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T H E R E L A T I O N S  
between  
G R E A T B R I T A I N and R U S S I A  
from 1848 to 1856.

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Thesis presented to the University of Birmingham  
by  
A. ROLAND COOKE. B.A.

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The Relations between  
Great Britain and Russia, from 1848 to 1856.

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CONTENTS

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1. Introduction.
  2. The Foreign Policy of Great Britain.
  3. Relations between Great Britain and Russia to 1848.
  4. Russia and the Principalities.
  5. Russian Intervention in Hungary.
  6. The Hungarian Refugees.
  7. Don Pacifico.
  8. The Fall of Palmerston.
  9. The Position of the Tsar Nicholas in 1852.
  10. The Question of the Holy Places.
  11. The Mission of Prince Menshikov.
  12. The Efforts to secure a Settlement.
  13. The Declaration of War.
  14. The Influence of Popular Opinion.
  15. British Policy with regard to the War.
  16. The Treaty of Paris.
  17. Conclusion.
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## I.

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In a real sense, the years 1848-1856 are remarkable as being the dividing line in the history of the 19th century, especially in the sphere of international relations. With the revolutionary year the relations of Great Britain and the continent entered on a new phase. It heralded the break-up of the old order in Europe and marked the beginning of that clash of national aspirations which was to lead to the creation of a German Empire and a United Italy, and to culminate in our own day in the Great War. Up to the year 1848 the settlement of 1815 had remained almost unaltered. Except for the formation of the kingdoms of Belgium and Greece, and the transfer of the French crown from the elder to the younger branch of the Bourbon family, the continent remained practically in the condition in which it had been left by the Congress of Vienna. It was still subject to the artificial restraints imposed for their own protection by the conquerors of Napoleon; Germany was still composed of a number of governments, more or less despotic, ruling over small states and with the influence of Austria predominating; Italy was still divided among the Austrians, the King of Sardinia the Grand Dukes, the King of Naples and the Pope.

The difference in political atmosphere in 1856 is considerable, for what we regard as the essentially 19th century Europe is beginning to shape itself. Austria is discredited and friendless; Prussia is feeling after a policy that shall lead her to eventual triumph; Sardinia has become a great power; Russia is at last finding her most imperative interest in internal reforms; while France is once more and for the last time in the century the mistress of Europe. The foreign relations which were now inaugurated were to last down to 1875 at least, and in the case of Great Britain to 1906.

For these years, 1848-1856, came after a generation of almost unbroken peace, and introduced an epoch of violent international and civic disturbance which resulted in a reshaping of the European system. The effects produced by the French revolution and the Napoleonic wars had been too sweeping to last. They had resulted in a reaction equally powerful and thirty years after the Congress of Vienna, its work remained almost intact. It inherited a legacy of strife from the 18th century and its task was to find a settlement of Europe and, as rapidly as possible, to secure peace. It was therefore natural that the spirit of the 18th century and the political conditions of the 18th century should dominate the settlement. In fact so thoroughly had Europe

been settled by its efforts, that outwardly at any rate, it was more immune from the possibility of revolution in 1847 than in 1788, and the extinction of the Republic of Cracow in 1846 seemed to show that the reactionary forces were not weakening. Then with astonishing swiftness, the reaction, which had lasted for thirty years, collapsed. For a whole year Revolution dominated the continent, and though, at the end of that year, reaction was once more to triumph and the old settlement to be restored, yet in the end the peace of Europe was to be completely ruined through its unsolved problems.

We must recognise that what Europe most needed in 1815 was peace, and the Holy Alliance "for the preservation of all things lawfully existing" did at least promise an organisation which would effect universal stability and quiet. Yet its work was increasingly threatened by the emergence of a number of problems of considerable perplexity which the congress had failed to settle or which it had deliberately ignored. The sentiment of nationality aroused during the War of Liberation, was entirely ignored, and the only foundation of the ultimate settlement was the reestablishment of the traditional public law and the old dynastic rights which the Revolution had overthrown. What idea of nationality existed in the minds of British as well as Austrian statesmen was

based on the old legal conception of a 'nation' as the people owing allegiance to a state - a conception which could not possibly form a permanent basis for peace under the circumstances of a new century. But peace could not have been secured by substituting one revolutionary principle for another, and it is futile to blame the statesmen of that age for not realising the strength of the new factor introduced by this sentiment. The settlement was to break down ultimately because it took little or no heed of this and other problems, and it is the special interest of the years under discussion that they witness the inevitable break up of the general stability of Europe, and the outbreak of a Great European War in which all the great nations were more or less actively involved and which inaugurated the centuries storm-period of 1854-1871.

We shall examine in this essay the relations between Great Britain and Russia during these years, and in them we shall find perhaps the most powerful single factor which determined the course of the history of Europe at this time. The most active political ideas of the time were three: the national principle, the liberal or constitutional principle, and imperial expansion. By the middle of the century, Great Britain and Russia had come to stand out not only as rival Empires but as representatives and champions of

two rival political systems. Yet the differences which held the two countries aloof until the beginning of the 20th century had their origin not only in differences as to political ideas and customs, but in competing Imperial ambitions which impelled the two Empires to continual rivalry not only in Europe but in Asia. In addition Russia had in Nicholas a Tsar who abounded in all the qualities of leadership and the international situation of the time finds its centre round Russia as it did round Germany in the time of Bismarck.

## II. THE FOREIGN POLICY of GREAT BRITAIN.

The foreign policy of Great Britain during these years was directed by Lord Palmerston, Foreign Secretary from 1830 to 1841, and again from 1846 to 1851; Home Secretary from 1852 to 1855 with an all-powerful interest in foreign affairs, and Prime Minister practically from 1855 till his death in 1865. His is the outstanding political figure in Great Britain throughout these years. He was long in the public eye, for his political career went back to the time of the wars with Napoleon, and his intensely vital personality impressed itself strongly on the public imagination both at home and abroad. The legend about him most popular on the Continent is summed up in Metternich's



description of him as "Lord Firebrand". He typifies the British spirit of aggression which sees and even seeks in the troubles of Europe, England's opportunity, as well as the insular spirit of self-satisfaction which loses no chance to dictate to, and interfere with others. That he was "British" there is no doubt and it was just this characteristic which created his great popularity with his own countrymen and gave strength to his expression of their foreign policy. His reputation has suffered in recent years, and the time may yet be coming when a true judgment of his character and policy will be possible.

He was not exactly a great man, but he had certainly the valuable gifts of plain-speaking and commonsense. He was conspicuously deficient in that foresight which accurately sees the forces which are to make the future. But he dealt with the hand of a master with the definite crisis and the affair of the moment. In politics he was a good radical abroad, whatever he might be at home. He sympathised openly with the aspirations for national independence and constitutional liberty at this time astir on the Continent, and he was prepared to give them support so far as this might not be inconsistent with the interests of Great Britain which were to him the last court of appeal. He was in the habit in his despatches of giving directions to foreign potentates as to the best course of action for  
them to

adopt, based on the happy experience of his own land. But it was not his habit to lay down in public general principles as applicable everywhere, at all times, in all circumstances and to be applied at any cost. In a word he was no doctrinaire, and was ready to sacrifice principle to the necessity of the moment.

For the method of his diplomacy he has been universally censured. He was for the most part of this period, on the worst possible terms with the Court, and this is vividly reflected in Queen Victoria's Letters and Sir Theodore Martin's Life of the Prince Consort. Greville's Memoirs leave us the record of a considerable body of the best public opinion on his doings. Subsequent historians, Spencer Walpole and Herbert Paul, with the writers of the great political biographies of Palmerston's opponents, are Gladstonians and temperamentally antipathetic to his character and policy. In truth he was no careful or patient diplomatist. "Palmerston wasted the strength derived by England from the great war by his brag" was Granville's harsh opinion of his activities later (Fitzmaurice, Vol.2, p.63). There is an element of truth in the accusation that his needlessly offensive manner was a weakness to his policy at home and abroad. The Prince Consort considered that the country was in serious danger of the consequences of the hatred borne to him by all the governments of

Europe (Letters, Vol.2, p.243). The Manchester School objected both to his policy and his methods because <sup>they</sup>~~it~~ kept Great Britain on the brink of war with now one and then another of the Powers, and so would necessitate huge armaments and a heavy burden of taxation. Yet <sup>the</sup>irritation <sup>caused by</sup> ~~of~~ his manner should not blind us to the motives and aims of British international policy at this time.

The main principle of his statesmanship lay in the maintenance of the Balance of Power. He thus adhered to the old British tradition in foreign policy that had inspired the struggle against Napoleon. At the same time he had a great deal of sympathy with the newer political ideas which then were in process of reshaping Europe. The attempts to combine these ideas with the traditional policy not unnaturally laid him open to a suspicion of double dealing and to the charge of hypocrisy. His action often seemed based on no discernable principle. How reconcile a policy which encouraged the Italians to throw off the Austrian yoke with one which steadily refused to recognise the claims of Hungary to independence? How reconcile his treatment of Greece, with its assertion in the crudest form of British rights, with the principles he never failed to put before Austria and Naples? This element of seeming political inconsistency has

caused a cloud to rest on Palmerston's character and policy. On the continent it was believed that by encouraging revolutionary movements abroad, England was merely pursuing her supposed traditional policy of stirring up strife on the continent in order to have a free field for her own commercial expansion and profit.

