ALBANIE =

[“NOUS AVONS L'HONNEUR DE VOUS INFORMER QUE  
NOUS AVONS ENVOYEZ A SA MAJESTE LA REINE DE  
L'ANGLETERRE SA MAJESTE L'IMPERATRICE DE LA RUSSIE  
LES TELEGRAMMES SOIGNES PAR 524 DAMES ORTHODOXES  
DE DURAZZO: TEXTE TELEGRAMME EST SUIVANT: TEXTE  
TELEGRAMME EST SUIVANT: LES DAMES ORTHODOXES  
DE DURAZZO, CONVAINCEUES QUE L'AUTONOMIE DE  
L'ALBANIE LOIN DE GARANTIR LE DEVELOPPEMENT LIBRE  
ET PROSPERE DE LA NATION ALBANAISE NE SERA QUE LA  
SANCTIONNEMENT DE LA VIELLE ANARCHIE QUI RUINERA  
COMPLETEMENT LA GRANDE MAJORITE DU PEUPLE,  
S'ADRESSANT A VOTRE MAJESTE AVEC LA PLUS HUMBLE  
PRIERE D'EMPECHER LA REALISATION DE CE PROJET FATAL  
ET DE LAISSER L'ALBANIE AUX ETATS BALKANIQUES ALLIES,  
DONT LES ARMEES VICTORIEUSES LUI ONT APORTEE LES  
BIENFAITS DE L'ORDRE ET LIBERTE:.]

## APPENDIX 3

### REPORT ON THE RETREAT OF PART OF THE BRITISH HOSPITAL UNITS FROM SERBIA, OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1915

(FO 371/2615)

Although since the moment in December 1914 when the Austrian army had been driven back in confusion over the Danube and Save, scarcely a day had passed without an exchange of artillery fire between the Servian positions at Belgrade and the Austrian batteries round Semlin<sup>256</sup>, this bombardment was mostly merely of a desultory nature.

Gradually, moreover, an understanding had been reached with the enemy mutually to avoid bombardment of the actual towns. The continuance of this state of affairs for many months together with evidence to the effect that very few Austrian troops remained in Southern Hungary, possibly give rise in Serbia to false sense of security, and to the belief that the Austrians had need of their troops elsewhere and consequently that invasion from that quarter no longer threatened.

Towards the end of September however, it was rumoured that a German army was being concentrated at Temesvar under the leadership of General Mackensen. Taken in conjunction with the news that the Turkish army was seriously in want of munitions,

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<sup>256</sup> Zemun, today a municipality within the city of Belgrade.

owing to the refusal of Roumania to permit the supplies sent by Germany to pass through her territory, this concentration was interpreted as indicating an intention either to over-awe Roumania or into forcing the Danube and gaining access to the Bulgarian railways through the north east corner of Serbia.

From this time on events developed rapidly; and presently little room was left for doubt as to the Austro-German intentions.

The attitude of Bulgaria during the negotiations which had been conducted with a view to securing her the cession by Serbia of the disputed portion of Macedonia had been consistently unsatisfactory, and she now, following almost immediately upon the news of the German concentration of troops on the northern bank of Danube, announced her intention to mobilise whilst temporarily disguising her true object by proclaiming that she would observe an armed neutrality. This she declared necessitated by the near approach of war to her frontiers.

The Bulgarian general mobilisation order was issued on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

Whilst the ties, which united Bulgaria to Russia and other political considerations, made it appear unlikely that she would actually enter lists against the Allies and attack Serbia the possibilities of such contingency, with its evident gravity from a military point of view, was nevertheless not entirely unforeseen. I had therefore thought it advisable, on more than one occasion, to discuss with the Serbian military authorities the question as to how the security of the British hospital units, situated throughout the country, could best be provided for in such an event.

On these occasions Colonel Ghentitch<sup>257</sup>, the principal medical officer of the Serbian army, had invariably assured me that safety of the foreign units would be his first care, and that he had at his disposal sufficient transport for the removal of the units located in the north of Serbia, more especially at Belgrade, to places of safety together with the wounded and the hospital equipment in case a retreat should become necessary.

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<sup>257</sup> Genčić

Notwithstanding the assurances I had thus already received, as the situation grew threatening, I thought it right again to visit Colonel Ghentchitch at Kragujevat<sup>258</sup> and to impress upon him the necessity of making adequate preparation. At the interview, which took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> October, Colonel Ghenchitch repeated to me that he was quite prepared for any eventuality. In addition to discussing the question with the Serbian military authorities I had at various times mentioned to the hands of the several units the possibility that a rapid retreat might under certain circumstances become necessary, and had urged the consequent desirability of considering beforehand what steps should be taken in such an event and of holding their units in a mobile condition.

The attitude which my remarks in this sense provoked appeared to be that under no circumstances could the doctors and nurses be induced to abandon the wounded in their hospitals, that they had not been sent out to retreat upon the first approach of danger and that after months of inactivity that welcomed the prospect of serious work. These sentiments whilst most laudable I felt it my duty to combat. I represented that the hospital equipment had been provided from home at a very considerable expense for the use of the Serbian and not for the use of the enemy; that its capture would materially benefit the enemy; that the services of the personnel would be lost to the Serbian army which would have every need of hospital help in its retreat; and that if they remained they might possibly nurse 200 Serbians but would then be applied to nursing the wounded of the enemy whilst if they retreated in good time with their equipment they might eventually nurse as many as 2,000 Serbians or more. Finally I stated that it was not a question of personal bravery, but solely one of expediency, and I added that of course every effort would be made to remove the wounded together with the hospital equipment.

Incidentally I may mention that when the moment arrived the majority of wounded who could by any possibility walk left

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<sup>258</sup> Kragujevac.

hospital, whilst I understand that in most instances pending the hospitals being taken over by the enemy, orderlies or Austrian prisoners were left to attend to the wants of the wounded who could not be moved.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> October a report reached Nish<sup>259</sup> that Belgrade had been bombarded. As such reports were frequent little attention was paid to this at the time, and it was not until two days later that it transpired how serious this bombardment had been and that it became evident that this was the commencement of Austro-German offensive.

There were at the time British units in Belgrade the Second British Farmers, sent out by the Serbian Relief Fund and the Eastern Auxiliary under the charge of Admiral Troubridge. As the former was established in building much disposed to any shell fire directed against the town I felt considerable anxiety concerning its safety. I therefore telephoned at once to Colonel Ghentchitch at Kragujevatz requesting him if necessary to withdraw the unit to a place less exposed, either at Belgrade itself or further south on railway line. I likewise telephoned to Admiral Troubridge begging him to advise the unit as he might consider best.

I subsequently learnt that at the time (October 7<sup>th</sup>) instructions had already been sent to the Farmers unit to evacuate their hospital. Admiral Troubridge's unit left Belgrade the following day shortly before the Germans entered the town.

Details of the experiences of the Second Farmers unit will be found in an interesting report drawn by Mr. R. C. Grey. Several shells fell in the hospital before it had been evacuated and one nurse Miss Lock and one orderly Mr. Catleugh were wounded, but as I was not present myself I find it difficult to give any particulars of the actual events. I wish, however, to record that the most invaluable help was rendered to this unit by Dr. Rynn who was in charge of the American Red Cross hospital at Belgrade and who was untiring in his efforts to assist the British unit to save its personnel,

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<sup>259</sup> Niš.

its wounded, and its equipment. We certainly owe him a very great debt of gratitude.

After leaving Belgrade the second Farmers unit which I regret to say had been unable to find any transport for its equipment, first halted at Mladmovaz<sup>260</sup>, but was subsequently established in hospital at Jagodina<sup>261</sup>, some distance south which contained sufficient Serbian equipment to enable work to be carried on. Admiral Traubridge's staff was sent on to me at Nish and was placed under my charge.

Up to this time although Bulgarian army was gradually massing on the Serbian frontier its delay in commencing active hostilities appeared to indicate the intention to immobilize a large number of Serbian troops and thus facilitate the piercing of the north east corner of Serbia by the German forces with the mere object of establishing communication with Turkey through Bulgaria rather than serious intention of Bulgaria to invade Serbian territory – an action which would be bound to involve her in a state of war with Russia and her Allies. However, the impression prevailed in Serbia that, would Bulgaria enter upon active hostilities, her first move would be to join hands with the German in the north and not from the very outset to make an independent attack upon Macedonia, the frontier of which was thought to be strongly guarded by Serbian troops and where she would be likely to come into immediate conflict with the Allied troops, which were disembarking at Salonica and were said to be upon their way in Skoplje<sup>262</sup>.

Under this supposition, for the time being, Skoplje and everything for the south likewise the towns on the line between Skoplje and Mitroviza<sup>263</sup> appeared comparatively secure. The natu-

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<sup>260</sup> Mladenovac, today the municipality within the city of Belgrade.

<sup>261</sup> Jagodina (Yagodina).

<sup>262</sup> Skoplje (Skopje), today the capital of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

<sup>263</sup> Mitrovica (Kosovska Mitrovica), the town in Northern Kosovo.

ral course to follow therefore seemed to be to evacuate the wounded from the hospitals in the north towards the south. Together with Colonel Sondermeyer, the surgeon chief inspector of military hospitals the surgeon chief inspector of military hospitals I urged this policy on Colonel Ghenchtich suggesting that the wounded able to travel should be sent without delay to Skoplje which had accommodation for some 15,000 men and from there so far as practicable to Monastir<sup>264</sup>. I also took steps to dispatch a portion of the Red Cross and Serbian Relief Fund stores under my charge in the same direction, but an event turned out it was already too late, for on the 16<sup>th</sup> October the railway line was cut between Nish and Skoplje.

This occurrence was in the first instance represented by the Serbian authorities merely as a Bulgarian cavalry raid and it was thought that with the dispatch of some regiments of Serbian troops communication would be soon restored. Notwithstanding the hopes the presence of Bulgarian forces at Vranje<sup>265</sup> made it appear to me advisable to telegraph to Lady Paget that she should watch events closely and be prepared to move with her whole hospital either to Monastir or to some town on the Skoplje-Mitroviza line as might seem best to her after consultation with General Popovitch<sup>266</sup> the governor-general of southern Serbia.

This telegram, it subsequently transpired, did not reach Lady Paget until four days later. Although this fact had in itself no particular bearing on events, it may serve to illustrate the difficulties of the situation generally if I here state that practically from the moment the Germans set foot in Belgrade, telegraphic, telephonic, postal and railway communication, although still maintained, became wholly uncertain and a matter of chance.

Some three days later having been unable in the meanwhile to obtain communication with Lady Paget's hospital I decided to endeavour to reach Skoplje by motor car myself. The continued

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<sup>264</sup> Monastir, the town in southern Macedonia, today Bitolj (Bitola).

<sup>265</sup> Vranje, the town in southern Serbia.

<sup>266</sup> General Damjan Popović.

occupation of Vranja by the Bulgarians rendered it necessary for me to take the road lending from -Nish through Prokuplje<sup>267</sup> /, / Kurshumlish<sup>268</sup> (the old Turkish frontier) to Pristina<sup>269</sup> – a considerable detour. This road, never of the best, had been reduced to a deplorable condition by three weeks of incessant rain, and between Kurshumlieh and Prepolatz where a pass of some altitude has to be surmounted it required the united energies of two oxen and some 30 Austrian prisoners, who fortunately happened to be on the road, to drag my motor car through mud.

With regard to those prisoners it may be interesting to note that I overtook probably some 10,000 on the march towards the south. They were already then short of food and suffering considerable hardships. It was stated that no bread had been carved out for two days, whilst they had no shelter of any kind and were simply lying by the roadside in the rain. They were being sent to repair this and other roads, a fact which indicates that the military authorities were none too sanguine about the re-occupying of the railway line, and were preparing for a retreat on Prishtina.

From Prishtina I was able to continue in my motor car as far as Ferisovitch<sup>270</sup>, but here it was necessary to take the railway. The Serbian authorities at Ferisovitch appeared to possess very little accurate information as to the actual state of affairs at Skoplje, in fact it was stated to me that Skoplje was probably already in the hands of the Bulgarians and that it would be impossible for me to reach the town, but I naturally decided to proceed as far as the train would carry me. Signs that Serbian forces were in full retreat were evident in all sides. On arrival at Skoplje, however, some four hour after leaving Ferisovitch, I learnt that the Bulgarian army was still about 15 miles distant and would probably not enter the town until the following day.

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<sup>267</sup> Prokuplje (Prokuplye).

<sup>268</sup> Kuršumlija.

<sup>269</sup> Priština (Prihtina), the capital of the Kosovo and Metohija region.

<sup>270</sup> Or Uroševac.



The town at the time appeared to be almost entirely deserted. Except for a few gendarmes with rifles there was no one to be seen in the streets. I was met by Lady Paget at the station and she told me that she had been requested by Serbian military authorities when the moment come for them to leave the town – which would not be defended – to take charge of the situation generally and with her unit to give assistance to any Serbians who might remain and to preserve order so far as in her power lay. There had apparently that same morning been an attempt on the part of a few Albanians to loot shops. These men had at once been shot by Serbians, and part of Lady Paget's staff was at the time of my arrival engaged in collecting and disposing of the bodies, so as not to afford the Bulgarians a pretext for asserting that pro-Bulgarian Albanians had been murdered and thereby justifying the Bulgarian army taking revenge upon the town.

I enquired of Lady Paget why her hospital had not been removed according to the arrangement previously arrived at between us, either to Monastir or Pristina. Her reply was that every effort had been made to this end. Everything had in fact been ready for departure and some 20 nurses had even gone to Prishtina, but at the last moment the necessary transport for the wounded and equipment had not been forthcoming.

Some three days previous to my visit Lady Paget had at the earnest request of General Popovitch, herself gone to Salonica to see what hope there might be of assistance for Skoplje from the Allied troops. On her return she learnt that, during her absence Dr. Maitland, in view of the threatening situation, had caused the hospital to be placed in readiness to be moved and had applied to general Popovitch for the necessary transport. Owing to some confusion as to the exact time when the hospital staff should start and the locality to which it should be moved, the Serbian authorities were unable to supply the transport needed for the equipment and wounded when it was required, and the staff of the hospital then represented that without their equipment they could be of no use to anyone and refused to quit Skoplje.

This decision having been once reached and it being obviously impossible for me at that late hour to attempt any other arrangement for the removal of the unit there remained only the duty of considering whether any steps could be taken to provide for its safety on the entry of the Bulgarians and whether my personal presence in Skoplje could in any way contribute to this end. After consultation with Lady Paget and Dr. Maitland it was decided that it would serve no purpose for me to remain, and that the interests of the other units still in the north of Serbia demand my return to Nish.

On leaving Skoplje I expressed concern to Lady Paget as regards the large amount of stores at her hospital falling into the enemy's hands, but I learnt from her that she had distributed a very large amount of these stores to the Serbian troops during the last days who had passed in front of her hospital in their retreat and that she would continue to do so until the arrival of the Bulgarians.

Shortly after my return to Nish I learnt from her that the Bulgarians had occupied Skoplje on the day following my departure, October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Since that time I have been unable to obtain any communication with Lady Paget's unit.

Meanwhile, in view of the fact that with the cutting of the line at Vranje the importance of Nish as a railway centre had entirely ceased, I had closed the rest house and had sent the ladies assisting in the management to Vrnjatchka Banja.<sup>271</sup>

The transfer of the Government offices and the foreign representatives to Kraljevo<sup>272</sup> on the 20<sup>th</sup> October is evidence of the serious view of the situation that was already taken by the Serbian Government at this time. The population was likewise fast leaving Nish, which, after suffering from overcrowding for many months, soon assumed a completely deserted aspect. As the result of a conversation which I had immediately on my return from

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<sup>271</sup> Vrnjačka Banja, the well-known spa in central Serbia.

<sup>272</sup> Kraljevo (Kraljevo).

Skoplje with the Prime Minister I come to the conclusion that it was only a question of days before communication between north and west of Serbia would be threatened by the Bulgarian advance at Knajevatz.<sup>273</sup> It seemed therefore advisable to make rapid preparation for the future and to dispatch to the Krusevatz<sup>274</sup>-Kralievo line as many stores as possible for the use of the Nish staff and other units who were gradually being driven down from the north. With this object some five trucks containing tents, blankets, rice, sugar and other foodstuffs were sent off under the charge of three orderlies to Kralievo for the purpose of establishing a camp at that place. A greater quantity of stores might have been dispatched had it not been that the railway department at Nish was altogether unable to furnish the necessary trucks. In any case, however, the congestion of traffic at Krusevatz, the junction of the lines presently became so great that of the five trucks sent off by me from Nish only three ever reached Kralievo.

It should be borne in mind that even so late as the last days of October the impression prevailed that although the Austro-Germans would undoubtedly attempt to seize the main line running north and south up to Nish where the line for Sofia branches off, such places as Kralievo and Vrnjatchka Banja on the narrow gauge line running east and west might for some time still remain free from attack.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> October the Serbian headquarter staff moved from Kragujevac to Krusevatz – an indication that the former town was seriously threatened. I had been unable, owing to the interruption of telegraphic and telephonic communication, to ascertain what dispositions had been made regarding the British units at Kragujevac, Valievo<sup>275</sup>, Jagodina and Mladenovatz, I therefore went by motor car to Krusevatz some four hours distant from Nish on the 26<sup>th</sup> October. On arrival I was informed by Col. Phillips,

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<sup>273</sup> Knjaževac (Knyazhevac).

<sup>274</sup> Kruševac (Krushevac)

<sup>275</sup> Valjevo (Valjevo).

our military attaché, who had accompanied the head quarter staff that although he had heard of the transfer of Dr. Hutchinson's unit (Scottish women) from Valievo to Poshega<sup>276</sup>, so far as he was aware the British units established at Kragujevatz still remained there on account of lack of transport for their removal. This information caused me to proceed at once from Krusevatz to Kragujevatz. The journey which under normal condition should be accompanied in about two hours by motor car, owing to the terrible condition of the road and the number of troops with their baggage trains in full retreat towards the south, occupied some six hours. The town of Kragujevatz appeared to be practically abandoned and it was with considerable relief that on reaching the quarters of the Scottish Women's unit I found these deserted. I was subsequently informed at the Arsenal that the British Units namely, the Scottish Women's, Mrs. Stobart's and the Wounded Allies had left some by train and some by road during the previous day. At the Arsenal itself every preparation had been made to set fire to all material which could be of use to the enemy.

Between Kragujevatz and Nish to which I returned the same night I passed through Jagodina and learnt on enquiring from Captain Georgevitch<sup>277</sup> of the railway transport department that all arrangements had been made for the transport of the second Farmer's unit from there the following morning.

The impression which I gathered on this trip was that the German advance, which had thus far been slow, was increasing in rapidity and that the safety of railway communication between Nish and other parts of Serbia was seriously threatened. I therefore determined to dispatch the remainder of the staff employed in the Nish stores to Kralievo the following day and also to leave myself for Krusevatz in order to be in closer touch with the units which were already on the Krusevatz-Kralievo line.

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<sup>276</sup> Požega (Pozhega).

<sup>277</sup> Djordjević (Djordjevich).

I had already some days previously discussed with Dr. Dold and his brother, and some other American gentlemen who for some time past had been engaged in relief work in Serbia the question of handing over to them the stores remaining in our depots at Nish which it had not been possible to send to Kralievo. They had very kindly connected to take them over in order to protect them so far as possible against any looting and to distribute them among the needy population of Nish or to restore them to me should there be a fortunate turn in the situation. On the day, therefore, of my departure from Nish the stores were handed over. I also caused all the documents except accounts in my office to be burnt as it was clearly impossible to transport them about the country.

Owing to the constantly increasing congestion on the railway, the journey between Nish and Krushevatz, some fifty miles in all, required 22 hours. This delay was due to the fact that at Krusevatz where the main line meets the narrow gauge line more than 3,000 trucks loaded with war material, foodstuffs etc. had collected. Unfortunately nearly all this subsequently fell into the hands of the enemy. Immediately upon my arrival I had an interview with Colonel Ghentchitch with the object of ascertaining what plans he might have formed as to the future movement and distribution of the units and the possibilities of establishing them in hospitals where those who had saved their equipment might again undertake some work. I regret to say that I found Colonel Ghentchitch the reverse of helpful. His attitude was merely that those units which had saved any equipment might remain and work as best as could in whatever building they might find at whatever place they happened to be, whilst he would be glad to see those who had lost their equipment removed from the country; he was unable himself, however, to provide any transport for the latter and would make no effort to procure any as he considered that his efforts would be unwilling. He suggested I might personally be more successful.

I ascertained at Krusevatz during the next two days that the distribution of the units was as follows: Dr. Inglis (Scottish Women's with her unit from Kragujevatz) and a contingent from

Lazarevat<sup>278</sup> under Mrs. Haverfield had arrived at Krusevat; Dr. Banks of the Red Cross, and Dr. Barry were still in their hospitals at Vrnjacka Banja, at which place were also the Second British Farmer's unit from Belgrade under Mr. Parsons, the Wounded Allies' unit under Dr. Aspland (from Kragujevat): Dr. Hutchinson who with her unit of Scottish Women had originally been sent from Valievo to Poshega had found it necessary to move first of all to Tchatchak and subsequently also to Vrnjatchka Banja on account of the advance of an Austrian force from the west; Mrs. Stobert's unit under my Dr. May and the contingent of the same unit composed of detachments from Mrs. Stobert's dispensaries under Dr. Cockburn had been brought down by road from Kragujevat to Kralievo through Gornji Milanovatz; the former had been dispatched direct to the monastery of Studenitza some 10 miles off the Kralievo, Rashka road, while the latter remained at Kralievo; a unit of Scottish Women under Dr. Mc Gregor was likewise to be found at Kralievo where it had established a dressing station in the civil hospital.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> October I summoned a meeting of the heads of the units at Vrnjacka Banja. I endeavoured to place before them the situation as clearly as I could. I stated that there appeared to be little hope of saving any part of northern Serbia from invasion by enemy, and that therefore the units had now to make the choice between moving south towards the towns in the Sanjak of Novi Bazar and thence if necessary escaping through Montenegro and Albania, or remaining where they found themselves at present and being inevitably captured. I added that when I spoke of moving towards the Sanjak it must be abandoned, as there would be no transport procurable, and it was doubtful even whether it would be possible to secure sufficient transport for the personnel together with the small amount of their personnel belongings. As regards this, however, I would do my best, but I wished it to be clearly understood that under existing circumstances the transport, the ac-

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<sup>278</sup> Lazarevac, today a municipality within the city of Belgrade.

commodation, and the provisioning of any considerable number of persons on a journey through Montenegro or Albania would be an extremely difficult matter, that there would be in all probability great discomfort and even dangers to be encountered and that therefore every person would undertake such expedition entirely at their own risk and on their own responsibility. In any case I suggested that only these who were able-bodied and felt capable of enduring hardships should make an attempt. On the other hand I encouraged the departure of orderlies of military age. I requested the heads of the units after consultation with their staff to hand me a list of the members who wished to undertake the journey.

I gathered at the time of conference that the sentiment generally, but especially that Dr. Rutchinson, Dr. Banks and Dr. Berry who were in possession of their equipment appeared to be in favour of remaining. Such being the case arrangements were made in the course of the next two days to establish the units newly arrived in buildings at Vrnjatchka Banja where I trust they have been able to carry on work.

The inquiries made amongst the personnel of the units showed that for the conveyance of those numbers who wished to leave probably some 30 or 40 carts would be required. For this number I accordingly applied to the military commandant of Kralievo, but was met with the reply that he had not one single cart to spare at his disposal. As the Russian minister, who happened to be still at Kralievo, had likewise some units at his hands I required of him as what course he proposed to follow under the circumstances. He replied that since he had found it impossible to obtain transport from the Government he was directing those Russian units which did not possess their own means of locomotion to return to Nish and there await events. I nevertheless thought it desirable to make some further attempts and I therefore returned to Krusevatz and applied for transport direct to Colonel Pavlovitch, the chief of the staff.

Colonel Pavlovitch, while evidently anxious to assist to the best of his abilities was unable to promise me more than 10 carts.

He stated that all they were urgently required for the transport of ammunitions and other necessities for the army, and he did not at the moment feel justified in detaining them for other purposes.

With this number, therefore, it was necessary to be constant, and having accordingly notified the units to have those of their members who wished to leave ready to start from Kralievo on the morning of 2<sup>nd</sup> November I returned to that town myself to superintend arrangements for their departures.

The state of affairs at Kralievo was anything but reassuring. The German army, advancing from Kragujevatz, had already reached and passed Gori Milanovatz<sup>279</sup>, whilst the sound of the guns of the Austrian army coming from Tschachak<sup>280</sup>, only some 30 kilometres to the west, could already be plainly heard. Troops, wounded, refugees, by rail, on foot, in carts and every other sort of conveyance were crowding into Kralievo in endless streams from the west, the north and the east all with the one idea of escaping by the road which leads from there to Sandjak. Signs of panic were visible and there were increased by the visit of Austrian airplanes, as the Austrian forces drew nearer. The town itself was choked with humanity and by far the grater majority of persons had neither lodging nor even shelter, but simply lived and slept in the muddy streets. Bread was unobtainable except by military order and other food was scarce. The railway station was blocked with trucks and its approaches with material of all kinds which, though urgently needed elsewhere the railway officials were unable to deal with owing partly to the general confusion, partly to lack of means of transport. To add to difficulties the state of the roads had become appalling. It may convey some idea of this if I mention that in approaching the situation my motor car became embedded in the mud and resisted efforts of four oxen to extricate it. It was finally hauled out by two motor lorries.

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<sup>279</sup> Gornji Milanovac (Gornyi Milanovaz)

<sup>280</sup> Čačak.