In England public opinion was from the first stirred in favour of oppressed nationalities struggling to be free and Palmerston shared in this sentiment, but he did not allow this to blind him to the greater issue involved in the maintenance of the balance of power, the essential foundation of the treaties of 1815. No political idea was in greater disrepute in some quarters before the war of 1914 than the doctrine of the balance of power. It is therefore worth notice that what we call the balance of power in 19th century ~~in~~ Europe was a distribution of forces, military as well as political, which from end to end of Europe guaranteed, as well as possible, the respect of existing treaties with the territorial arrangements and political rights they established. It was an order of things such that all the powers were compelled to respect each other, and so that one of them could not impose its domination on the others. Nothing like it existed at the opening of the century when Europe was subject to the Empire of France. The Balance of power was thus a political

ideal, realised as much by the rivalry of the powers as by their agreement, and regarded as being in the interests of the community of nations and especially of the independence of the smaller powers. This ideal is the one eternal element in British policy.

It is impossible to find any consistency in British foreign policy simply in terms of either intervention and non intervention in the affairs of the continent. Both policies have in fact been adopted, but only as a means of expressing the national policy and neither has completely dominated it. If we examine British policy for a short period of years it is not impossible to recognise its changes and inconsistencies. But looked at a century at a time, its fundamental consistency is its most striking characteristic. The determined policy of Great Britain through the centuries has consisted in demolishing one after another every government and every people which has tried, or even threatened to try, to treat the rest of Europe as a conquered country. That is in practical action what is meant by the policy of maintaining the balance of power, which John Bright denounced because he found it difficult to recognise in it either consistency of purpose or continuity of action. There has even been about this policy a permanence and power greater than the will of the particular statesmen who from time to time have

directed it, though it has varied under the influence of their views. In a democratic system, of course, the same obvious consistency in foreign affairs, characteristic of an autocracy like Russia, is perhaps not to be found. Statesmen live for the immediate present and sometimes unconsciously have to keep in the background the most vital aspect of the interests involved, in order to carry with them a people ignorant of the great factors in international relationships. Yet it is possible to see in the balance of power one abiding principle which has dominated our foreign policy. England can only be safe even behind the Channel so long as no power arises strong enough to dominate the continent and its coasts, and so be in a position to dispute the mastery of the seas. So Great Britain has been forced into the position of protector of this conservative basis of the European state-system.

It is important to realise that while purely British interests have dictated this policy, the moral authority of Great Britain in Europe has been founded upon it, because in most respects British interests and those of the continental peoples have been identical. It has made Great Britain the champion of the rights of the weaker states and of the sanctity of treaties by which these rights were secured, and while the

pursuit of this policy may at times have involved war, it has been the opposite of a warlike policy. This moral aspect of British policy was to be revealed during these years. It is in its own way, one of the most striking facts in ~~the~~ 19th century history that Great Britain dominated the politics of Europe, worked for nationality and liberty, proclaimed its civis Romanus doctrine, and reaped the honours of Palmerstonian diplomacy with a military force that could never have seriously challenged any considerable power. We can see in this fact partly a splendid game of bluff backed by the prestige gained in the Napoleonic wars, partly an instructive realisation of the value of sea-power, and partly the result of a clever diplomacy which gave the decisive power to the minority vote. But we must add that there was an interlude between the fall of Napoleon and the rise of Bismarck when moral arguments prevailed unsupported by physical force, or, at least, lent force to British influence and intervention. The power of Britain during these years was out of all proportion to its military strength, and was all the stronger as she alone among the nations succeeded in solving her internal problems while her great neighbours were constantly plunged into revolution, or lived in fear of its outbreak.

Canning had summarised the principles of British foreign

policy as "respect for the faith of treaties; respect for the independence of nations; respect for the established line of policy known as the balance of power; and last, but not least, respect for the honour and interests of this country". Palmerston was his political heir. Perhaps the best description of his idea of foreign policy is to be found in a speech he made in 1848 in answer to an unbalanced attack made upon him by Urquhart -

"I hold with respect to alliances that England is a power sufficiently strong to steer her own course and not to tie herself as a necessary appendage to the policy of any other government ..... Therefore I say that it is a narrow policy to suppose that this country or that is to be marked out as the eternal ally or the perpetual enemy of England. We have no eternal allies and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow. And if I might be allowed to express in one sentence the principle which I think ought to guide an English minister, I would adopt the expression of Canning and say that with every British minister the interests of England ought to be the shibboleth of policy". (Ashley, Vol. 2, p.62).

Palmerston saw truly that the statesman is primarily the trustee of the interests of his own country and that he has no moral right to sacrifice those interests to the pursuit of purely ideal ends, though he would be equally false to his trust if he failed to realise that the interests of his country could not in the end be opposed to that of the whole community of nations. Also we must recognise that he cared little for consistency in



comparison with success, or for means in comparison with ends. It may not seem the highest ideal of statesmanship but it is the only statesmanship that accomplishes the practical thing. By it Italian unity was secured by Cavour, not by Mazzini; German unity by Bismarck not by the liberals of the Frankfurt parliament. Men like Palmerston, Cavour, and Bismarck are alike in being of necessity opportunists; they claim to be judged only by results, not by adherence to political principle or policy. It is often difficult to make out from Palmerston's despatches and public utterances any more definite system of action than that his country should get the better of any struggle she might happen to encounter or provoke. So he was at one time the ally of France, at another of Russia, aiding revolution in Italy, discouraging it in the Austrian dominions. He was for the greater part of his career opposed to two men, Metternich and the Tsar Nicholas, who were dominated by rigid systems of political action, who outlived the time when pure conservatism was a benefit to Europe, and were doomed to see the almost complete overthrow of their systems in the stress of revolt and war. In opposition to this doctrinaire view of policy was the foreign statesmanship of Palmerston, bent on making the best of whatever materials were at hand.

But however liberal and humane his ideas might be, however

frankly his sympathies were enlisted on the side of oppressed nationalities, however incautiously he expressed his opinion on the course of events in Europe, he was still the Foreign Secretary, the heir of Canning, and in that capacity his chief duty was the maintenance of the Balance of power. For this reason he realised the value of an understanding with France, which he would have made the basis of an alliance, including a constitutional Spain and Portugal, to be directed against the three absolutist powers - Russia, Prussia and Austria. This was the keynote of his policy and in spite of differences which now and again brought the two countries to the verge of war, the force of circumstances and a common point of view as to broad principles of policy <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ always drawing the countries together. Europe was in fact divided into two camps, the Western powers against the Eastern, a division recognised by the Convention of Münchengrätz in 1833. The alliance with France, the fear of Russian preponderance, and the measures taken by Palmerston in the interests of the foreign policy of this country, make up the diplomatic and international history of this period.

### III. EARLIER RELATIONS of GREAT BRITAIN and RUSSIA.

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It is perhaps not easy to realise the position of Europe from the burning of Moscow to the campaign in the Crimea, and the position which Russia and the Tsar Nicholas occupied in the eyes of other European monarchs and statesmen. The youthful Queen Victoria records in a letter to the King of the Belgians the impression which the great Emperor made when he visited England in 1844. She is much impressed by "this greatest of all earthly potentates", "on whom the weight of his immense power and position weighs heavily and painfully" (Letters, Vol. 2, p.12). The Duke of Argyll, then present, (Autobiography, Vol. i, p.426-428) records that never had he felt himself in the presence of such a king of men. The Tsar was the type of man in a world of action, and his whole expression was that of conscious will, of energy and of power. He was the very ideal of an autocrat over millions of the human race, full of a sense of his great position and of the habitual exercise of its immense and insuperable authority. His predominant expression was that of resolute will, always fearless and sometimes fierce. He was Russia. Other countries might be represented by ministers whose opinions and policy were sure to be followed, but Russia was the Emperor Nicholas. The personal will of the sovereign was paramount and supreme.

Influenced, little by argument and persuasion, he would evidently never yield to menace but would be hardened by it into more defiant determination.

These descriptions are worthy of notice because the personal character of the Tsar was one of the most important factors in the events which followed. The unforgettable part which Russia had played in the closing years of the Napoleonic war invested him with a strength he was far from possessing. This was especially true of those in political society or the army who belonged to a generation which had been accustomed to think of Russia as the greatest of our allies in that great controversy. Yet when the time of questioning came, it was realised that the real Russia was unknown, and her enormous area, her untold millions of fanatically loyal serfs, the incomprehensible Slavonic character - these were the aspects of Russia which began to leap to the mind of the Western peoples. There seemed something non-European about this Empire, and it was believed that the West was threatened sooner or later to fall under the yoke, or at least the direct and irresistible influence of the Tsar. Such opinions only repeated Napoleon's famous prophecy that before the end of the century Europe would be either Cossack or Republican. That this prophecy was still potent may be seen in the fact that when Louis Napoleon

proposed an Anglo-French alliance to Lord Derby's ministry in 1852, he urged that in the then disturbed state of European politics "if his Uncle's prophecy respecting the Cossacks was not physically realised it would be so morally". (Malmesbury: Memoirs, Vol. 1, p.390).