On the 2<sup>nd</sup> September, as the carts promised by Colonel Pavlovitch were punctually forthcoming, a party of about 20 from the units, mostly orderlies of military age set from Kralievo to Novi Bazar. It was my intention at the time to establish a camp either at Novi Bazar or at Mitrovitza where the detachments of personnel could assemble and thence be forwarded on, either to Monastir or through Montenegro as circumstances might indicate. This party had therefore instructions to leave two orderlies and two tents together with some provisions at Novi Bazar, there to await the arrival of further hospital personnel.

I have mentioned that some 5 truckloads of foodstuffs etc. had been sent by me from Nish to Kralievo. These I now dispatched together with a sum of money (29,000 dinars) in charge of an orderly for the use of the units which had remained at Vrnjatchka Banja.

After the first party had left I was fortunately able to obtain some 10 more bullock carts which were needed for the transport of Dr. McGregor's unit whose intention it was to open a dressing station further south. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> November I myself left for Mitrovitza where the Government and Foreign Ministers were already established, and which place I had ascertained, being at the head of the railway, would offer greater facilities than Novi Bazar for sending the units out either via Monastir or Montenegro. For this information I was indebted to the energy of Mrs. Moore, Mr. West and Mr. Kawson, who during my stay at Kralievo undertook to make a dash to Mitrovitza and back. The journey which was accomplished in a small Ford car occupied only three days – in itself a remarkable feat – taking into account all the difficulties they had to contend with. On the road to Mitrovitza I overtook the party dispatched from Kralievo the previous day and instructed them likewise to proceed to Mitrovitza. These instructions were, however completely disregarded and the party proceeded to Novi Bazar a fact which caused such inconvenience as I was thereby deprived of the use of the carts which I had intended to send back for the benefit of the others.

The road south from Kralievo passes through Rashka and there divides, one branch leading to Novi Bazar<sup>281</sup> and the other to Mitrovitza, which is the rail head of the line from Skoplje. As far as Rashka, although encumbered by innumerable military convoys and carts with refugees the road proved to be tolerable. But from this point on to Mitrovitza a distance of some 70 kilometres, the road along the Ibar valley had been rendered both difficult and dangerous by washouts and mountain torrents, and except for the timely appearance of oxen and the ubiquitous Austrian prisoner at some of the fords I should have been unable to reach Mitrovitza with my motor car. A motor lorry belonging to Admiral Troubridge's party remained in the middle of a torrent for some 12 hours. I deeply regret to say that the state of this road was the cause some days later of an accident to a motor lorry in which Mrs. Toughill, a member of the Scottish Women's unit lost her life. It likewise prevented my returning from Mitrovitza to Rashka where I might have given more assistance to the units arriving from the North, as the repairs to my car occupied some six days.

Although I found on my arrival at Mitrovitza that the stream of refugees from the north had scarcely yet arrived so far, the town was nevertheless already considerably filled with refugees from Skoplje. The prospect therefore was not encouraging and it was obvious that there would be much difficulty in finding accommodation and food for the personnel which I expected to collect there.

I was not long, indeed, before Mitrovitza assumed the same aspect as Kralievo and the want, overcrowding and misery which had been apparent at the latter place became still more evident here. The bread distributed by the order of the military authorities, which at Kralievo had still contained a certain proportion of wheat flavour, was now entirely made from maize and was bitter and sodden. The streets were filled with half-starved soldierly, mostly bare-foot, and with refugees of every description and condition seeking

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<sup>281</sup> Novi Pazar.

for food and shelter with very little chance of finding either. Some of the wounded who had succeeded in hobbling the many miles from Kralievo presented a specially piteous sight.

The local authorities were so busily engaged with the demands of the military that they could scarcely be expected to give much attention to the relief of distress and I therefore thought it advisable to hand a sum of money to the bishop for the purpose of buying bread to distribute daily amongst refugees.

A decision had now to be taken as to the route by which the units should leave Serbia whether by Prisrend, Dibra, or by Ipek and Montenegro. The opinion of the majority of Serbian officers appeared to be in favour of the former and the arrival of Dr. Hamilton and four nurses of the Wounded Allies, who had come direct from Podgoritza<sup>282</sup> via Ipec<sup>283</sup>, and who reported that there was no food and no means of transport and that it was doubtful whether it would be possible to find a way out of Montenegro as no ships were calling at Medua, inclined as to the belief that this option was correct.

In view of the fact that the route via Dibra<sup>284</sup> was said to present no great difficulties and that, at the time, owing to some slight success of the Serbian army at Katchanik it was even hoped the railway to Skoplje and Salonika might be re-opened, if the Allied troops pressed on with sufficient forces, I telegraphed to the units which had remained on the Krusevatz-Kralievo line stating that I now thought it possible to make adequate arrangements for as many of their personnel as might choose to leave and they should therefore send them through to me at Mitrovitza at once. I am not aware whether these telegrams ever reached their destination as two days later the fall of Kralievo was reported.

Since I foresaw great difficulty in providing transport, food etc. for large parties the plan I proposed to follow was to send on small detachments time to time as they arrived to Mitrovitza from the north. The first party thus to be dispatched consisted of Mrs.

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<sup>282</sup> Podgorica.

<sup>283</sup> Peć.

<sup>284</sup> Debar.

Moore (Belgrade Orphanage), Dr. Hamilton and her four nurses and one Red Cross orderly who had the opportunity of travelling under the protection of part of Admiral Troubridge's naval detachment which was itself being sent out by the Dibra-Monastir road.

In the course of some 10 days personnel from the Scottish Women, from Mrs. Stobart's unit and a detachment of orderlies from the Second British Farmers, numbering in all some 50 were assembled.

It had, meanwhile, come to my notice that Colonel Mihailovitch of the Serbian medical staff had received instructions from the military authorities to make arrangements for the journey to Salonica of some 60 French military doctors who had been employed with the Serbian army. On getting into touch with him, to ascertain how he proposed to accomplish this, I found that his instructions covered also the personnel of all the foreign medical missions. The arrangements, which he contemplated, were to forward these under his charge from Mitrovitza to Ferizovitch by train and thence by bullock-cart to Prizren<sup>285</sup>. From this point he hoped, with the aid of the general staff, to obtain pony transport as far as Dibra where carriages and possibly motor transport sent from Monastir would be available. For that portion of the route, namely, between Lium-Kula and Dibra where no food or shelter could be found he informed me that he was establishing stations in tents where there would also be depots of the most necessary provisions. In order to facilitate this scheme I requested Sir Charles des Graz to telegraph to the general commanding the British troops in Salonica requesting him to put two motor cars and two motor lorries at the disposal of the British Vice-Consul at Monastir with a view to the transport of the British units from Dibra to that place. I have reason to believe that this suggestion was duly acted upon.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> November a party of about 120 British and French accordingly left Mitrovitza by train for Ferisovitch under the charge of Colonel Mihailovitch<sup>286</sup>.

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<sup>285</sup> Prizren.

<sup>286</sup> Mihailović.

The day following their departure the General headquarters staff issued orders to the Government officials and Foreign ministers to leave Mitrovitza without delay, so owing to the advance of the Bulgarian right wing at Gillane<sup>287</sup> communication with Prisrend might later become precarious, As I was not aware of there being any further British personnel on routs from the North to Mitrovitza and as Dr. May who had arrived with a portion of the Stobart unit had declared to me her intention of remaining and working in the hospital I left together with the headquarters staff for Prisrend having requested Dr. Curdin to make the necessary arrangements for Dr. May's should they change their mind and wish to follow on later.

Just before reaching Prisrend I overtook a detachment of some 30 Scottish women who had been sent by Dr. Inglis under the charge of Mr. Smith (to whom the greatest credit is due for the manner in which he conducted his party throughout) from Krusevatz down the road leading through Brus, Kurshumliah and Pristina. In due course the party from Mitrovitza under Colonel Mihailovitch reached Prisrend, but I fear they already suffered some discomfort as during their march snow began to fall and rendered progress difficult. On arrival at Prisrend the units were housed in the newly built cholera sheds which being heated with stoves and littered with hay had been rendered fairly comfortable.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> November when arrangements to convey the units by the Dibra-Monastir road were already well advanced a new development presented itself. Colonel Mihailovitch came to me with an order he had received from the general staff to the effect that owing to the insecurity of this road which was said to be threatened by the enemy all the medical missions were to be deflected to Ipek, and to be taken out through Montenegro. This notice was in the nature of a peremptory military order and on discussion was therefore possible although in my opinion the Monastir route would have been shorter and would have presented fewer obstacles.

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<sup>287</sup> Gnjlane.

Colonel Mihailovitch informed me that he had already begun to make arrangements in accordance with this order and that some 5 motor lorries and 40 bullock carts had been placed at his disposal by the military authorities to start with the units for Ipek two days later. He requested me, in the circumstances, to go on ahead and endeavour to make arrangements for housing and provisioning the parties at Djakova<sup>288</sup> and Ipek. From that point to Podgoritza Colonel Mihailovitch feared no arrangements would be possible as no village of any importance except Andreievitza<sup>289</sup> were to be found on the road. He stated however that he had some 5000 lbs. of flour and that by sending the units in small parties during several days he expected to be able to provide for them sufficiently to enable them to make the journey without any great privations.

After having telegraphed to our Minister at Cetinje<sup>290</sup>, requesting him to urge the Montenegrin Government to instruct the local authorities to afford necessary assistance in the matter of food and transport along the route, and likewise requesting him to make arrangements for a ship to embark the units at some part on the Adriatic coast, I left for Djakova and Ipek by motor car on the morning of 19<sup>th</sup> November in company with Mons. Miuschkovitch the Montenegrin minister accredited to Serbia.

At Djakova the Montenegrin authorities engaged themselves to accommodate the units in an empty school house and to provide food for them on their arrival.

It here became necessary for me to abandon my motor car, which was left in a shed, the cylinders and other parts having been removed and hidden elsewhere. Inasmuch as that town was occupied by the Austrians some two weeks later it is unlikely that the car notwithstanding this precaution will be as any time recoverable.

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<sup>288</sup> Djakovica.

<sup>289</sup> Andrijevisa.

<sup>290</sup> Cetinje (Cetinye).

From here the following day I proceeded with Mr. Leslie my secretary, and Captain Petronievitch, the Serbian officer attached to me, and Mons. Miuschkovitch on horseback to Ipek which we reached the same evening. We found that the Authorities had been duly notified by the Government of our arrival. On my approaching the subject of arrangement for the units they stated there would be no difficulty with regard the food and accommodation but Mons. Petrovitch, the perfect of the town, regretted that owing to the large number of refugees who had lately already arrived, to the needs of the army for ammunitions and to the orders he had received to find transport for the Serbian Government officials and Diplomatic corps, he was unable to guarantee a sufficiency of ponies for the use of the medical units. He thought that in any case it would be necessary for them to remain for some time at Ipek and await their turn as opportunity offered.

Colonel Mihailovitch, in the meantime, having also arrived in Ipek, one day ahead of the units, which had reached Detchane<sup>291</sup>, and having undertaken the arrangements for their accommodation, I considered it advisable itself to hurry on in order to make such prevision as might be possible for them along the route to Podgoritza<sup>292</sup>, and to urge the authorities at Cetinje to make further efforts on their behalf.

In order that some idea may be formed of the hardships through which the units have since passed, I think it advisable to give a short description of the route which they were called upon to traverse.

Immediately on leaving Ipek the road becomes a mere mountain path, at times scarcely two feet wide, with a high wall of rock on one side and a precipice and mountain torrent on the other. This path, which underfoot is rocky and uneven, winds up a mountain gorge, rising continuously. The higher the altitude the more difficult becomes the progress, as the track during most months

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<sup>291</sup> Dečani.

<sup>292</sup> Podgorica.

of the year is covered with frozen snow, and both for ponies and pedestrians foothold becomes increasingly precarious. When at length after some eight or ten hours strenuous marching the path emerges from the gorge, there rises before one the actual pass, with the path winding up in zig-zags, some two thousand feet higher, and here the conditions for both man and beast become positively dangerous.

Some distance short of the summit which is over 5,000 feet above sea level, there exists a small Khan built of wood named Bicluka, which usually constitutes the halting place at the end of the first day's march. The Khan consists of one room capable of sheltering perhaps some thirty travellers. There is no other sleeping accommodation than the floor, and nor can any refreshment except tea be obtained.

As I was anxious to proceed as quickly as possible in order to reach Andrievitza and Cetinje and to arrange for pack ponies to be sent back to Ipek, I decided to continue, and after a heart-breaking climb of some two hours with a thermometer far below freezing point and in the teeth of a bitter wind and after an almost more difficult descent of three hours in the dark, over a path of ice and frozen mud, we finally reached Velika fourteen hours after leaving Ipek. At Velika there is scarcely more accommodation to be found than at Bicluka, but the shelter and warmth of a filthy Khan nevertheless was most acceptable. From this point Andreievitza is only some five hours distant, and the route presented no special difficulties, except that its rocky nature, and the mud and cold at times rendered the condition the reverse of pleasant.

At Andreievitza the prefect showed every disposition to do his utmost for the units on their arrival, but was unable to do his utmost for the units on their arrival, but was unable to promise to send back any pack ponies.