Such ideas though exaggerated found some justification in the existence of the Pan-Slav movement, in which sometimes the racial, sometimes the religious, and sometimes the political element was most prominent, but always all three were in some degree present. It was truly felt that those ties of race, sentiment and tradition which were the links in the chain of Slavonic national unity were far closer and far more subtle and irresistible than those in any other European race. The movement began to shape itself from the time of Peter the Great. Russian nationalism was set up against the evils of Western civilisation, and the racial and religious affinities between Russia and the Christians of Turkey became important in the field of international politics. In this movement there were certain mystical or religious elements bound up with the Orthodox Church and the ancient imperial traditions of Byzantine. The Orthodox Church had preserved the Russian people in its primitive virtue, and Constantinople was destined to be Russian, not only as a climax

to imperial ambitions but as the metropolis of Orthodoxy. Russia, as the head of the Orthodox faith, must demand the great city, indispensable to a Slav Federation, not only as a city of the past, but as containing in Santa Sofia the symbol of the common Eastern Christianity. Such ideas were of course exploited by Peter and his successors for political ends, and in aid of the imperial policy of territorial expansion, with the result that there grew up a Russian policy which enforced a ruthless system of autocracy and repression at home, supported extreme reaction in Europe, and at the same time championed the oppressed races of the Balkan peninsula. It was this combination of the religions, with the political, imperial, and even commercial ambitions in this movement which made it all-powerful with the people of Russia, but at the same time made it an object of increasing suspicion to the Western peoples now that greater knowledge of the country, its people, and its religion, became widespread with the advance of the century.

The personal character of Nicholas is also of importance because the British tradition of general friendliness with Russia suffered a great check with his accession. Till the end of the 18th century this country had manifested no ill feeling toward the remarkable progress of Russia, and had even welcomed it,

especially commercially, as an exporter of raw materials and a considerable importer of English goods. The first visit of a Tsar of Muscovy to this land in the person of Peter the Great in 1697 is vividly described by Macaulay (Ch.23). His mingled glory and squalor, his queer occupations and the rumour of his grandiose designs excited curiosity but nothing more. England had as yet nothing to hope or fear from his vast Empire. The elder Pitt was a strong advocate of a Russian alliance. He described himself as "altogether a Russian". Fox was in power when Catherine annexed the Crimea, and declared that Russia was the power in Europe with whom the cultivation of friendship, commercial and political, was most natural and of the greatest consequence to this country. The younger Pitt was the first English statesman to appreciate the real and intimate concern of Great Britain in the affairs of the Near East and to perceive that those interests might be jeopardised by the expected ultimate accession of Russia to Constantinople. In 1790, he got the Cabinet to agree to the sending of an ultimatum demanding the surrender of Oczakov, but the debate, even in a subservient Parliament, showed that public opinion was not prepared for a reversal of the traditional policy, and the whole incident is now only memorable as giving a date for the first symptom of those changes

of national feeling which were to lead to war. The increasing weakness of the Turkish Empire, and the continued advance of Russia still seemed without significance to the majority of English statesmen. The Napoleonic wars secured this point of view for at least another generation, and with the exception of a short interval under the Tsar Paul in 1800, cordial relations continued till 1806. The fate of Turkey exercised the mind of Alexander I, and in 1804 he enlarged to Pitt on the grievances of the subject races, and suggested for the first time that Great Britain <sup>and Russia</sup> should concert beforehand in the measures to be taken in the event of the break up of the Turkish Empire. The Compact ~~at~~ Tilsit in 1807 indicated the adoption of an anti-British policy, but this ended in 1812, and the last years of the great War of Liberation were notable for the most cordial British relations with the greatest of the allied sovereigns on the continent.

But this co-operation was destined to end with the divergence of policy with regard to the operations of the Holy Alliance, and particularly with the end of all semblance of liberalism on the death of Alexander, and the accession of his brother, the supreme representative of the old Muscovite spirit. Nicholas was par-excellence the autocratic Tsar, devoid of all leanings towards liberalism and nationalism; much less "Western" in outlook than



Alexander, and champion of Orthodoxy and Reaction. Yet by 1848, all that had happened in Europe had taken place without an outward break in our friendship with Russia, and in 1844 the Tsar was received in this country as the embodiment of a power with which we had long been in close and honourable alliance.

The Russian Diplomatic Study on the causes of the Crimean War - "Gorchakov's political legacy" - has a suggestive chapter on the causes of the gradual destruction of the traditional friendship of the two countries between 1815 and 1850. It is there described as due to the successive departures from the treaty of 1815 proposed by France and supported by Great Britain, but systematically opposed by Russia, thus deserted by her natural ally. To the Russians, the arrangement of 1815 possessed not only a political but a military character. It was a strategic combination against France in which Austria was the advance guard in Italy and Prussia on the Rhine, while Russia was the rearguard to maintain the status quo in the East. The first blow at the settlement was struck in the foundation of the Belgian monarchy, succeeded by the sympathy popularly offered to the Polish insurrectionists, and by increasing divergence on the Eastern Question after the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi in 1833, all of which led to an entente cordiale with France with the object of isolating Russia. On the other hand the Russian

Tsar was convinced of the vital importance of maintaining the provisions of the treaties, and did what he could to reunite the conflicting interests of the two countries, both in the negotiations of 1840, and by his visit in 1844, which showed that he realised that the growing enmity was due to the state of things in the East as well as in Central Asia.

There is a great deal of truth in this description of the trend of British policy in the 19th century as based on an unwillingness to bind this country to old and obsolete conditions, on a reversal of our earlier attitude to France, and marked by a divergence in Eastern policy since 1833. In the history of British foreign policy as directed by Palmerston the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi (Annual Register 1854, p.475) is all important. Russia had intervened to save the Sultan, but the price paid was heavy, and went further than any other treaty towards subjecting Turkey to Russia by practically placing the Ottoman Empire under her military protectorship in return for the simple closing of the Dardanelles to the ships of war of any other power but Russia, which was to have a free passage for her warships through the straits (Separate Article). In effect this treaty made Russia a naval power in the Mediterranean, securing to her a great <sup>many</sup> ~~deal~~ of those strategic advantages which made her possession of Constantinople feared. It also broke up the "ancient rule of the Ottoman

Empire" which closed the Straits to all foreign vessels in time of war, and in view of the unceasing advances of the Russian Empire on the shores of the Black Sea, and the increasing naval armaments she maintained there, would have given her in time of war an immense advantage. The object of the negotiations was to induce the Sultan to trust absolutely in the support of Russia, and to neutralise British and French influence by making it clear that the sole object of the Russian intervention was to preserve the Ottoman Empire.

This was the master stroke of Russian diplomacy, and marks her greatest advance, but it had as its result that it revealed the trend of Russian policy as resolved on securing her interests in Turkey, if not by territorial absorption, then by maintaining <sup>the Sultan</sup> ~~it~~ in practical vassalage. From this time Palmerston was definitely and decidedly anti-Russian in policy. He joined with the French government in a vigorous protest against the proposed violation of the neutrality of the straits, and when the next crisis in the Turkish Empire occurred, he arranged a joint intervention of the Powers of Europe, and the provisions of 1833 were never put into force.

British fears as to the mind of Russia were increased by the alliance of the three absolutist powers three months later in the Convention of Münchengrätz, and by growing suspicion of

Russian designs on the Indian Empire. Russia under Nicholas was extending in three directions; in the Caucasus, in Central Asia and in the Far East. Hitherto its vast extent had been marked off by clearly defined barriers. The Caucasus between Russia and the Turkish and Persian Empires and the deserts of Central Asia made her an isolated and self-contained Empire except on the side of Europe. Now the impulse toward expansion carried her even over these barriers into relations with the weak, isolated, and self-dependent principalities on her borders. The conquest of the Caucasus begun in 1802 brought her into a position where she could increasingly threaten the Turkish Empire from the East as well as the West. Her influence was growing with the Persian Empire. Her advance over the barrier of the K<sup>h</sup>or<sup>h</sup>gh<sup>h</sup>z deserts into Central Asia brought her into direct contact with Afghanistan where Russian agents were at work before 1840, and through their intrigues Great Britain was involved in the Afghan War of 1838-1842. The shadow of the vast power looming over Persia and over the mountain frontiers of India was the direct cause of the advance of the British frontier from the Indus over North West India till at length it rested on the natural positions of the mountain ranges. Perofski's expedition to Kh<sup>h</sup>éva in 1839 was executed at the same time as the English expedition to Afghanistan. These appearances

of Russia in the Khanates and in Afghanistan were to have considerable importance on the attitude of our government to Russia at this time. The chain of influence is seen in this letter of Lord Palmerston.

"Auckland seems to have taken a just view of the importance of making Afghanistan a British and not a Russian dependency, since the autocrat has determined that it shall not be left to itself. If we succeed in taking the Afghans under our protection ..... we shall regain our ascendancy in Persia. But British ascendancy in Persia gives security on the eastward to Turkey and tends to make the Sultan more independent and to place the Dardanelles more securely out of the grasp of Nicholas. Again our baffling on so large a scale the intrigues and attempts of Russia cannot fail to add greatly to the moral weight and political influence of England and to help us in many political questions." Ashley, Vol.I, 396, 398.

Russian advance in the Far East in this connection is only important in that the vast Empire of the Tsar, though thinly populated, now formed by far the most vast and continuous area ever yet under single rule and the thought of this colossal fabric of power was not ~~to be~~ without ~~its~~ influence on the apprehensions of the West.