The road from Andreievitza to Podgoritza a distance of about 120 kilometres is under ordinary circumstances excellent, and adopted for motor transport. Unfortunately, however, owing to the constant rain during the previous month, landslips had oc-



curred, and some bridges had been washed away on Andreievitza side of Lievareka<sup>293</sup> sixty-two kilometres distant. This fact necessitated continuing the journey on horseback and on foot. On this stretch another pass, some three to four thousand feet high, has to be crossed on which at the time there was, of course, a considerable amount of snow, but any difficulties encountered were solely due to a desire to lessen the distance by taking short cuts, as the main road presents no obstacles

I fear that in crossing these two passes and generally on the road between Ipek and Lievareka, the personnel of the units must almost without exception have suffered severely from cold, want of food and shelter, and other hardships, especially as towards the last seven days of November there was a heavy snowstorms. It is a matter of great regret to me that I was unable to do anything to alleviate the miseries through which they must have passed. Colonel Mihailvitch, I am sure, did all in his power to make such arrangements as were possible, but he was attempting an almost hopeless task. To make arrangements successfully for the transport and provisioning of so large a number of persons across the mountains in winter and through a country where no food was to be found, would require some considerable time for organization with tents and provisions at hand, instead of just the few days which we had at our disposal with no material and no supplies to draw upon.

In retrospect I think that point of view to take is that it is matter for congratulation that every member of our units who started from Ipek came through without serious accident. And surely for this great credit and our gratitude are due to Colonel Mihailovitch whose efforts contributed to this happy issue.

But If Colonel Mihailovitch was so fortunate it must be said that his good fortune was also greatly due to those under his charge. The endurance, courage and cheerfulness exhibited by our nurses and the few orderlies accompanying them under the most trying conditions deserve the unbounded admiration of all. Their

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<sup>293</sup> Lijeve Rijeka (Liyeva Rieka).

conduct was entirely above praise, and has profoundly impressed all those who witnessed it. The qualities which they displayed during this retreat immensely facilitated the task of those who felt responsible for their welfare and I, personally owe them a debt of gratitude in this respect which I find it difficult sufficiently to acknowledge.

In contrast to the behaviour of our nurses was the conduct of the French military doctors, who, as I stated above, left from Mitrovitza at the same time, and also under the direction of Colonel Mihailovitch, and who travelled in company with some of our units the whole of the way to Podgoritza. According to accounts which I received from our nurses on their arrival to Scutari, these doctors appear to have lost no opportunity of showing a disgraceful want of consideration, courtesy and good feeling towards their fellow travellers. At Prisrend they succeeded in appropriating for themselves the food destined for our units, who in consequence had to forego one meal. Regardless of the number of places and Colonel Mihailovitch's arrangements they seized on all the motor transport on the departure from Prisrend, leaving our nurses to walk behind the bullock-carts; whilst on arrival at the various halting places such night they took good care to appropriate any beds which might be available, and even the hay there might be instead of beds, before allowing any for use of our nurses.

These statements are not based alone on the evidence of members of the British units; but both Colonel Mihailovitch and Dr. Curčin<sup>294</sup> were incensed beyond measure at the tone and conduct of these doctors. They both informed me they would rather have charge of any number of British nurses and orderlies than have to deal with one Frenchman.

After spending some four days at Cettinje, where I had an audience of the King and urged His Majesty to make arrangements to dispatch of further means of transport to Ipek, and from which

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<sup>294</sup> Dr Milan Čurčin, see: Lj. Trgovčević, *Naučnici Srbije i stvaranje jugosloveneske države*, Beograd 1986, 79

places also I telegraphed to our ambassador in Rome enquiring as to the possibilities of obtaining a ship to embark the units at Medua. I proceeded on the 29<sup>th</sup> November to Scutary, which, I had arranged with Colonel Mihailovitch, should be the rendezvous of the units pending the arrangements for their embarkation.

Accommodation to the extent of some 70 beds had here, at my request, been secured by His Majesty's Consul in some of hotels, but after a personal inspection of the latter, notwithstanding my desire to give the units as many comforts as possible after their previous discomforts, I decided that it would be preferable for them to live for the few days before their further departure in empty houses, even though these might contain no beds. As the units gradually came in, the question of supplying food became one of considerable difficulty. This difficulty was, however, due more to the peculiar circumstances obtaining in Scutari than to actual shortage of food at the time. Practically the only money in the possession of all those arriving from Serbia was Serbian and Montenegrin paper money. This, however, the Albanian merchants and traders who control the food supplies of the town refused to accept save on their own terms. During some days it was possible to change the notes at very heavy discount but when the town became crowded with Serbian soldiers refugees and scarcity of food began to make itself keenly felt the shops refused to take paper money on any terms whatever. Gold or silver coinage was at the same time not procurable in any amount that would have enabled me to finance the units for more than a very few days.

To illustrate this difficulty about currency, I may mention that in view of the great distress among the Serbian refugees arriving at Scutari, I endeavoured in conjunction with the Serbian and Montenegrin municipal authorities to establish shelters and a soup kitchen. All arrangements were apparently satisfactorily made, and I was on the point of opening an account for financing this scheme at the bank, when the prefect informed me that unless I could arrange to pay for the necessary provisions in silver it would be altogether impossible to proceed, as the Albanians refused to

sell for paper. I made every effort, both at the bank and by application to other sources, to obtain silver in return for a cheque on London, but my efforts were in every case unsuccessful. Under the circumstances it was finally arranged that I should leave a cheque for five hundred pounds with Mr. Rigg, who had been sent out to Scutari by the Serbian Relief Fund, and that the Serbian Minister of finance, who expected shortly to receive consignments of silver currency from Salonika, should cash this for him in coin on its arrival.

In other respects the conditions at Scutari were a repetition of those we had experienced at Kralievo, Mitrovitza, Prisrend and Ipek. At every town where we arrived we were soon followed by crowds of soldiers and refugees who brought with them misery, starvation and squalor and in the time induced attacks by hostile aeroplanes. At Scutari the naturally depressing effect of conditions was heightened by the fact that during our stay there an Austrian squadron from Cattaro appeared before Medua and sunk some eleven ships in the harbour – an event which occasioned us grave doubts as to whether any further food ships would be sent to Medua on which the units would find an opportunity to embark.

I nevertheless determined that anything would be preferable to keeping the units indefinitely at Scutari and that it was advisable they should set out with the least possible delay either for San Giovanni di Medua or if necessary Durazzo and there await the chance of a ship to convey them to Italy.

When my decision to leave Scutari became known I was approached by the Russian minister with the request that I would take charge of the Russian units also, comprising a personnel of some sixty or seventy both doctors and nurses, and permit them to take passage with us to Italy. To this request I willingly consented; but, on the other hand, in view of the previous conduct of the French doctors I felt compelled to inform the French minister that, although I had engaged myself to the French military attaché to find them transport across the Adriatic, I suggested that the French should make their own arrangements as regards the steamer.

On application to the Montenegrin authorities for means of transport to Medua I was able, after some negotiation, to secure 45 bullock-carts, 80 packs ponies and six horse carriages. Having likewise ascertained that provisions in the nature of bread and tinned meat were available a caravan about 180 strong of British and Russian set out from Scutari on the 11<sup>th</sup> December.

The distance is only about 12 miles but the road being in places extremely heavy a day and a half is required to accomplish it. There being no other accommodation one night was passed in the open by the roadside. Fortunately the weather was mild and dry. We arrived at Medua the following afternoon, December 12<sup>th</sup>. On the way we passed a number of Bulgarian and Austrian prisoners who were being sent to Medua to work cargo. The state of these men was distressing in the extreme; they were mostly in the last stages of exhaustion, emaciation and scarcely able to walk.

At Medua we found a sufficiency of provisions such as bread, bacon and tinned meat, (the two latter recovered from the sunken ships in harbour) but house accommodation was entirely inadequate for all the personnel. With the addition of some tents, however, kindly lent me by Major Paget at Scutari it was possible finally to provide for all.

The evening previous to our departure from Scutari, I had received a message from Rome, through the Italian consular authorities, that the Austrian sailing ship "Albania" then discharging at Durazzo, would call at Medua a few days later, and would there embark the women belonging to the foreign medical missions and also any "man debarred from military evidence." This latter phrase gave rise to considerable speculations whether doctors of military age would be included thereunder. In reply to numerous enquiries addressed to me by Russian doctors, I stated that the decision must rest with the captain of the American ship, but that in any case I feared that orderlies of military age, of whom there were some twelve British and few Russians would not be able to avail themselves of this ship. In view of this, the day following our arrival at Medua, the British orderlies intimated to me their desire to set out

for Durazzo with the least possible delay. Although the reports as regards the road between Alessio and Durazzo were by no means encouraging, I saw no alternative to their proceeding, unless they wished to remain at Medua on the chance of getting a passage on a food ship, which at the time appeared to be extremely problematical.

It was my intention at the time after having embarked the nurses on board the "Albania", which I hoped to be able to do within the next two days, myself to follow on to Durazzo by road in company with Mr. Keeling of H.M. Legation, whom Sir Charles des Graz our minister had very kindly detailed to assist me, and Mr. Leslie my secretary and there assist our party of orderlies to obtain a shi On the 14<sup>th</sup> December I telegraphed both to Essad Pasha and to the Italian Minister at Durazzo requesting them to give our party all the assistance possible and interest themselves on their behalf. On the 14<sup>th</sup> December, therefore a party consisting of some forty British and Russians and by Mr. Izzard of the Wounded Allies left Medua for Durazzo. I fear they met twith extremely difficult conditions and many hardships on the road, but they eventually arrived safely.

Meanwhile, although I received various telegrams to the effect that the "Albania" had left Durazzo for Medua, her continued delay in arriving caused us considerable anxiety especially as we perceived certain indications that the provisions which had at first been plentiful were rapidly diminishing. It was therefore, a relief that on the sixth day of our stay, to see a small Italian steamer, the "Brindisi" entering the harbour and threading her way in between the sunken ships.

I lost no time in approaching the naval officer in charge as regards the embarkation of the personnel under my care both British and Russian. Having received orders to embark a number of women and children of the Italian community he appeared doubtful at first whether there would be sufficient room but finally consented. It must be admitted that his doubts were justified for on embarking that same night it was found that we numbered over

400 persons which on a ship of that size rendered conditions extremely unpleasant.

Surely before sailing, at 11 m. Dr. May with her unit some thirty in all, which had been brought through by Dr. Curçin who had accompanied them the whole way from Kragujevatz and had been indefatigable in his efforts on their behalf, arrived in Medua, and come on the board. A few minutes latter, when the steamer was actually on the point of departure, Dr. Clemow also came to tell me that his unit had arrived in Medua, and begged me to detain the ship to give them time to embark. I felt it, however, inexpedient to make this request to the commander, as the steamer was already in motion, and an escort of cruisers and destroyers was awaiting us outside. Owing to the consistent presence of Austrian submarines, the entry into or the departure from Medua is always attended with considerable risk, and it would therefore not have been at all advisable to interfere with arrangements already made.

The run to Brindisi occupied some twelve hours, and though uncomfortable was uneventful. It seemed more than probable in view of the rumours of typhus and cholera at Scutari, we might be subjected to quarantine on arrival, and I have reason to believe that at first something of the kind was actually contemplated. But eventually after a short period of suspense, we found that by the great courtesy of the Italian naval authorities most of the various formalities which are usual on disembarkation were to be dispensed with and we were permitted to land.

I should have been glad if possible to have given the units at least one night's rest at Brindisi, but the authorities informed me that no accommodation would be found in the town and that we must in any case proceed to Bari. This being the case I considered it best for the units to proceed straight home. I therefore made what arrangements I could for them to leave for Paris the same evening and I likewise telegraphed to H.M. Embassy there requesting that they should be met and assisted on arrival. Their departure was, I fear, a somewhat hurried one but with the assistance of some petty officers from H.M. ships in port was finally successfully accomplished.

It would indeed be more than ingratitude on my part were I not to mention these, viz. Captain Petronievitch and Mr. Leslie, was accompanied me the one as far as Scutari and other throughout the journey from Nish to London.

Captain Petronievitch's knowledge of his country and his people and his popularity with all classes in Serbia procured for us advantages without which our difficulties would have been greatly increased, whilst of Mr. Leslie's services to me as my secretary, of his resource in all circumstances, of his solicitude for the units I cannot sufficiently express my appreciation.

Mr. Keeling of H.M. Legation, as I have stated above, joined at Scutari, and his assistance on this part of the journey, especially his knowledge of Turkish, proved altogether invaluable.

I cannot more fitly conclude this report, which I fear conveys but a very inadequate idea of the hardships suffered and of the magnificent spirit displayed by the units during a retreat which for some entailed a march of over 200 miles on foot, then by recording that the day before my departure from Scutari the Crown Prince of Serbia sent for me for the purpose of desiring me to convey to the personnel of our medical missions in Serbia the expression of his unqualified admiration likewise his own and his countrymen's heartfelt gratitude for the sacrifices they had made on behalf of Serbia and for their constant and untiring services to the wounded and sick of the Serbian Army. Although I was able to convey this message privately to some of the leaders of the units at Medua, no occasion presented itself for conveying it to all the units collectively and I therefore gladly take this opportunity of placing His Royal Highness' words upon Record.