But Nicholas had not lost hope of coming to an understanding with Great Britain and watched attentively the relations between that country and France which from 1834 became steadily worse, owing to the vehement assertion of French claims to supreme influence in the Mediterranean and the near East by Thiers. He

indicated his intention of not seeking for the renewal of the 1833 Treaty and came to an understanding with Great Britain, Prussia and Austria, when the Turkish Empire in 1839 was on the point of collapsing before the attacks of Mehemet Ali, supported by France. In the negotiations which followed, Palmerston's diplomacy obtained a decisive victory which once more recognised the "ancient rule of the Ottoman Empire" that the straits should be closed to the warships of all nations, and required the Sultan to enforce it. France in the end proved glad to enter what proved to be a Concert of Europe, and Russia no longer attempted to control the Dardanelles as an advanced Russian port. The Bosphorus and Dardanelles were to be closed to foreign ships of war when the port was at peace: "So long as the Porte is at peace, His Highness will admit no Foreign ship of war into the said Straits" (Convention of the Straits July 13, 1841 between the Five Powers and Turkey; Hertslet Vol. 2, 193).

The negotiations of 1841 gave permanent expression to a new and united policy regarding the affairs of the East of Europe - that the fate of the Turkish Empire was a matter of European concern and that all the powers were to acknowledge it to be the subject of mutual consultation, and, if need be, of collective action. The diplomatic form of this principle was now stated

for the first time as "the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire". Of course neither integrity ~~nor~~ independence were considered in 1840, ~~any~~ more than in 1829. But the expression meant that the Turk could only exist, even nominally, on condition of the European Powers agreeing to abstain from separate attacks, and acknowledging a common obligation. This was the greatest triumph of Palmerston's career at the Foreign Office, approved by all parties <sup>and by Lord</sup> ~~including~~ Aberdeen, and destined to be all important as laying down the maxim of policy which Great Britain was to follow when next the Eastern Question was raised.

Palmerston had cleverly used the dispute with France, which brought us to the verge of war, to secure the tearing up of the 1833 Treaty. He followed the principle which Canning had laid down in the case of the Greek insurrection, that Russia must not be permitted to regard the affairs of the East as her own exclusive concern. In doing so, he followed the abortive policy of the younger Pitt in realising that Great Britain was equally interested in the fate of the Ottoman Empire to which Egypt belonged. "Who is master of Egypt is master of India" was Napoleon's saying, and Egypt was a portion of the Ottoman Empire. Russian policy toward that Empire had hitherto been one of unbroken aggression, which could only end, either in its political annihilation, or its preservation as a practical dependency of

Russia. The latter alternative was the policy of 1833, and its complete failure to win the approval or even the countenance of Europe may have disposed the Tsar to acquiesce in Palmerston's victory of 1840. But was this an indication that the Tsar intended to revert to the older and more drastic policy? At least we can say that one thing he had learnt<sup>ed</sup> was that if Russia was to be successful in finding a satisfactory solution of the Eastern Question, she must come to some agreement with England.

For this purpose the Tsar made his unexpected and uninvited (Martin, Vol. 1, 213) visit to the Queen in 1844 where he won a great personal success. Palmerston was no longer Foreign Secretary, and to his successor Lord Aberdeen, to the Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel, and to the Prince Consort he opened his mind freely on the Eastern Question. He was ready to refrain from all advance into the Khanate's of Central Asia and to leave them as a neutral zone between the possessions of Russia and the Indian Empire. The views he expressed in conversation he was at pains to embody in a written memorandum which his Chancellor, Nesselrode, sent to our government afterwards, and which was received without comment. It is given in Annual Register 1854, p.482. The gist of it was that the maintenance of Turkey in territory and independence



is a great object of European policy; that, to preserve it, the powers of Europe should abstain from demands made on it in their selfish interest, or in an attitude of exclusive dictation; that all the powers should urge on the Porte the duty of conciliating its Christian subjects and should use all their influence to keep those subjects to their allegiance; that in the event of any unforeseen calamity befalling the Turkish Empire, Russia and Great Britain should agree together as to the course that should be pursued.

Nothing could be more innocuous, reasonable, or friendly, and we must give the Tsar credit for a frank attempt to find a solution to a problem hitherto insoluble. The Queen's opinion was that he was perhaps too frank (Letters, Vol. 2, p.15), and his desire that Great Britain and Russia should agree together was nine years later to take the form that they should divide the Turkish dominions between them. Was he in 1844 preparing the way for a course that was a direct reversal of the policy both countries had agreed on in 1841? We cannot tell, but he was temperamentally subject to the dominance of fixed ideas one of which was that Turkey was in a moribund state and must soon fall to pieces. As to this the members of the English government did not agree with him, and if he came over with the hope of securing their concurrence

in some definite scheme in the event of a Turkish catastrophe, he signally failed. But another of his fixed ideas was that such conversations and personal understandings were suitable forms of diplomatic activity, and it is not unlikely that he deceived himself on this subject. There can be no doubt that the personal relations established by the Tsar with English statesmen and particularly with Lord Aberdeen predisposed him to anticipate with excessive confidence a peaceful issue to any difficulties that might arise. The Tsar had drawn the erroneous inference from his conversations that under no circumstances, so long as Aberdeen controlled its destinies, would Great Britain use armed force against him. And Lord Aberdeen, Foreign Minister in 1844, was Prime Minister in 1852 when the inevitable Eastern Question was next raised. But it was Palmerston and not Aberdeen who most truly represented the national attitude to Russia and whose suspicions had not been removed. For Palmerston never saw the Tsar.

Finally we may note in this summary of British relations with Russia in the first half of the century, that in 1848 the situation was definitely to change for the worse. Hitherto fear of Russia had been a politician's fear of Russian aggrandisement, directed against Turkey in particular, and perhaps against the borderlands of our Eastern Empire. But from 1848 a situation was to arise which, while endorsing and underlining, all these suspicions

as to the Tsar's ultimate aims, was to be embittered by the rise of the underlying antipathy between the spirit of the two peoples. The great events of 1848 did not occur in England nor did the English people have any immediate concern in them. But Europe was sufficiently a unity for the events of this and the succeeding years to be all-important in the development of national feelings.

It was the Tsar's attitude as "the sword drawn against revolution" that caused popular animus against him to be added to the long-standing suspicion of his plans in the East of Europe. The reaction that he led was so powerful as to provoke the liberal sentiment of Europe to greater activity which was only to end when Europe was freed from the shadow of absolutism. From 1848 we see the Tsar's greatest personal triumph and predominance in Europe, but we find his relationship with Great Britain so much altered for the worse, that when the old question once more arose, Palmerston found himself with the solid backing of the whole British nation.

#### IV. THE RUSSIANS IN THE PRINCIPALITIES.

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The most significant facts in the history of the nineteenth century Europe were connected with the conversion of absolute monarchies to constitutionalism, and the awakening of latent nationalities to consciousness and unity. In this double process the year 1848 is important as marking a new beginning, and it witnessed an explosion of political violence unknown since Waterloo which resulted, in the end, in the destruction of the treaties of 1815. In this year Liberalism challenged the rival spirit in its strongholds in Italy, in Germany, even in Austria, while the national spirit which had been fostered by the Napoleonic strife made a great attempt to assert itself.

The two countries which least felt the effects of the struggles of this year were Great Britain and Russia, for in April the Chartist demonstration had ended tamely and in Russia the Tsar was immediately on his guard. He wrote at once to Queen Victoria pointing out that Great Britain and Russia alone remained standing and that it would be their united task to save the world (Letters, Vol. II, p. 166). The credit for this state of things the Whig leaders were disposed to give to the moderate and constitutional government which Great Britain enjoyed. Such was the opinion of

Lord John Russell (Letters, Vol.II, p.170).

Even before the outbreak in France, Palmerston had written to Lord Ponsonby, our Ambassador at Vienna, "If Metternich takes upon himself the task of regulating by force of arms the internal affairs of the Italian states there will infallibly be war, and it will be a war of principles which beginning in Italy will spread over all Europe ----- in that war England and Austria will certainly not be on the same side." (Ashley, Vol.II, p.63).

But in Russia the same result was credited to the opposite principle. Although the French Government speaking through Lamartine's famous manifesto disclaimed all aggressive intentions, it was the view of Nicholas that the mere existence of a republic in France would bring the whole European system to ruin. When Europe was in chaos Russia remained the sole armed force at the service of the principles of the Holy Alliance. The role of soldier of the Counter-Revolution the Tsar accepted without hesitation. At home he took the most vigorous measures to prevent the propagation of liberal ideas. In foreign affairs he resolved to maintain the status quo, political and territorial, of 1815. He at once tried to secure that Prussia should refuse to recognise the Revolutionary Government and concentrate a strong army on the Rhine. But this plan of taking the place of his brother Alexander at the head

of the leagued armies of Europe against France had to be given up when revolution broke out in March in Berlin. Soon he was to see his hereditary allies disappear or weaken, and the attempt made to create in their place states which would have been his declared enemies. He was thus concerned for his own sphere of influence, and he actively interfered in two places - in the Danubian Principalities, and in Hungary. In each case his interference was to bring him before the end into a contest with the government and people of Great Britain.

The Revolutionary spirit was active in the two principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia which at this time were governed by the "règlement organique" drawn up in consequence of the provisions of the Treaty of Adrianople and in operation since 1831. It involved the perpetual right of Russian interference. Russia's consent was necessary for the deposition or resignation of the Hospodars or Princes, and Russian Consuls had the right of exerting their influence in internal affairs. The power of the hospodar was balanced by the power of the boyars or nobles, for there was elected an assembly of nobles with the privilege of bringing complaints against him to the suzerain (the Sultan), or to the protecting power (Russia) while the Prince could appeal to these two Imperial guardians of his principality against the assembly.

Russia was thus not lacking in grounds for interference and for the right of protection. The sole remaining ties between the Sultan and the principalities were the investiture of their princes, and the payment of tribute, while it was the claim of Russia that no change could be made in the organic statute without her consent as well as that of Turkey. In addition to this special right in the Principalities, Russia claimed a general right to protect Christians in Turkey.

When the revolutionary movement broke out in 1848, George Bibescu was Prince of Wallachia, and Michael Sturdza, Prince of Moldavia. Both were on bad terms with the nobility who accordingly found their support in the activities of the Russian Consul. It was against this constant interference of this foreign power in their affairs that the Balkan ~~ed~~ edition of the revolution was specially directed, for the national spirit of the country had immensely developed since the authorization of the organic statute in 1831. The glories of the past had been taught in Colleges and Schools, and a generation had been prepared for its vigorous assertion. So when the revolution passed over Europe, it did not stop at the Carpathians.

In Moldavia the revolution broke out on April 8th and was suppressed by the Prince without the aid which Russia was eager to

offer, for an attack was made on the Organic Statute and the Russian protectorate, and on behalf of a movement to unite the Principalities. But in Wallachia on June 23rd, a popular rising took place in Bucharest, the troops refused to act, and the Prince was forced to sign a constitution which annulled the Organic Statute, granted universal suffrage, and declared the eligibility of all Wallachians for the office of Hospodar. The Russian consul successfully protested and the Prince was forced to leave the country. The provisional government was soon overwhelmed with difficulties, and the Russian government claimed that, according to the Treaty of Adrianople, it was its duty to maintain order in the Principalities if occasion should arise. Thus the immediate consequence of the Bucharest rising was the sending of an invitation by Russia to the Sultan proposing a joint occupation by Russian and Turkish troops. The Turks agreed to what proved a dangerous step, and occupied Wallachia establishing a government by a Turkish Commissioner. The Russian government next demanded a judicial enquiry into the circumstances of the rising in which a Russian general should assist the Turkish commissioner. The demand led to an outburst of popular feeling in which the Organic Statute was publicly burnt before the Russian consulate, and the Russians took advantage of this and other disturbances to threaten



to occupy the principalities.

In this strait, the Turkish ministers appealed for advice to the British ambassador to the Porte, Sir Stratford Canning, ~~their~~ taking up his fifth residence at Constantinople. By his force of character, and commanding presence he had acquired immense personal influence over the feeble mind of the Sultan, and was named "the Great Elchi" - the Ambassador par éminence. He was the most distinguished envoy ever employed in the British diplomatic service, belonging to the older school when communications from the Home Government were long in reaching their destination, and when ambassadors necessarily took a great deal of responsibility on themselves. Personally he was noble, stately and dignified, implicitly trusted by the Turks, always honourable and straightforward. Tennyson was later to honour him as the "Voice of England in the East" and the title was well deserved.

We shall find that the personality of the great ambassador was to be an important factor in the course of later events, and we may note here that he entered on his work at the embassy with two main convictions - the one that it was to the interest of Great Britain to watch with a jealous eye every scheme of Russia; the other that it was his duty to urge and even to compel the Porte to carry out internal reforms and to take its place among the civilised

powers of Europe. This was his own policy, which he was ready to pursue undisturbed and uncontrolled by the home government, and the very strength of his character was more than once to be a serious embarrassment to the politicians in London. It so happened that this was the first time that the great diplomatist found himself in complete antagonism to Russia, for at his first residence France had been the enemy and Russia the ally, and at his second England, France and Russia were united on the question of Greece. Nicholas never did a worse thing for himself than when he refused to accept Canning as British ambassador to Russia soon after his accession, but it so chanced that Canning had been absent from Constantinople on the occasion of Russia's greatest advances in 1828 and 1833. From 1842 Great Britain's influence predominated at the Porte, where her ambassador exercised undisputed sway till 1858.

In the episode of the Principalities and his defence of Turkey's interests, we shall find a foretaste of the Canning policy which was to end at Sebastopol, for he saw in the needless invasion of the Principalities one more step in the road which everyone believed led to Constantinople. The sequel of the revolutionary rising in Bucharest was to bring the Eastern Question into prominence for the first time since its settlement by a united Europe in 1841.

The Eastern Question is in brief the series of problems created by the appearance and disappearance of the Turkish Empire in Europe. Since Suleman the Turk had gained a footing in Europe in 1356 such a question had existed. But till the loss of Budapest in 1686, the Turk was an aggressive force in Europe, and but for the efforts of Austria would have carried his conquests beyond the Balkans, whose populations he had successfully enslaved. With the 18th century Turkey was an active menace no longer, and the Treaty of Carlowitz (1699) restored nearly the whole of Hungary and Transylvania to Christian rule. The Treaties of Passarovitz (1718) and Belgrade (1739) drove her beyond the Carpathians and the Save, which still in the middle of the 19th century constituted her northern frontier. But to the North East she lost still more territory, for the treaty of Jassy (1792) advanced the Russian frontier at her expense from the Bug to the Dniester, the Treaty of Bucharest (1812) advanced it to the <sup>Pr</sup>South and over Bessarabia to the Kilia (north) mouth of the Danube, while the whole delta became Russian at the treaty of Adrianople in 1828. Yet in spite of these losses Turkey in 1848 was one of the largest European states.

The next cession of territory might be expected to be that of the Principalities, owing to the military preponderance of Russia on the borders, and to the interest which since the days of Peter

the Great, the Tsars had always taken in the inhabitants. That interest was not so much racial, because the majority were Roumanians and not Slavs, as geographical and ecclesiastical, and when the Russian Empire began to extend its sway along the coasts of the Black Sea a difficult situation was created, for the geographical formation, of the principalities, bounded by the Danube and its great tributaries, and in a crescent round the Austrian Empire, as well as on the direct road to Constantinople, suggested strategical possibilities of great significance. Russia occupied the principalities with her armies during the war with Turkey in 1736 and again in 1774, restoring them according to the provisions of the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainardji only on condition of better government and general toleration for the Christian religion. The Russian consulate was then first established in both the capitals and a policy of peaceful penetration begun. When they were not in fact under direct Russian military occupation, a semi-protectorate by Russia, such as was secured in the Organic Statute was continued.

The fear of the Turkish government that serious intentions were behind the Russian proposals for their pacification in 1848 had therefore some justification, and those fears were shared by Canning. His advice to the Porte was to treat the Wallachians not as rebels but as constitutional reformers, and that therefore the

despatch of an army was not necessary. The Turkish government however sent a force of 4,000 men to accompany their commissioner into Wallachia, with the result that an equal number of Russians entered Moldavia from the North. As the hereditary protector of the oppressed Christians under Turkish rule, the Tsar had no intention of leaving the Turk to act by himself.

Canning's advice even now was to adopt mild measures, to grant amnesties, to liberalise the constitution, but above all to get rid of the Russian troops as soon as possible. (Lane-Poole, Vol. II, p.78). But the Tsar's intentions were quite otherwise and he demanded the severest punishment of the revolutionary leaders, the repudiation of all free institutions, and a prolonged joint occupation to secure law and order. Here, in epitome, was arising the old contest between the principles of the Holy Alliance and the liberal policy of the Cannings. It cannot be pretended that Canning's influence, indicating the interference of Great Britain in an affair which the Tsar considered concerned no one but himself and the Sultan, was welcome.

Canning's task, as he himself described it in a letter to Palmerston of the same date, was:-

"to keep the peace and to respect the treaties on one side and to sustain the Porte's courage and to lay the foundation for real improvement in Wallachia."  
(Lane-Poole. Vol. 2,180).

He had the support of General Aupick, the French minister at Constantinople, and already there was talk of calling up the British fleet and appealing to the Powers. Yet he advised the Porte not to risk a quarrel with Russia so long as it could be avoided without loss or dishonour. This was in keeping with Palmerston's policy not to risk a war between Russia and Turkey while both Austria and France were incapacitated by internal disputes from active participation.

Nevertheless by the time winter came on Russia had 30,000 men in the Principalities, and the Tsar's attitude became more ~~difficult~~<sup>menacing</sup> as he realised an unexpected opposition to his wishes at the court of the Sultan. He had practically proposed a working alliance, and his proposition had not been accepted; the joint occupation of the Principalities had been refused, and his intention to stamp out revolution there by military measures had been frustrated. He now began to realise the existence of the unwelcome influence of the British ambassador.

There is every evidence that at this time the Turk was in mortal fear of a Russian advance, and, to insure against it, was pressing Canning to negotiate a defensive alliance with Great Britain at the very moment when the Turkish alliance was being sought by Russia. Even as early as July 1st, Canning was writing

confidentially to Palmerston, bringing this proposal forward with his own personal approval.

"Rifaat Pasha has requested me with much earnestness to inform your lordship how anxiously the Porte desires to draw more closely than ever those ties of confidence and cordiality which subsist between the Sultan's government and that of her Majesty ..... He remarked that in these times the Porte was exposed to much danger, and that he trusted the British government would be prepared to countenance, uphold and assist her in the hour of need .. .... It is evident that in the present unsettled state of Europe the Sultan looks upon England as his sheet-anchor in the event of the storm extending to his dominions .... Your lordship will, I hope, think it worth while to consider this overture vague as it is in terms, and to make me acquainted with your sentiments respecting it."  
(Lane-Poole, Vol. II, p.183).