Ralph Paget.



## APPENDIX 4

*The Paget-Tyrrell Memorandum (FO 371/2804, 1916)*

### INTRODUCTION

*In framing the suggestions which are set out below we have been guided largely by the following considerations:-*

His Majesty's Government have announced that one of their chief objects in the present war is to ensure that all the States of Europe, great and small, shall in the future be in a position to achieve their national development in freedom and security. It is clear, moreover, that no peace can be satisfactory to this country unless it promises to be durable, and an essential condition of such a peace is that it should give full scope to national aspirations as far as practicable. The principle of nationality should therefore be one of the governing factors in the consideration of territorial arrangements after the war.

For similar reasons we should avoid leaving any state subject to grievous economic disadvantage, as for instance by not providing it with the outlets necessary for its commercial development, since the absence of such facilities would necessarily affect the permanent character of any settlement.

In giving effect to the above principles, however, we are limited in the first place by the pledges already given to our Al-

lies which may, as for instance in the case of Italy, be difficult to reconcile with the claims of nationalities. We must realise further that our Allies, apart from any promises which we may have made to them, may put forward claims conflicting with the principle of nationality. In such an event our attitude should be guided by circumstances generally and British interests in particular.

Lastly, we should not push the principle of nationality so far as unduly to strengthen any State which is likely to be a cause of danger to European peace in the future.

## BELGIUM

By the Declaration of the 14<sup>th</sup> February, 1916, the three allied Powers are pledged to the restoration of Belgium's political and economic independence, and to her being largely indemnified for the losses she has suffered. The extent of these losses should properly be estimated by a Commission of the most independent character that can be obtained, which might be nominated by the United States, or The Hague Tribunal, or the Sovereign of some neutral State. It is evident that Germany's financial situation at the close of the war may be such as to render it difficult, if not impossible, for her to pay the amount to which Belgium may be found entitled in a lump sum, even if spread over a limited number of years; but what means can be devised to extract from Germany the equivalent of a prompt payment of a money indemnity is in the main a financial question with which we scarcely feel competent to deal.

It will remain a vital British interest after the war, as it was before it, to prevent Germany from obtaining access to the Belgian coasts. Recent events have shown conclusively that that interest is not effectively safeguarded by treaties providing for Belgian neutrality under international guarantees; we submit that Belgian independence will be better secured by substituting a treaty of permanent alliance between Belgium, France, and ourselves in the

place of the present safeguards. It is understood that Belgium herself would welcome such an alliance.

This proposal is open to the objection that it commits us to continental alliances and a probable increase of our military obligations. In our opinion, however, there is no alternative so long as it is a vital interest of this country to prevent the German invasion of Belgium, and so long as the letter is incapable of undertaking its own defence.

#### LUXEMBURG

The experience of this war has shown that treaties guaranteeing neutrality have failed to secure the object for which they were concluded, and have, on the contrary, in the case of Belgium, had the effect of causing her to neglect the adoption of measures for the defence of her integrity. Belgium will certainly not wish for a renewal of the Treaty of 1839, and in this connection the Allies will have to reconsider the provisions of the Treaty of London of 1867, which guaranteed the neutrality of Luxemburg. A practical solution would seem to be the abrogation of the Treaty of London of 1867 and the incorporation of Luxemburg into Belgium, from which it was detached in 1839.

#### ALSACE AND LORRAINE

We should be mainly guided by French views. If the French, in addition to Alsace-Lorain, desire a further rectification of frontier on strategic grounds, no objection should be raised, provided the wishes of the population are consulted. We should, however, deprecate, as far as possible, any attempt on the part of France to incorporate any considerable extent of German territory on the plea of strategical exigencies.

HELIGOLAND, THE KIEL CANAL,  
AND SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN

The question of Heligoland and the Kiel Canal must of course engage the most earnest attention of the Allies, and especially of Great Britain. We refrain, however, from making any recommendation on this subject at present, as we understand that it is being reserved for the consideration of the Admiralty, who are the Department primarily concerned.

The question is also intimately connected with the future of Schleswig-Holstein in so far as, apart from general considerations, the future of the Kiel Canal will largely determine the attitude of this country on the subject. Until we are in possession of the naval views on the future of Heligoland and Kiel Canal we refrain from making any definite suggestions, but we should like to mention a few considerations that deserve attention.

From the ethnographical point of view, Holstein should remain in German possession, as its population is entirely German. As regards Schleswig, the German population is very considerable, and should it be decided to restore it to Denmark, such restoration should be subject to a plebiscite at the willingness of Denmark to recover its possession.

The future of Heligoland is obviously a subject mainly for naval decision, but it should be remembered that the ethnographical principle will not be violated if it be decided to leave Heligoland in possession of its present owners, as its population is entirely German. Moreover, Heligoland reverted to Germany as a result of a bargain between two countries. Germany obtained Heligoland and we obtained Zanzibar. Its retention, therefore, by Germany would be no blow to English *amour-propre*, while its transfer to England would be a heavy blow to German feelings without obtaining, from a political point of view, any adequate advantages.

## BELGIUM AND THE SCHELDT

It may be presumed that on military grounds it will be desirable not to renew treaty arrangements heretofore in force respecting Belgian neutrality, but to substitute for them a treaty of permanent alliance between Belgium, France, and ourselves, which would give us a voice in the maintenance of Belgium's defences. In order to enable us in case of need to land a force rapidly in Belgium, it should be provided that the western branch of the Scheldt shall remain open at all times to vessels of war, and Holland should be precluded from fortifying Flushing, or the banks of this branch of the Scheldt. The work of maintaining the waterway in a state fit for navigation should be left in the hands of Belgium with all necessary facilities for carrying out the task.

The proposed arrangement would no doubt constitute a further restriction of Holland's sovereign rights over the waters of the Scheldt. They can, however, be justified on the ground of the wholly exceptional position of Antwerp, Belgium's only important seaport, and by the fact that in the present conflict Holland has claimed to be entitled, and in fact bound as a neutral, to prevent Allied warships from passing through the Scheldt to Antwerp for the purpose of defending Belgium.

As an inducement to Holland to accept these arrangements about the navigation of the Scheldt with good grace, the Allies might engage to ensure to her the safe possession of her colonies in the East.

The present situation, however, is too fluid to enable us to formulate anything in the nature of final views.

A memorandum by the Admiralty on the subject is annexed.

### *Memorandum by the Admiralty on the Status of Antwerp and the Scheldt*

The final opinion, from the Admiralty point of view, with regard to the treaty arrangements which it would be desirable

to make after the war concerning the status of Antwerp and the Scheldt, would appear to depend to a considerable extent on factors which cannot be known until the war is over.

Such questions, for instance, as the degree of military assistance to be given by Great Britain at the outbreak of war in the defence of Belgium against invasion by Germany, the decision as to whether it would be best to land the army at Antwerp, or at some other port, and other points would have to be settled between the Governments of Great Britain, France, and Belgium, and these decisions would affect the importance to be attached to keeping the Scheldt open.

It may, however, be stated generally that, if it could be depended upon that the Scheldt could be kept perfectly free for navigation in war time, it would be to the advantage of Great Britain and Belgium, but as Germany would probably not allow this state of things to exist for a moment after war was declared, and as it is so easy to stop the traffic by mines in the river and guns on travelling carriages on the banks, it would not appear wise to depend upon any treaty arrangements made with Holland to this end.

In war troops could not use the Scheldt to reach Antwerp unless Holland was entirely friendly. Precluding Holland from fortifying the banks of the West Scheldt would be of little use. Ships in the East Scheldt, from its entrance to Bergen-op-Zoom, can bombard the West Scheldt, apart from guns on land.

This uncertainty of being unable to rely on free navigation would also make it undesirable to constitute a naval port of Antwerp. The distance from Antwerp to Terschelling being greater than from some English ports, no important strategic advantage would be gained by its use, although the river would afford a useful base for destroyers or other craft acting against submarines in the vicinity.

These considerations will no doubt be made clear to Holland and other nations by the experience of the war.

In May 1911 the British Government decided that "the fortification of Flushing does not affect British interests materially."

This decision was arrived at mainly on a statement made in a note by the Imperial General Staff, and agreed by the Admiralty, that:-

“Mines, torpedoes, and improvised defences would be sufficient to prevent the ascent to the Scheldt.”

General Sir William Nicholson enquired whether the possibility of Flushing, when fortified, being used as a base for hostile offensive action was immaterial.

Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson said that it would make no appreciable difference to naval strategic conditions, and even if it did, we had no right to interfere.

*Beliefs which held good in 1911.*

Germany thought England would not respect the neutrality of Holland.

England thought the same of Germany, if Holland closed the Scheldt.

Both countries thought that German trade carried in neutral bottoms would be free to enter neutral ports, and for this reason it was more to Germany's advantage to keep Holland neutral than to occupy her territory and thus prevent England from forming a strategic base in her ports.

It was believed that Germany would not be likely to infringe Belgian neutrality, and would not attack France through Belgium, but that if she did, she would not respect Holland either, and would form a naval base at Antwerp, and occupy Holland – should the latter raise objections to the use of the Scheldt.

The blockade of ports was then considered a feasible operation. It was thought that if the Germans did invade Belgium they would be in Antwerp in twenty days.

Every one of these beliefs was falsified.

POLAND

The Allies who went to war for the emancipation of nationalities will inevitably be called upon to deal with the Polish question. Apart, however, from this consideration the latter is intimately connected with the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy, as it is closely bound up with the future of the States that will secede from Austria-Hungary. This aspect of the problem is considered in another portion of this report. If it be admitted that the question of Poland must be faced for the above reasons, we have to consider the solutions which are possible. The first, and on the face of it the simplest, would be the absorption by Russia of all Polish-speaking districts of Upper Silesia. This solution, though simple in appearance, has nothing to recommend it. It is most unlikely that Russia would feel inclined to add a large number of Poles to the already existing number of nationalities that cause her so much trouble. Russia has already before the war become alarmed at what we might call the Polish invasion of Lithuania, Volhynia and Little Russia. The Western Allies might very properly take exception to the extension of Russian boundaries in Europe to within 125 miles of Berlin and about 200 miles of Vienna. Such an extension would secure for Russia a preponderance that might become a serious menace to the balance of power. We may, therefore, safely set aside a resolution which would not recommend itself either to Russia, or France, or England, not to mention the Poles themselves, who would be most strongly opposed to such an absorption. Moreover, it would run counter to the proclamation of the Grand Duke which was issued at the beginning of the war, and which the Emperor of Russia has pledged himself to maintain.

A second solution might be the resurrection of the Polish State, which would enjoy under Russian sovereignty an autonomy on the lines of, say, the Grand Duchy of Finland. We understand from well-informed Russian sources that there would be considerable opposition in Russia to the grant of autonomy to Poland, on the ground that it would lead to similar requests from other



nationalities under Russian rule, such as the Armenians, the Lithuanians, the Ruthenians, the Letts, and so on. Moreover, a Poland under Russian sovereignty would enjoy the same fiscal privileges as the rest of Russia, and would meet with considerable opposition on the part of Russian commercial and financial classes, who dread, with good reason, Polish competition in Russian markets. In fact, those Russian classes go so far as to say that such a solution would substitute Polish for the hitherto existing German absorption of Russian commerce. For political and economic reasons, therefore, we may expect strong Russian opposition to this solution.

A third alternative would be the creation of a Polish kingdom under a Russian Grand Duke. This kingdom would be merely connected with Russia by the personal link of its ruler, but would in every other respect enjoy complete independence. The grant of independence under such conditions would satisfy to the full the national aspiration of the Polish nation, and if it could be coupled with the acquisition of a commercial outlet for Poland in the Baltic, it would lead to the establishment of a State that, from the point of view of national feeling and economic interests, promises stability. Given the strong race antagonism of Poland to Prussia, which has secured during this war the open adhesion of the Russian Poles and the tacit support of what is best in Galicia and the Grand Duchy of Posen, there is every reason to expect that the future Polish State would become a buffer State between Russia and Germany in the best sense of the word, that is to say, it would secure for Russia a Poland that would be most unlikely to be found in league against Russia, as long as Russia remained faithful to the programme of the Allies, which is respect for the independence of small nations.

This new Polish State would be one of the most powerful units among the independent countries which are expected to come into existence upon the dissolution of Austria-Hungary. From the point of view of England and France this conglomeration of States would prove an efficient barrier against Russian preponderance in Europe and German extension towards the Near East, because these states would be happy and contented in the

realisation of their national aspirations, and strong as regards their economic future, which would be secured by the possession of their natural commercial outlet to the sea. The Congress of Vienna attempted to secure a balance of power against France by the creation of kingdoms which were expected to prove a formidable barrier to any French aggression in the future. But these creations did not fulfil that expectation, because they were artificial and did not bring contentment and prosperity to the people who formed part of them. The solution we recommend has this in its favour, that it is based on more solid and lasting foundations than were obtained by the provisions of the Treaty of Vienna. We are quite alive to the opposition such a proposal may encounter at Petrograd; we also realise that it is not likely to be overcome unless the military situation should oblige Russia to require Anglo-French co-operation in order to secure the evacuation of her territory which is now in the hands of enemy. We do not presume for one moment, to offer suggestions as to how we can overcome any such opposition, but we should like to place it on record that the solution which we have submitted is the best in the interest of the Allies, as it will preserve for them the reputation of good faith, and constitute a great asset in their favour among the nationalities that are about to be created by their victory; it will seriously weaken Prussia by withdrawing from her a very capable and prosperous population, together with the loss of the considerable coalfields of Silesia, and above all it will considerably add to the number of States in the future composition of Europe whose desires and interests will all tend in the direction of establishing the rule of right over the rule of might. In other words, we shall assist in creating nations that will be keen in their sympathy with our desire for a rule of peace, which shall materially decrease the burden of armaments that so heavily hampered the national and economic aspirations of the people of Europe.

We annex a map based on ethnographical lines which, after enquiry regarding the distribution of the Poles, shows the frontiers a new Polish State might fairly claim. The figures of the population are taken from the German official census.

## BALKANS

The clearest British interest in the Balkans would appear to be the existence in the future of some combination of Balkan States sufficiently strong to serve as a counterpoise to the Germanic Powers on the one hand, and eventually to a greatly enlarged Russia on the other. Although the creation of a Balkan *bloc*, including Serbia and Bulgaria, may be impracticable for at least a generation to come, we should at any rate avoid any territorial rearrangements which would make a reconciliation between these two States entirely impossible. For that reason, and also with the more general object of arriving at a durable settlement, we must bear in mind the two principles of nationality and of reasonable economic facilities to which reference is made at the commencement of this report.

### *Bulgaria*

*Macedonia.* - If we could be guided solely by the above considerations we should unquestionably favour the retention by Bulgaria of the so-called "uncontested zone" of Macedonia, i.e. the zone bounded on the west by the line Egri-Palanka-Sopot-Ochrida, and to the south by the present Greek frontier (*vide* Appendix I). It is not seriously disputed that the population of this region was predominately Bulgarian at the time of the outbreak of the present conflict. Bulgaria's claim to it was implicitly recognised by the Serbs in the Secret Annexe to the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty of the 29<sup>th</sup> February, 1912, and by the Allied Powers themselves in their offer to guarantee its possession to Bulgaria if she joined their side. The possession of Southern Macedonia has become a matter of passionate national sentiment with the Bulgars, and whatever dynastic changes may take place in Bulgaria it is tolerably certain that the Bulgarians, if they are deprived of the uncontested zone, will seize the first opportunity of attempting to recover it, just as they did after the Treaty of Bucharest.

The chief practical objection that may be urged against the suggested arrangement is that it would leave a large section of the

Uscub - Salonica Railway in the hands of Bulgaria, thus making Serbia dependant on that country, as well as on Greece, for her railway access to the Aegean. The reply is that under the settlement which we are now contemplating (see below), Serbia will have access through Serbian territory at several points to the Adriatic, and it is proposed to give her a coterminous frontier with Greece west of Lake Ochrida (*vide* Appendix II), which would eventually enable her to link up with the Greek railway system, and thus secure also an outlet to the Aegean.

The attribution of the uncontested zone to Bulgaria would therefore be the logical solution, but in practice it may not be feasible to adopt it. If at the time when negotiation are opened the Serbians are in possession of all the territory which they held before the war it would manifestly be impracticable to call on them to surrender a portion of it to the Bulgarians. Moreover, public opinion in Russia may be found averse to an arrangement which would be regarded as equivalent to rewarding Bulgaria for having sided with enemy.

We therefore think that His Majesty's Government, who are already suspected in the Balkans for Bulgarophilism, avoid any appearance of initiating such a proposal. Should, however, the situation be such at the close of the war that Serbia herself admits the necessity of a compromise on this basis with Bulgaria, we should do our best to promote it.

A means of retaining for Serbia under the same conditions as hitherto her trading through Salonica would be by the internationalisation of the Vardar Railway under the guarantee of the *Entente* Powers. Such a scheme would, however, in our opinion, impose serious obligations on the guaranteeing Powers without affording Serbia the same security as she previously enjoyed, and we do not therefore recommend its adoption.

*Thrace.*

On the assumption that Russia obtains possession of all the territory for which she has stipulated north of the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmora up to the Enos-Midia line, there appear to be three possible ways of disposing of the remainder of the Adrianople vilayet comprised between that line and the present Bulgarian frontier. It may be assigned either to Russia, Greece, or Bulgaria.

The population of the territory in question is predominantly Turkish, but there are Greek colonies, chiefly in the neighbourhood of Kirk Kilisse and in the town of Adrianople. The Bulgarian population in the region is scattered, and probably slightly superior in numbers to the Greek.

To award the northern portion of the Adrianople vilayet to Russia(?) is open to the very grave objection that Russia would thereby acquire too complete a domination in the Balkan Peninsula. We think that this situation would be detrimental to British interests, and should therefore meet with our most strenuous opposition.

If it were decided to allot this same region to Greece, the latter would inevitably also claim the southern portion of Bulgarian Thrace, in order to establish connection with her new acquisition. This would deprive Bulgaria of access to the Aegean, and would make a conflict between Greece and Bulgaria a matter of certainty sooner or latter.

There remains the third solution: to allot Thrace north of the Enos-Midia line to Bulgaria. It is open to the objection that the latter, having sided against the Allies, would be receiving practically the same territory as had been offered to her in the event of her joining us. This objection is in part sentimental, and should not be allowed to outweigh the consideration that, looking to the future, it will be to our interest to leave Bulgaria after the peace settlement so far contended and strong as to encourage her to emancipate herself from German influence.

Further, it is to be anticipated that the acquisition of Northern Thrace by Bulgaria may be objected to by Russia on the ground

that Adrianople in Bulgarian hands will be a standing menace to the Russian position south of the Enos-Media line; but this difficulty might be met by stipulating that the fortress of Adrianople shall be dismantled.

In reviewing the whole situation, it should be borne in mind that nothing is more likely to dispose Russia favourably towards Bulgaria than the removal of King Ferdinand. This therefore should be pressed by the Allies as the price of any territorial addition made to Bulgaria; moreover, she should be called upon to pay as large an indemnity to Serbia as her finances will allow.

#### *Greece and Roumania*

Greece and Roumania deserve but little consideration at the hands of the Allies. If, therefore, they should persist in their present attitude, the Allies will be entitled to consider only the general interest when it comes to settling the frontiers of those two States.

As regards Roumania, the Allies are bound by the pledge given by Russia, under which Bukowina and the Roumanian portion of Transsylvania were to be assigned to Roumania. We do not think that any extension of Roumania into the Banat would be desirable in the common interests of the Allies, and therefore the Roumanian portion of the Banat which does not go to Serbia should be left to Hungary. This point is further elaborated in our note on the latter country.

We recommend the division of the Banat between Serbia and Hungary in preference to its division between Serbia and Roumania, as Serbia is more likely to get on with a defeated Hungary than with a disappointed Roumania.

As regards Greece, considerations of general policy would point in the direction of leaving it in possession of its present territories. In order, however, in the event of Bulgaria retaining Macedonia, to secure a Serbia conterminous with Greece, Greece should be given the southern portion of Albania up to a line drawn west from Lake Ochrida, following the course of the Skumbi River down to its outlet into the Adriatic.\*

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(\* Since this report was drafted, Roumania has joined the Allies)

*Albania.*

The frontiers of an autonomous Mussulman State:-

The north, the River Mati; to the east, the Tirana Mountains, then following the Grabe Mountains, so as to exclude Elbasan, and down the course of the Skumbi River to the Sea.

The Italian agreement contemplates the creation of an autonomous Mussulman State. After bringing the Serbian frontier down to the River Mati, and securing a conterminous frontier between Serbia and Greece by a line running due west from Lake Ochrida to the River Skumbi, the area that would remain for the contemplated Albanian Mussulman State would be that comprised within the Mati and Skumbi Rivers, or what has hitherto been known as Essad Pasha's country.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY, SERBIA, MONTENEGRO,  
AND THE SOUTHERN SLAVS.

The agreement concluded between Italy and her Allies on the 26<sup>th</sup> April 1915, inasmuch as it concedes to the former the whole of Istria, a considerable strip of the Dalmatian coast with most of the islands, in which indisputably the population is predominantly Slav, unfortunately constitutes a very distinct violation of the principle of nationalities, and there is consequently no doubt that it involves the risk of producing the usual results, namely, irredentism, and lack of stability and peace. We understand, however, from competent and moderate judges of the situation, that there is every prospect of the parties reaching a satisfactory settlement by direct friendly negotiation.

This departure from one of our guiding principles need not, therefore, cause unnecessary alarm, and, in any case we are precluded from suggesting any other solution in view of the binding nature of our engagements towards Italy.

The portions of the littoral which under the agreement are left for division between Serbia and Montenegro, and Croatia, extend from the River Drin in the South to the Cape Planka just north of Spalato – this section includes some islands – and furthermore the coast lying between the northernmost point of Dalmatia and the Bay of Volosca, likewise with a few small islands attached. A stipulation of the neutralisation obtains with regard to the southern section first mentioned. This does not, however, apply to any portion of the present coast of Montenegro, with which country Italy has special arrangements.

Whilst it will doubtless be best that Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia, should, if possible, be left to make their own dispositions regarding the territories allotted to them, it may nevertheless be advisable to form some idea in advance as to what would be a suitable division.

One of the first considerations which occurs in this connection relates to the future of Montenegro. Shall this country be revived as an independent State or be absorbed into Serbia ?

Montenegrin policy, at no time of the most reliable, has since the commencement of the war surpassed itself in duplicity, and has proved distinctly unfriendly to the Allies. There is little doubt that King Nicholas and his Ministers were in direct communication with the Austrians and that but for their treachery a far more successful resistance to the enemy's advance through Sanjak (Sandzak, prim Č. A) of Novi Bazar and Montenegro might have been made. The King, therefore, deserves no consideration at the hands of the allies, and in our judgment after such conduct his restoration or that of any of his family who were parties to this treachery is much to be deprecated, and, indeed, should be so far as possible opposed.

The resurrection of Montenegro as an independent State under another King must presumably depend on the wishes of the Montenegrins themselves, but it should be borne in mind that in any case such a State will serve no useful purpose; it will in the future as in the past not be self-supporting, and be dependent on



the charity of the Powers. Its absorption by Serbia is therefore on the whole much to be desired:-

On the assumption, however, that an independent Montenegro is revived, we would recommend the following territorial division:-

That Northern Albania with the coast from the River Mati (the northern limit of the projected Albanian Moslem State up to the present Montenegrin frontier, and again the coast from a point just north of Cattaro up to Cape Planka should be given over to Serbia.

The allotment to Serbia of the portion of Northern Albania above indicated will render it possible to arrange for a conterminous frontier between Serbia and Greece west of Lake Ochrida, thus removing one of the obstacles to Serbia's consenting to the retention by Bulgaria of the uncontested zone of Macedonia. It likewise keeps in view the assurance given to Serbia that she shall acquire Bosnia and Herzegovina and a wide access to the Adriatic.

The more important of the harbours on the coast-line which we suggest should become Serbian are San Giovanni di Medua (Sv. Jovan Medovski), Gravosa, and Spalato. The two latter are of considerable size and capable of accommodating a large amount of shipping. They have connection with Brod and Sarajevo by rail; the lines, it is true, are at present only narrow gauge, but could eventually be improved, probably at no great expense.

San Giovanni di Medua is under present conditions of little value as a port. It can only hold a very limited amount of shipping, and possesses no other communication except a road to Scutari. This fact makes it necessary that Scutari also shall be included within the Serbian frontier.

There would, no doubt, be the strongest opposition on the part of the Montenegrins to this proposal, on the ground that they have prior claims, having occupied Scutari during the war. That occupation, however, was carried out in direct opposition to the wishes of the Great Powers, and as San Giovanni di Medua is necessary to Serbia as an outlet for Northern Albania and must be accompanied

by Scutari, Montenegrin protests need merit but little attention, especially if Montenegro be given possession of Cattaro.

The acquisition by Serbia of Spalato, Gravosa, and San Giovanni di Medua, which latter could in time be connected with the Sanjak railway line, should amply satisfy Serbian ambitions in respect of facilities for commercial expansion, but, in any case, in addition to the ports above mentioned, Fiume is connected with Belgrade by a normal gauge line, the free use of which Serbia may no doubt expect to enjoy if Croatia be liberated.

Meanwhile, from representations which have been made to His Majesty's Government, it has become evident that the assurance given by us to Serbia that she should receive "Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wide access to the Adriatic" as her reward after the war, when considered in relation to these provinces themselves and the Southern Slav question generally, not only falls short of their national ideas, but is actually repugnant to Jugo-Slav conceptions of their own future.