Canning was no doubt disappointed that Palmerston declined to adopt a definite step of this nature, though he urged that every step should be taken to keep Turkey firm in the English interest. What was to be feared was the acquisition of an exclusive influence in the Principalities, for in all his acts Nicholas aimed at a perfect equality with the Sultan. It needed all the ambassador's efforts to keep the Sultan from going over to the Tsar. On December 4th he writes to Palmerston:-

"In order to secure any permanent advantage from the counsels hitherto given to the Porte, a greater confidence must be established in the determination of friendly powers and particularly of Great Britain to throw their moral weight into the scale, and to place an effectual restraint on the undue pretensions of Russia, striving for objects exclusively her own and by a forced interpretation of the treaties with the Porte, to substitute the rights of protection for the obligation of a guarantee."  
(Lane-Poole. Vol.II, 183).

It soon became evident that an early evacuation could not be expected for the Tsar was anxiously watching the struggle between Austria and Hungary, and only waiting his chance to intervene.

In January 1849 Russia proposed a seven years occupation of the Principalities and we hear first of a convention round which the diplomatic struggle was now to centre. A further embitterment was created at the end of the month when the Porte was requested to permit the passage of Russian troops into Transylvania to act against the Hungarians. In defiance of the Porte's prohibition, the Russians marched against the Hungarian forces and were defeated. On February 19th, Canning made yet another attempt to win Lord Palmerston to his active policy.

"The Turk must prepare for the worst and 'England must finally make up her mind'. The time has come for adopting a definite and decisive course of policy with respect to this country viewed as to its relations with Russia. A timely and effective demonstration of support, especially if concerted with France, might be expected to deter the Russian Cabinet from proceeding to extreme measures, or should it fall short in that respect, to save the Porte from being overwhelmed in a single and unequal struggle." (Lane-Poole, Vol. II, p184).

Canning was prepared at this point to anticipate war on the Turkish side, or as an offset to the Russian occupation, the usual countermove - the movement of the Mediterranean squadron as a naval demonstration to give support to the Turkish government.



He wrote at this point to Lord Palmerston:-

"It requires no spirit of prophecy to foresee whither an unchecked excursion over a field so fertile in pretexts and opportunities for aggression will ultimately lead .... The moment is arrived when general understandings and general assurances must be followed up with positive declarations and pledges not to be mistaken of sympathy and eventual support." (Lane-Poole, Vol.II, p.185)

Rejecting the plan of a naval demonstration, Palmerston decided on a protest against the necessity of occupying the Principalities. He believed that a permanent occupation was not intended and that the Tsar sought only to secure a base for ultimate assistance to be given to Austria. In the debate in the House of Commons on March 22nd 1849 he declared in the plainest terms that "he was confident that the Russian government had no intention of making a permanent encroachment on the Turkish Empire". He realised that it was useless to expect an evacuation till the struggle in Hungary could be brought to a successful termination, and we shall see later that he had determined on a policy of no protest against Russian intervention in that struggle, in the interests of the balance of power. Nor did he feel any great anxiety as to the permanent acquiescence of Austria in Russian preponderance on the Danube (see a letter to Lord John Russell of April 9th in Ashley, Vol.II p.94). It was obvious that the same strategic advantage which the geographical position of the Principalities

gave to a Russian invasion of Hungary would be equally potent in case of a Russian march on Vienna.

But at this point it was hardly to be expected that the Tsar would readily surrender his base of operations. He was in so awkward a position that he sent a special envoy - Colonel Grabbe - to bring the Sultan to terms. Once more he disclaimed all territorial ambitions, but his representative firmly declared that no one had a right to interfere between the Tsar and the Sultan in this dispute. Russian intrigue made every effort to discredit the influence of the British minister. The Sultan was the weakest of monarchs. A large army was already within his frontiers. England was far away, and Canning could not offer any promise of material support in case of a definite rupture between Russia and the Porte. So after a lengthy struggle during the month of April 1849 the Tsar was successful in carrying most of his demands through the "Act of Balta-Liman" (Annual Register 1854, p.476). Hospodars were to be nominated for seven years only, not for life as before, the assembly of elected nobles was suspended, and a joint occupation till complete pacification was secured. Canning's mortification was great and he could only prophesy fresh complications on the Danube (See his Memorandum in Lane-Poole, Vol.II, p.186), and urge the Porte to continue all

preparations for self defence, in view of the fact that the Principalities in spite of expectations to the contrary were still being used for offensive operations against the Hungarians, whose cause was universally popular in the whole of the Turkish Empire, among Christian and Mahomedan alike. The two great Pashas Reshid and Ali were openly on this side and this sympathy was to have important developments in the next stage of the conflict.

The incident of the occupation of the Principalities shows that the beginning of the struggle between Great Britain and Russia had its origin in a question that arose twelve months before the Russian intervention in Hungary. It reveals the character of our ambassador at Constantinople, and illustrates both the policy which Palmerston was adopting toward the Hungarian revolution, and the methods adopted by the Tsar as the apostle of reaction. The sole result of the peaceable Wallachian revolutionary movement was the withdrawal of the important liberties conceded by the treaty of Adrianople. The efforts of the Roumanians to escape the influence and interference of Russia only ended in the increase of her means of legal action. It was this victory of the Tsar over the Sultan which encouraged Canning and others to see in every move of the Tsar a new progress in the slow conquest of the Balkans and a new step forward on the patient and continued march to

Constantinople. It is worthy of notice that Russia was in no hurry to execute the new Act as far as the military occupation was concerned, which lasted till April 1851. In two years more Russia was again in occupation of the Principalities.'

## V. THE RUSSIAN INTERVENTION IN HUNGARY.

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Meanwhile the revolution of 1848 had been raging in the Austrian Empire with unparalleled force. The crisis was complicated by the fact that the subjects of that Empire formed the most diverse population of any European State. The non-Slavonic portion itself contained four "nationalities"; German, Italian, Roumanian and Magyar, while the Slavonic element was still more subdivided. Even among the opponents of Austrian rule there was no pretence at even a sympathy of feeling, while unity of action, which would have been decisive in the struggle, was made impossible by the divergent and self-centred ambitions of Magyar-Hungary.

The Crown of Hungary, with its dependencies Transylvania and Croatia, had been added to that of the Hapsburgs in 1526. Two centuries of struggle had freed them from the Turkish menace and now a spirit arose which stirred the Magyars to challenge German Austria. After 1830 a Liberal and National movement was instituted demanding a Hungarian administration, the meeting of the Diet in their own capital Pest, and the use of Magyar as the official language. Before 1848 nationalism had steadily gathered force under the inspiration of a remarkable literary revival, and

of brilliant political leaders of whom Kossuth, a lawyer member of the Diet, was an orator of surpassing power.

The problem of Hungary was complicated by its relations with her Slav neighbours, and when on the outbreak of the Paris Revolution, Kossuth was successful in demanding the creation of a Hungarian ministry, the nationalist movement was captured by a violent form of jingoism which bitterly resented the national claims of all the neighbouring races and proclaimed its determination to complete the Magyarisation of the whole of Hungary. The violent passions aroused on all sides by this frenzied propaganda were directly responsible for the way in which the revolution of 1848 developed in Hungary into a fierce racial war, ringing the Magyars round in a fence created by hostile nationalities in arms. While they could truly claim to represent the Cause of constitutional liberty and progress, their folly in restricting such privileges to their own race rallied all their neighbours to the side of the dynasty. At first the practical dissolution of the Austrian Empire led to an almost complete surrender to the Hungarian demands, and by July their own assembly was elected. But a Slav deputation which came to congratulate Kossuth was told bluntly that nothing but force could gain for their race equality of treatment with the Magyars. When the new

Emperor resolved to coerce Hungary, whose assembly refused to recognise him, he found his first weapon in the Slavs of Croatia.

Yet for the greater part of 1848, and the first six months of 1849, the Hungarians were on the whole conspicuously successful, and by May they were for the second time in possession of their capital and advancing on Vienna. Already, in April, the Hungarian diet had declared the forfeiture of all legal rights over Hungary of the House of Hapsburg-Lorraine. The whole dynasty was foresworn, the tie with Austria denounced, and a republic formed with Kossuth as the Governor-President of what was claimed to be a free and independent European state (see text of the Hungarian decree in Annual Register 1849, p.331). Hungary's action was a challenge to every legitimate monarchy in Europe and the subject of special alarm to the Tsar. The helpless condition of Austria he would not tolerate, and in a manifesto of April 27th he explained the grounds of his intervention. He asserted that Polish emigrants, his subjects, forming whole army-corps were fighting in the Hungarian ranks under Bem and Dembinski, turning the revolution into a general Polish insurrection and encouraging the Moldavians and Wallachians in their resistance. The Austrian government had "formally requested" the Tsar to assist in the repression of the rebellion, and he had consented "lest the reaction

of revolutions near him should tend to endanger his own safety, or the political equilibrium of the frontiers of his Empire".

(Text in Annual Register 1849, p.334).