The end which the Jugo-Slavs have in view is the liberation of all Serbs, Croats and Slovenes from the domination of Austria-Hungary or any other Power and their union into one State. They desire, however, a free and voluntary union, not one imposed from without implying subjection of any one partition(?) to the other. The Croats and Slovenes no doubt admire Serbia for her fighting qualities and look to her to assist their liberation, but on the other hand they consider themselves superior to Serbia in culture and education, and rely on this superiority to assume the leadership in the future confederation of Southern Slav States.

The statement made by Sir E. Grey to M. Supilo on the 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1915, that, provided Serbia agrees, Bosnia, Herzegovina, South Dalmatia, Slavonia and Croatia shall be permitted to decide their own fate is therefore far more in accord with Jugo-Slav ideals than the assurance previously given, and should be the determining factor in guiding our policy on this question. We consider that Great Britain should in every way encourage and promote the union of Serbia, Montenegro, and the Southern Slavs into one strong federation of States with a view to its forming a barrier to

any German advance towards the East.

The objection that such a State would be a mere appendage of Russia and so add to her already overpowering weight in Europe need not, we think, cause serious apprehension. Indications in Serbia of latter years have pointed to anxiety for emancipation from Russian tutelage, and simultaneously to a marked desire for closer relations with the Western Powers. There is reason to suppose that if we promote the birth and development of the Jugo-Slav Confederation by affording it our political and commercial support, the already existing feeling of confidence towards us will increase in strength to the mutual advantage of all parties.

The Jugo-Slav desire that the boundaries of their prospective Confederation shall be determined on ethnological lines, and upon this basis they lay claim to extensive territories. This would include, in addition to Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Slavonia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Dalmatia, portions of Carinthia and Styria, the whole of Gorizia, Carniola, Istria, and the coast, together with islands down to the Albanian frontier. The northern frontier of their State would run approximately from Graz in a south-easterly direction along the Drave, then north of the provinces of Baranja,



Government of the Kingdom of SCS, presided by Nikola Pašić

Bačka, and the Banat, along the Moris River to Arad, thence south past Temisvar to the point where the Roumanian western frontier joins the Danube.

Although these claims may appear extravagant at first sight, the Jugo-Slavs maintain that in all these localities the population is predominantly Slav (*vide* Appendix III). In so far as the Adriatic littoral is affected the Jugo-Slav will have to confirm to the requirements of the Italian Agreement, but outside of the regions referred to in this Agreement we see no reason why their claims should not be admitted to their full extent at the expense of Austria, though we suggest some reservations in respect of certain territories which they claim in Hungary. Our reasons for this recommendation appear below:-

The future of Austria-Hungary will, of course, depend very largely on the military situation existing at the end of this war. If the situation should be one which enables the Allies to dispose of its future, there seems very little doubt that, in accordance with the principle of giving free play to nationalities, the Dual Monarchy, which in its present composition is a direct negation of that principle, should be broken up, as there is no doubt that all the non-German parts of Austria-Hungary will secede. The only objection that might occur to this radical solution would be the large accession of strength to the German Empire in population and in wealth by the inclusion of the Austrian provinces. We have, however, to remember that a solution favourable to the Allies will deprive Germany of a population considerably in excess of this Austrian increase. It will be deprived of Alsace-Lorraine, Schleswig, and the Grand Duchy of Posen. This will be a direct diminution of Prussian power. It will receive, it is true, the Austrian population, but this accession will add to the importance and influence of the non-Prussian States of the German Empire. Moreover, it will mean a considerable increase in the Catholic elements of Germany, and everything tending to decrease Prussian power will naturally tend in the direction of a more permanent settlement in Europe, as it will diminish the aggressive tendencies of the Central European Empires through

the weakening of Prussia. We therefore think that the drifting of the Austrian provinces to Germany need not alarm the Allies, who are not out to crush Germany, but do intend as far as they can to impair the hegemony of Prussia over other States. The preparations for this war, the impulse to this war, the aggressive designs connected with this war, are all traceable to Prussian enterprise, and it is not extravagant to hope that a defeated Prussia will considerably lose its power for evil, and should it further be confronted by a large, wealthy, and influential southern Federation within its own borders, we shall not be far wrong in expecting to achieve that diminution of its influence, which can only be brought about by the play of political forces within the German Federation. Assuming the Allies, for purely political reasons, contemplated the keeping alive of an independent Dual Monarchy, they would have to consider very seriously whether it would be possible to secure the real independence of Vienna from Berlin. In the light of past events we do not hesitate to come to the conclusion that whether the Central Powers are victorious or not, Austria-Hungary will remain, to all intents and purposes, subservient to its ally. A victorious Prussia would, as we have already seen during the course of the war, still further absorb Austria-Hungary within its political and economic orbit. A defeated Prussia would equally be able to persuade Austria-Hungary that her only future lies within a still closer amalgamation of the two countries. There is no doubt that there has been in the past, and might be in the future, a party both in Austria and in Hungary who are strongly opposed to the German hegemony, but from all the information at our disposal this party in both portions of the Dual Monarchy is a minority, and likely to remain one. An Austria-Hungary, therefore, at the beck and call of Prussia is not a solution which the Allies should or could contemplate; the survival of Austria-Hungary could not be reconciled with the objects for which the Allies went to war, and even if they decided to sacrifice these objects for political expediency, the weapons they intended to forge, that is to say, a diminished but independent Austro-Hungarian State, would fail to be effective for the purposes for

which it would be intended. On the assumption, therefore, that the solution which we recommend be adopted, we find no difficulty in disposing of those portions of the Dual Monarchy which are likely to constitute the Slav State of the South. There remains Bohemia.

Three solutions occur as regards Bohemia:-

First, that it should become an independent State;

Secondly, that it should become linked by some means or other with a southern Slav State;

Thirdly, that it should be tacked on to the Kingdom of Poland.

As regards No. 1, it is not a practical solution, and from all we hear it does not recommend itself to the Czechs themselves. The second solution seems somewhat artificial, and therefore does not promise permanency. The most durable solution, as far as we can ascertain from Czech and Polish sources, is the third. The objection to the last one is that we are still very much in the dark as to what the status of the Polish kingdom will be. Here, again, we are confronted with three possible solutions. First, a united and independent Kingdom of Poland; second, a Kingdom of Poland incorporated in Russia; third, a Kingdom of Poland enjoying, roughly speaking, the same autonomy as the Grand Duchy of Finland. At first sight it must be admitted that the solution of the Polish question rests with Russia alone. This is undoubtedly what we understand to be the point of view of the Russian Government at the present moment, and should the latter be able to give effect to it at the end of the war, France and England will have to make up their minds to stand aside and allow Russia to have her own way. But we are dealing in probabilities, and the course of the war in the Eastern section suggests that, without the assistance of England and France, Russia is unlikely to obtain the evacuation of her Polish provinces by Germany, still more unlikely to obtain the addition of the Grand Duchy of Posen to Poland. Should this turn out to be a correct forecast, the opportunity will then be given to England and France to talk to Russia about the Polish question. It will be open to them to say that a prolongation of the war in order to obtain the evacuation of Poland by German troops could not be justified to

English and French public opinion, unless Russia were prepared to go very far indeed with the concession of autonomy to a liberated Polish State. This situation would enable the Western Powers to favour the adhesion of Bohemia to Poland. As far as we understand, this solution is desired both by far-seeing Czechs and Poles. The latter realise fully that the addition of Bohemia to Poland would afford and promote very considerably the economic development of Poland. The Czech, on the other hand, fully appreciate that they would benefit by the superior culture and civilisation of the Poles. At this stage we do not propose to go further than indicate what, in our opinion, would be the best solution for the Austro-Hungarian question.

To sum up, we should say: let the Slav provinces constitute themselves into a Southern Slav State; let German provinces of Austria be incorporated in the German Empire; let Bohemia be linked up to Poland; and let Hungary be formed of the purely Magyar portions of the country into an independent State with the fully secured commercial outlets to the Adriatic at Fiume, and by means of the Danube to the Black Sea. This solution promises permanency, as it will be based on the national and economic elements of the countries affected by this settlement.

Were it proposed still to maintain an Austrian Empire, in the hope that it might eventually free itself from German influence, the arrangement which we have indicated would be open to the objection that Austria is entirely cut off from the sea, and some provision would have to be made to afford her a commercial outlet of her own. But in view of the conclusion which we have ventured to set forth above this is now of no consequence, and the question of securing from Italy concessions on behalf of Austria at Trieste does not arise.

With these considerations before us the boundary we suggest for the Jugo-Slav State would be approximately a line continuous with the Italian frontier as laid down in the Agreement of the 26<sup>th</sup> April, 1915, running from Volosca to a point slightly north-west of Villach; thence in an easterly direction just north of

Klagenfurt and Marburg to a point where the River Mur – an affluent of the Drave – turns eastwards, thence following the course of this river to its junction with the Drave, thence following the course of the letter to its junction with the Danube, thence along the right bank of the Danube to Petrowardein; from this point the direction would be changed to due east as far as the River Temes, whence the course of this river southward to its junction with the Danube at Panscova could again form the frontier.

This boundary, while conceding all the Jugo-Slav demands in Austria proper, excludes the Hungarian provinces of Baranya, Backa, and the Banat, to which they also desire to lay claim. If, however, Hungary is to be an independent State with any chance of vitality it would be inexpedient to deprive it of territory beyond that which is necessary in order to confirm the principle of nationality. This boundary had the further recommendation of being in accordance with the Serbian strategical requirements for possession of the country on the north bank of the Danube opposite Belgrade, and of not conflicting with the Roumanian claims.

The above settlement may at first sight appear somewhat academic, being as it is mainly in accordance with national aspirations, but we quite appreciate that it may have to be modified in deference to the views of Russia, geographical configuration, military considerations, &c. Our main object at present was to devise a scheme that promised permanency from the national point of view.



## ARMAMENTS

In putting forward the above considerations we have endeavoured to approach the settlement, after the war, mainly from a political point of view. We have attempted to draw up a scheme which is not confined to the promotion alone of British interests as regards either territorial acquisitions or the establishment of British spheres of influence. We have tried to work out a scheme that promises permanency; we have aimed at a reconstruction of the map of Europe intended to secure a lasting peace. We have been guided by the consideration that peace remains the greatest British interest. The most direct way to this end is, of course, to arrest the race in armaments, which has gone on increasing for the last forty years. This object can be best achieved by means of general arbitration treaties and the consequent reduction of standing armies and navies. This ideal is doubtless common ground amongst all the Allies, but Great Britain would probably be prepared to face greater sacrifices than other countries in order to achieve that end. Public opinion in this country would be willing, we think, to go very far indeed in this direction, but the danger we have to guard against is that if we succeeded in persuading the enemy to come to any kind of arrangement of the sort we must see to it that he is both able and willing to abide by his pledges. In view of the attitude which Germany has adopted in the past on this question we entertain but little hope that the Germans will be willing to approach the subject in any sincere and serious spirit unless they have no option. If we contemplate a condition of things which would force the Allies to discuss terms of peace with the enemy on more or less equal terms, we have no hesitation in saying that we should either be met by a direct negative on the part of the German Government even to consider the subject, or we should be invited to submit proposals which the German Government would either prove to be unworkable or which they might accept with a mental reservation that they would do their best to evade them. We have to consider that in the case of a draw, the German Government would be able to

persuade their public that they had been successful in saving their country from invasion; we must remember that the leading people in Germany who are mainly responsible for this war never allowed their countrymen to suspect that their designs were aggressive; the German Government have always officially dissociated themselves from pan-German propaganda. On these occasions they have distinctly and publicly repudiated pan-German aims. But in practice their policy, which remained carefully concealed from their countrymen, was dominated by ideas of aggression in order to secure expansion of territory and spheres of influence. Territory was to be secured by the acquisition of additional colonies in the possession of other Powers, and spheres of influence were to be obtained by the policy of commercial penetration, which has been so steadily pursued both in the Near and the Far East. The same people will, in the case of a draw, be able to convince their country that it was due to their invincible army and navy that the integrity of their country was saved, and they will have little difficulty in persuading them that for the future they must rely upon the same weapons. This frame of mind would not readily respond to any invitation on our part seriously to take in hand a reduction of armaments all round. On the contrary, it would be misrepresented as an insidious proposal to weaken the defensive forces of Germany for the purpose of taking it at a disadvantage, and thereby achieving the object which the Allies had in view when they went to war in the summer 1914. The other alternative which promises more hope for the eventual reduction of armaments presents itself if the Allies are in position to impose their terms. Even then, the matter will have to be very delicately handled so as to avoid all appearance of interference in what the Germans consider an essentially internal question which every independent State has a right to decide for itself. It is possible, however, that a substantial defeat of Germany may so shake the confidence of the German people in their rulers that they may be induced to listen to the voice of reason, and ask themselves whether it is an axiom that the safety of a State is exclusively secured in proportion to the extent of its armaments. It may

be possible in those conditions to convince the German people that we do not confuse the military defences of a country with militarism. A German writer has defined militarism as a teaching of the dogma that might alone counts, and that right, which does not depend on might, is not worth consideration. If the Allies can succeed in substituting for this doctrine the principle that brute force is not entitled to override everything, that a country possessing the physical means to impose its will, irrespective of right or wrong, is not entitled to do so, but can promote in its stead the doctrine that no community can exist which is based on physical force alone, one of the main objects for which they went to war will have been achieved. In other words, one of the essential elements towards securing a reduction of armaments will be the conversion of the German people to these views. Another element, of course, but a less effective one, will be the creation of a League of Nations, that will be prepared to use force against any nation that breaks away from the observance of international law. We are under no illusion, however, that such an instrument will become really effective until nations have learnt to subordinate their personal and individual ambitions and dreams for the benefit of the community of nations. We have witnessed such a process in individual States with the development of what we call a civilized condition of things, but this process has seen slow growth, and we shall have to exercise considerable patience in watching and promoting a similar development among the nations of the world. This consideration brings up the question of whether it will be possible to secure the adhesion of the United States of America, a repetition of Canning's attempt to bring in the New World in order to redress the balance of the Old. There are signs in America that the more thinking people there are awakening to the fact that in the modern condition of things America can no longer cling to her position of splendid isolation. If America could be persuaded to associate itself to such a League of Nations, a weight and influence might be secured for its decisions that would materially promote the object for which it had been created.