Undoubtedly if Hungary succeeded in the rebellion, it would not have been the only republic on the frontiers of the great Conservative Empire, and the disruption of the Polish kingdom might be expected. Yet if this was the official reason given for the intervention there were other motives which urged the Tsar to save the Austrian monarchy. Not the least was that grandiose imperial generosity allied to a rather theatrical vanity, that was one of the autocrat's chief characteristics. He had made for himself the position of head of the cause of Authority, the guardian of the monarchical and conservative spirit in Europe. He was in his own way an idealist, and in addition, as we shall see later, it was always one of his tendencies to regard the affairs of nations as personal matters between reigning houses and no one else. He therefore set on foot a large army, and raised no question<sub>q</sub> of any demand for repayment, even in the concerns of the Turkish Empire, where Austria had been and might be again Russia's most considerable competitor. Perhaps, in addition he was minded to show the Slavs of the Austrian Empire as well as those of the Balkans to whom they had to look for protection in the hour of need.



So in June the Russian army under Paskievitch entered Hungary through Galicia, and another under Lüdgers through Transylvania, while General Haynau led the Austrians. This was the "Hyena of Brescia", a man justly odious for his barbarous cruelty, whose very appointment showed the unmistakable temper of the Austrian government. The Hungarians could not stand against the combined attacks of the two Empires, and their hopes were ended with the surrender of Gorgëi and their army on August 13th, and the capture of the fortress of Komorn on October 1st. The revolutionary period in the Austrian Empire was at an end.

But the sympathy of the people of this country was unmistakably and generally on the side of the Hungarians, as may be seen in the contemporary Reviews and in the debates in the Houses of Parliament. The spectacle of a people defending its ancestral rights, and enlarged liberties was naturally of great interest to a nation that had won its privileges by force of successful arms. In addition the valour of the Hungarians raised hopes doomed to failure. A sonnet of Matthew Arnold "To the Hungarian Nation 1848", after celebrating the lack of heroism in Spain, England, France, America and Germany, ends with this fervent apostrophe:-

"Hungarians! Save the world! Renew the stories  
Of men who against hope repelled the chain  
And make the world's dead spirit leap again!"

As July passed and the Magyars with real heroism struggled against two Empires, the genuine British hatred of autocracy and the sympathy with the weaker cause began to assert itself. To Englishmen the struggle could not be a mere national affair. It was one of principle - Hungary the isolated and constitutional against the deadening centralism and absolutism of <sup>Austria</sup> ~~Russia~~. Such a struggle, in order to afford a proper verdict, it was felt, ought to have been left to itself. Austria was not conquering by the vitality of her government or the energy of her soldiers. She had taken the unfair step of recourse to foreign aid. Such a victory was really a defeat with regard to the settlement of the principle concerned, and it left Austria with a heritage of unpopularity in England that was never lifted till her defeat in 1866. The time was soon to come when to be called an "Austrian" was the darkest of all political accusations. We must add that liberal opinion of the day was either blind to, or ignorant of, the unbridled nature of Magyar nationalism, at that very time denying the same political rights to others, which has been one of the greatest curses of Europe down to the Great War of 1914.

Contemporary opinion in England as to the Russian intervention may again be illustrated in the debate in the House of Commons on July 21st. In that debate, Bernal Osborne asserted the

historical independence of the kingdom of Hungary as a free state since the year 1,000<sup>A.D.</sup>, described the development of her own institutions, and showed how in 1790 Leopold took the oaths as king declaring her to be free and independent, and how in 1849 the separate existence and free legislature granted in the previous year together with all previously acquired rights had been perfidiously withdrawn. He refused to acknowledge the term "insurrection" for the rising of a nation in defence of its rights. During this debate Lord Palmerston declared amid acclamation<sup>la</sup> that "there were enlisted in this struggle on the side of Hungary the hearts and soul of the whole people of this country". "The greater part of the people have engaged in what they consider a great national contest". At the same time he declared that we were not called on to interfere in any way that would commit this country to embark in those hostilities, beyond the expression of opinions and offers of mediations, and "opinions are stronger than armies".

Palmerston's attitude in this matter excited a great deal of speculation at the time and has been misunderstood since. Something irreconcilable has been found in his well-known dislike of the Austrian government, <sup>and</sup> with his opposition to its rule in Italy, and his supineness in the face of the Russian intervention in Hungary against which he did not even protest. At a meeting

of Radicals at the London Tavern in 1850 protesting against the unchecked Russian invasion of Hungary, Cobden pointed out that Russia was allowed to march her armies across the territory of Turkey, through Wallachia and Moldavia to strike a deathblow at the heart of Hungary and yet no protest was recorded by our government against that act.

"It was our deliberate conviction as it was that of the most illustrious men engaged in the Hungarian struggle that if Lord Palmerston had made a simple verbal protest in energetic terms, Russia would not have invaded Hungary. The Tsar's ministers had begged him not to interfere in the struggle. Our protest would have been backed by the Ministry of the Tsar, if it had been made, and I believe it would have prevented that most atrocious outrage on the rights and liberties of a constitutional country."  
(Morley p.531).

More recently G. M. Trevelyan in his Life of John Bright (p.188) considers that Palmerston let slip his best opportunity of doing something really valuable for the cause of liberty when he failed to make any protest.

The charge of inconsistency which the Radicals brought against Palmerston in his day, and which has been repeated by the liberal historians and biographies, takes no account of what was the settled basis of his foreign policy - the maintenance of the balance of power. In his commonsense view, the permanent peace of Europe was of more importance than the realisation of a particular national ideal, especially if this ideal conflicted

with others equally urgent. His attitude to this double question of Austrian dominion in Italy and in Hungary was plainly declared in the debate of July 21st, from which we have quoted.

"Austria is a most important element in the balance of European Power. Austria stands in the centre of Europe, a barrier against encroachment on one side, and against invasion on the other. The political independence and liberties of Europe are bound up in my opinion with the maintenance and integrity of Austria as a great European power and therefore anything which tends by direct or even remote contingency to weaken and to cripple Austria, but still more to reduce her from the position of a first-rate power to that of a secondary state must be a great calamity, and one which every Englishman ought to deprecate and try to prevent."  
(Debate of July 21st).

The opinion so explicitly stated in Parliament is repeated again and again in his correspondence at this time. In a letter to the King of the Belgians of June 15th 1848, he says:-

"As to poor Austria, every person who attaches value to the maintenance of a balance of power in Europe must lament her present helpless condition ..... I cannot regret the expulsion of the Austrians from Italy. I do not believe that it will diminish the real strength or the real security of Austria as a foreign power. Italy was to her the heel of Achilles and not the shield of Agamemnon. The Alps her natural barrier and her best defence."  
(Ashley, Vol.II, p.82).

To Ponsonby he wrote on August 31st:-

"The real fact is that the Austrians have no business in Italy at all and have no real right to be there ..... North of the Alps we wish her all the success and prosperity in the world."  
(Ashley, Vol.II, p.90).

His correspondence is full of expressions of the same view:-

"I hold a great and powerful Austrian Empire north of the Alps to be of the utmost importance for the general interests of Europe". "Austria is the pivot of the balance of power in Europe". (Ashley, Vol.II, pp. 64, 83, 87, 88).

The Queen, of course, believed that he was animated by hatred of Austria pure and simple, and her letters both to him and to Lord John Russell are full of indignant remonstrances as to his attitude. (Letter of July 1st, 1848, Vol.II, 182; also 186, 7).

But Palmerston's noted antipathy to the Austrian rule in Italy was at any rate based on a consistent policy, and in retrospect, we must acknowledge its statesmanlike quality. Geography more than anything else had made Austria a political necessity, and held together the areas inhabited by different races. But it had imposed on its government a cruel dilemma, the solution of which makes Austrian history till the end of the 19th century. Did Austria look to East or West? Did the future of Austria lie in concentrating and becoming a German state of Central Europe, or an Eastern state along the Danube to unify and amalgamate the Slav races? Palmerston anticipated the verdict of Bismarck and of history that the "Drang nach Osten" must prevail. The work of Austria was to stand against the possibility of Russian aggression. He would have agreed with the Slav historian Palacky "If there were no Austria, it would be necessary to create one". The part which it was Austria's duty to play in the states-system of Europe

could not be accomplished by small states. This explains the difference in British policy with regard to the Italian and the Eastern Question. We accepted the national principle south of the Alps, but we rejected it at this time on the Danube. (See a paper read to the Historical Society by C. H. Firth in "Transactions, 1917").

It was therefore the fear of Russian preponderance and the necessity of a balance of power in Eastern Europe that made it essential that Austria should be strong, and should be pre-established as a great Empire to form a barrier against Russia. In 1849 the barrier was down, and it would never be set up again by a group of small states of varying and conflicting nationalities. So Palmerston was prepared to see Austria turned out of Italy, to give up his interests in the Hungarian national rising, to remain silent when Russian intervention gave him an unrivalled opportunity, and give very little support diplomatically, and none materially to Canning's attempt to expel the Russians from the Principalities. As he wrote to Lord John Russell on April 9th 1849:-

"It is unfortunate for Austria and for Europe that the Austrian government should place itself in this state of dependence on Russia, because it disqualifies Austria from being hereafter a check on Russian ambition and encroachment ..... I have no doubt we shall get the Russians out of the Principalities. Austria, be she ever so

subservient to Russia, cannot submit to see her get possession of those military positions".  
(Ashley, Vol.I, p.94).

Again he wrote to Canning on May 7th 1849:-

"It is possible that Russia may not find her account in this intervention to the extent she imagines ..... We of course attach great importance to the maintenance of the Austrian Empire as an essential element and a most valuable one in the balance of power, and we should regret anything which should cripple Austria or impair her future independence." (Lane-Poole, Vol.II, p.189).