We propose to confine ourselves to these general considerations, because we hesitate to discuss the question of reduction of armaments in a more detailed or technical fashion. We lack the knowledge, military, naval, and economical, which would enable us to submit recommendations of any value; such a task would be more properly and usefully entrusted to a committee representing the various national interests, acting on the advice of the most competent experts. In touching upon this question, however, we have been mainly guided by the consideration that no complete scheme for the settlement of Europe after the war is acceptable which does not seriously concern itself with this question and does not endeavour to formulate proposals that would secure the main object for which this country, almost subconsciously, went to war – for which it is prepared to pay heavily, and for which it is also prepared to carry on the war to the ultimate end in order to secure the triumph of the principle that right is superior to might.

INCONCLUSIVE PEACE.

The situation which we have to consider that would arise out of a draw would be dominated by the inability of the belligerents to prolong the war – that is to say, it would find Germany, roughly speaking, in military occupation of the countries outside of her dominions which she now holds, *i.e.*, Belgium, eleven departments of France, Poland, Courland, Serbia, and Montenegro, and our Allies unable to reconquer those territories. In these conditions any concessions to be sought for from the enemy would have to be bought. Beginning with Belgium, we might find Germany willing to restore its political independence; for us the latter would be a *sine quâ non* for consenting to any kind of peace, but it is more than doubtful that we should be able to obtain its financial rehabilitation by Germany. This task would, therefore, devolve upon the Allies. It is possible that both France and Russia would plead not only financial inability to assume their share of such a charge, but they might also put forward the fact of having suffered invasion as a justification of their refusal to bear any share in this contribution. In such an event the fulfilment of the pledges given to Belgium would fall upon this country alone.

But this is not the only burden that might devolve upon us. It is quite conceivable, if not probable, that Germany would ask for the restoration of her colonies as the price of her evacuating France and Belgium; if our reply were that the German colonies which had passed into the possession of our Dominions were beyond recall, Germany might retort in that case by asking for territory, say in Africa, now in the possession of Belgium, France, or Portugal, to indemnify her for the loss of her original possessions. It would seem somewhat paradoxical to call upon Belgium to cede part of her colonies as compensation for her spoliation in Europe. France, on the other hand, would certainly be indisposed to make a sacrifice for Belgium at the expense of her Congo. Here, again, Great Britain may be confronted with a suggestion that, having escaped invasion, it is incumbent upon her to cede part of her East African

possessions.

Such is the situation which we anticipate as being the most likely to arise in any discussion on Belgium, and it shows that we shall be called upon to bear the lion's share if it comes to any question of buying Germany out. It would, of course, be open to us to argue with France and Russia that they are equally bound not to leave off fighting until Belgium has been restored politically and economically; but we should however have to face their argument that, though they were unwilling to go on fighting, it was open to us to continue, but without their assistance. This raises the question as to how long we should be able to continue the struggle without forfeiting the benevolent neutrality of our Allies, even though parting from them on the most amicable terms. In truth, we should have parted from them because we demurred to being called upon to bear the largest portion of the sacrifice necessary to secure such a peace. Assuming, however, for the sake of argument, that we parted from our Allies amicably, and without bearing malice, how long would France and Russia resist the temptation of profiting economically from a state of war between Great Britain and Germany? We understand that the clearest maritime lesson taught us by this war is that, as regards blockade, we shall have to revise the rules which have hitherto prevailed. With considerable difficulty, we have been able to enforce our blockade in the face of the opposition of the small neutral countries of Europe; but we are assured that we should have been wholly unable to do so had one big Power alone remained neutral in the general European conflagration. In the eventuality of our continuing our struggle with Germany alone, we should have the rest of Europe directly interested in making impossible for us to use effectually one of our main naval weapons against Germany; in other words, our blockade weapon, which would have been the main inducement to Germany to come to terms, would break in our hands; and as far as we know there is no limit which could be put to the duration of that single-handed struggle except the exhaustion of the belligerents. Our chief naval weapon against Germany, namely, the blockade, will not enable us

in a single-handed struggle to exert sufficient pressure on Germany to bring about a successful issue of the war. We shall, therefore, in the absence of the alternative, be obliged, if we cannot induce our Allies to continue the struggle, to make the largest contribution for the purpose of obtaining the liberation and rehabilitation of Belgium. Again, as regards France, the probable elements for a peace such as we are contemplating would be the evacuation by Germany of her northern departments in return for a French renunciation of all her aspirations to Alsace and Lorraine and of any indemnification due to her from Germany which would otherwise naturally result from a German occupation of part of France.

Again, it is quite on the cards that, in order to obtain the evacuation of Poland and Courland, Russia may be tempted to do a deal with Germany in the Near East. Germany would make a strong point of not opposing the Russian occupation of Constantinople, provided Russia agreed to respect the commercial interests of Germany in what remained of the Turkish Empire in Asia Minor, coupled with a proviso[n] for securing the freedom of the part of Constantinople. Such an arrangement would have to be very carefully scrutinised from the British point of view, as it might work out to the injury of British commercial interest and seriously affect our future relations with Russia in the Near East, as the latter has no commercial interests in Turkey, and would therefore not be likely to come into conflict with Germany.

As regards the Balkans, the Allies would have to consent to a partition which would leave in possession a strong Bulgaria, with a large slice of Macedonia, and we may expect encroachments on Serbian territory by Austria, such as the reoccupation of the Sanjak of Novibazar; but all the information in our possession at present points to Serbia being still further reduced for the benefit of Bulgaria.

The settlement would leave the Dual Monarchy territorially intact, but owing her integrity to Germany, and would thereby increase her subservience to the letter. In other words, Germany will, to say the least, have considerably improved her access to the

Near East.

To sum up, a peace the result of a draw such as we have endeavoured to sketch out in this report would imply that Germany will not have obtained all she wanted when she began the war, but will have obtained such an instalment of her ambitions as will enable her Government to justify themselves to their people for having gone to war in defence of their territory in 1914; in fact, they will have every reason to claim victory and to represent the Allies as having suffered defeat.

We have said enough to indicate that whatever concessions will be necessary in the event of a draw will have to be made by this country. Such concessions can only be made by the sacrifice of our colonial possessions. But this would have to form the subject of enquiry and report by a committee on which the Colonial Office would be represented, so as to enable His Majesty's Government to decide what price they could afford to pay for such a peace.

RALPH PAGET

August 7, 1916.

W. TYRRELL



*Appendix I.*

The provisions(?) of the Secret Annexe to the Serbo-Bulgarian Convention of the 29<sup>th</sup> February, 1913, were briefly as follows:-

Serbia recognized the right of Bulgaria to the territories to the east of the Rhodope Mountains and the River Strouma. Bulgaria recognized the right of Serbia to the territories situated to the north and west of the Char Planina Mountains. With respect to the territories situated between the Char and Rodhope ranges, the lake of Ochrida, and the Aegean Sea, it was agreed that, if these could not be constituted as an autonomous province, Serbia would not lay claim to any territory lying to the east of a line drawn from Egri Palanka in a south-westerly direction to the Lake Ochrida.

At the conclusion of the war against Turkey, Serbia was, however, found in occupation of a considerable amount of territory to the east of the above mentioned line, including the towns of Veles, Prilep, and Monastir, on which the Bulgarians set great store. The refusal of Serbia to evacuate this territory, which she now claimed as her due for services rendered to Bulgaria and on other grounds, led to the Serbo-Bulgarian war.

*Appendix II.*

One of the chief arguments used by Serbia in resisting any attempt to induce her to part with the "uncontested zone" to Bulgaria has been that, for strategical purposes and for the protection of both Serbia and Greece against Bulgaria, it is necessary they should have a conterminous frontier, and that this would become impossible if the "uncontested zone" were ceded to Bulgaria.

To combat this argument a suggestion was made that the Serbian and Greek frontiers should be so drawn as to meet in Albania to the west of Lake Ochrida.

*Appendix III.*

The Jugo-Slavs claim that they form the compact population of the Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro (population 5,000,000), of the Jugo-Slav provinces of Austria-Hungary (Jugo-Slav population, 8,000,000), and of the Italian district west of Gorizia (40,000 Jugo-Slavs), whereas 1,500,000 Jugo-Slavs live as emigrants in oversea countries.

In Austria-Hungary the Jugo-Slavs are subordinated to two dominant State organizations, viz., the German and Magyar. Their territory is broken up into ten provinces; they are politically oppressed, socially persecuted, and in every way hampered and menaced in their intellectual, economic, and national development.

There are 2,100,000 Jugo-Slavs under the German Administration in Vienna. Of these, 410,000 live in Southern Styria, 120,000 in Southern Carinthia, 490,000 in Carniola, 155,000 in Gorizia-Gradisca, 70,000 in Trieste, 225,000 in Istria, and 610,000 in Dalmatia.

Under the Magyar domination there are 3,100,000 Jugo-Slavs, viz., 2,300,000 in Croatia-Slavonia and 900,000 in Southern and South-Western Hungary (in the Medjumurje, along the Styrian frontier, in the Baranja, Backa, and Banat).

A joint Austro-Hungarian Administrative controls the 1,900,000 Jugo-Slavs living in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Finally, there are 40,000 Jugo-Slavs under Italian rule.

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**Dold**, Dr Douglas Meri Weather, The Columbia University Relief Mission to Serbia

**Hutchinson**, Dr Alice, the Scottish Women

**Hamilton**, Dr Cicely, Wounded Allies Relief

**Inglis**, Dr Elsie (1864-1916)

After qualifying as a doctor, Inglis was appointed to a teaching post at the New Hospital for Women, while several years later she established in Edinburgh a maternity hospital that was staffed entirely by women. On the outbreak of the First World War, Inglis suggested that women's medical units should be allowed to serve on the Western Front. Dr. Inglis and her Scottish Women's Hospitals Committee sent the first women's medical unit to France three months after the war started. By 1915 the Scottish Women's Hospital Unit had established an Auxiliary Hospital with 200 beds in the 13th century Royaumont Abbey. Her team included Evelina Haverfield, Ishobel Ross and Cicely Hamilton. In April 1915 Elsie Inglis took a women's medical unit to Serbia. During an Austrian offensive of 1915, Inglis was captured but eventually, with the help of American diplomats, the British authorities were able to negotiate the release of Inglis and her medical staff.

**Troubridge**, Charles Thomas, Vice-Admiral

Troubridge was born in 1862. He served in British legations in Vienna, Madrid and Tokyo as Naval-Attaché. In 1912 Troubridge became the first officer of the Naval-Warfare Headquarter. After commencement of the 1914-18 War Troubridge received the command of the First squadron of cruisers in the Mediterranean. Latter on he was degraded and sent in Serbia in capacity of head of the British Adriatic Mission.

**Aspland**, Dr Head of the Wounded Allies Unit

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CIP – Каталогizacija u publikaciji  
Nародна библиотека Србије, Београд

341.7:929 Пеџет Р.

ANTIĆ, Čedomir

Ralph Paget : a diplomat in Serbia /  
Čedomir Antić. - Belgrade : Institute for  
Balkan Studies SASA, 2006 (Beograd : ATC). - 198  
str. : ilustr. ; 24cm. -  
(Special Editions / Serbian academy of sciences and  
arts, Institute for balkan studies ; 94)

Na spor. nasl. str. : Ралф Пеџет : један  
дипломата у Србији. - Tiraž 500. - Str.  
6-7: Ralph Paget : a diplomat in Serbia / by  
Nigel J. Brailey. - Beleška o autoru: str.  
197. - Napomene i bibliografske reference uz  
tekst. - Bibliografija: str. 185-190. -  
Registar.

ISBN 86-7179-049-5

1. Stv. nasl. na upor. nasl. str.

a) Peđzet, Ralf (1864-1940) - Diplomacija

COBISS.SR-ID 132507404