Palmerston took care to have pointed out to the Austrian government the strategic perils which ensued from the Russian occupation of the Principalities, but he found that Schwarzenburg was equally sensible of them. (Lane-Poole, Vol.II, p.189). If the Austrian minister declared that his country would astonish the world with her ingratitude to Russia, Palmerston was confident that her gratitude would astonish the world even more. Gratitude has seldom been a decisive factor in international relations, and permanent interests are rarely disposed of by feelings. So in spite of his hatred of the court and ministry at Vienna, and of his sympathies with, and the things he said about the Hungarians, the cause of Hungary was sacrificed to the Russian menace. There was no change in our foreign policy, which was more than ever conditioned by this fear.



## VI. THE HUNGARIAN REFUGEES.

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The revolutionary period in the Austrian Empire ended with the surrender of Komorn on October 1st, and absolutism triumphed everywhere. Centralism was established in the Austrian Empire and all constitutions were abolished on December 31st 1851. The struggle had been a bitter one and the passions it aroused were reflected in the attitude of the Austrian government in its treatment of its conquered rebellious subjects. Our English papers became filled with reports of the savage and degrading punishments meted out by the conquerors, of public floggings of ladies, and the ruthless execution of prisoners. The Magyar cause, now lost beyond all hope, was gaining converts and sympathisers all over Europe and especially in England. And now that Austria as a member of the European states-system was saved, Palmerston was free to express his opinion of her government and people and this he did with great force, describing them as "the greatest brutes that ever called themselves by the undeserved name of civilised men". (See a very strongly expressed private letter to Ponsonby of September 9th in Ashley, Vol.II, p.105).

There was almost at once an opportunity for his outraged humanity to find a practical outlet. Within five months Great

Britain was to be on the verge of a war with Russia, not this time on the ground of territorial aggrandisement, but in the cause of humanity. ~~and~~ This <sup>in turn</sup> raised the question whether British or Russian influence should predominate at the Porte ~~and~~ This was the ~~double~~ <sup>other</sup> side of the question of the Hungarian Refugees.

Immediately after Gorgöi's surrender, about 5,000 Hungarians and Poles sought safety by crossing the Danube into Turkish territory. Among them were the chief leaders of the Hungarian army including Kossuth, the very embodiment of the revolution, and the Polish generals Bem and Dembinski, whose defiance of the Tsar had lasted since the Polish rising of 1830. Their presence was intolerable to the two Emperors and a joint demand was made on the Porte for their surrender, based on certain definite treaty stipulations of each country with Turkey. Article 18 of the Treaty of Belgrade bound the Porte to punish evildoers and discontented and rebellious subjects of Austria, as well as robbers and brigands. Article 2 of the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainardji bound each side to permit the extradition or expulsion of refugees from its territory. The question which arose was whether the representatives of a nation in arms for constitutional right come under the terms of the treaty of Belgrade.

Canning, who was of course consulted by the Turkish ministers,

adopted the attitude that the punishment of evildoers referred to, applied only to ordinary offenders in time of peace, and he advised the Sultan to adopt a humane and generous policy and to refuse to surrender those who appealed to his compassion. This policy was adopted all the more easily by the Sultan as sympathy in Turkey for the Hungarian cause was widespread.

But, as in the case of the Principalities, the decisive factor would not be the provisions of treaties, but the amount of support which the Sultan could look for from the British and French governments in support of their representatives. As before General Aupick acted with Canning, and a final refusal to surrender the fugitives was given on August 30th, 1850. There followed at once a practical ultimatum from the Tsar demanding an immediate answer of "yes" or "no," on which the further relations of the two Empires would depend, the escape of a single Hungarian or Pole to be regarded as a declaration of war. ("Correspondence respecting Refugees from Hungary" No.3). Canning continued nevertheless to inspire the Sultan to refuse the Tsar's demand, and in pursuit of policy went so far as to assert in writing on September 15th with General Aupick's assent, that in case of war resulting, it was to be presumed that England and France would not leave the Porte unassisted. (Correspondence No.11). For this step, of course, he had no authority, but it was a matter where time was everything and

in a letter to Lord Palmerston of September 17th he claimed the government's support on grounds of "obvious considerations of humanity, honour and permanent policy". (Lane-Poole, Vol.II,p.192). "Permanent policy" was implicated in the matter because the old question of whose should be the predominant influence on the Sultan was thus raised. To Canning it was imperative that Turkish acquiescence in the demand should not be used to press the Turk into further subserviency to Russia. This would be the result of British influence with the Sultan and his ministers were to be completely and for ever lost through the home government's refusal to accept the responsibility for his promise. (Correspondence No.13).

The Sultan temporised with the ultimatum by sending a direct representative to the Tsar at Warsaw, while refusing to give the definite answer demanded, and the Russian envoys accordingly broke off communications, as the Turkish ministers for once showed no sign of weakening. On September 17th the diplomatic relations between the Porte and the two Empires came to an end (Correspondence No.13). Six weeks of anxiety were to pass while Canning waited to hear whether his bold policy would be upheld at home, but during this period Sir William Parker commanding the Mediterranean fleet, and informed of the course of events at Constantinople, had sent a frigate with the news that he was cruising in Tonson

waters till his orders should arrive. Even this indication of the presence of British naval power helped to maintain the Porte in an attitude of unaccustomed strength.

The extremely serious nature of things on the Bosphorus and the rupture of Diplomatic relations became known in London at the end of September when Parliament was not sitting. Palmerston had no hesitation in committing this country to the support of the Sultan against the Tsar. He instructed the British ambassador at Paris to secure the support of the French government in urgent representations to the two Emperors, and, what was more important, in the fateful step of ordering a combined squadron to take its place at the Dardanelles to give moral support to the Sultan, and to go to Constantinople if called for. (Ashley Vol.II, p.108; Lane-Poole, Vol.II, p.197,8). On October 2nd he was able to write to Canning that the Cabinet had decided to give moral and material support to the Sultan. He was urged however not to send for the squadron to enter the Dardanelles without real necessity because it might be turned to bad account by the Russians afterwards, and it would have, in addition, the air of an open public menace. (Lane-Poole, Vol.II, p.198). This was in deference to a suggestion of Baron Brunnow, the Russian ambassador in London, who in conversation had warned Palmerston that "the

fault of the Emperor is that he is very sensitive, and that anything like the language of open menace might prevent him from doing what he would otherwise feel inclined to do" (Ashley, Vol. II. p.109). Again Palmerston wrote to Canning on October 6th:-

"The government here have resolved to support the Sultan at all costs, but we must be able to show to Parliament that we have used all civility and forbearance, and that if hostilities ensue they have not been brought on by any mistakes of ours. There never was such unanimity in England upon a question not directly affecting the immediate interests of England" (Correspondence No.18).

Palmerston in fact thought that it was possible to evade a crisis if the Turks would exercise their right of expelling the chief refugees from their territory, and the Admiral was authorised to offer ships to take them away (Correspondence, No.19, 20). He was also careful not to mention the Orders to the squadrons to the ambassadors in London so that no question of a threat might arise.

The sympathetic attitude of the whole British nation was so unmistakable that the Cabinet had no need to hesitate. It was felt that Abdul Mejid did himself honour by refusing to give up political refugees. The Turk was a better Christian than the Tsar. What the Sultan had been. the Tsar was. We shall see that this defiance of European and civilised opinion, as well as of justice and humanity, by the autocrat of Russia was to have the most

serious consequences on the relations of Great Britain and Russia in the near future. Palmerston reported to Canning on October 11th:-

"There never was I think in this country so strong and so unanimous a burst of generous feeling as this demand of the two imperial governments has called forth. All men of all parties and opinions, politicians, soldiers, sailors, clergymen, and Quakers; and all newspapers, Tory, Whig, Radical, have joined in chorus, and this outpouring of indignation must I think have a salutary effect at St. Petersburg and Vienna, and must raise our national character in the esteem of the world, and show that we are not so incapable of being roused to manly action as some speeches in Parliament and at peace meetings and congresses might have lead people to suppose."

(Lane-Poole. Vol.II, p.200).

Palmerston's welcome message came to Canning on October 18th, and on November 1st the British fleet, followed by the French, entered the Dardanelles. This demonstration, added to the well-known expression of British feeling, caused the Emperors to withdraw their demand. Canning reported this to Palmerston on November 7th and that it was due ~~to them~~, as the Russian ambassador said, <sup>to the</sup> pronounced expression of public feeling in England. (Correspondence p.71). When the Turkish envoy, Fuad, had seen Nesselrode on October 8th, he was informed that "if ~~the~~ Foreign Powers pretended to interfere in the question at issue His Imperial Majesty would not listen to any terms of accommodation whatever". (Correspondence No.44.) Nevertheless

on October 9th the Tsar ordered diplomatic relations to be established as soon as possible, but a copy of this order was refused to the British ambassador by Nessebrode "because he could never admit the principle of foreign interference in the relations of Russia and Turkey" (Correspondence No.48).

The Tsar came in for the odium of this action of the two Emperors, but Austria was perhaps the more insistent and even now was intractable, insisting that the Turkish government should keep the refugees interned according to her will. This was done in spite of Cannings efforts with the Sultan, and Palmerston's protests through Ponsonby (Ashley, Vol.II, p.121, 124, 125 and Lane-Poole, Vol.II, p.204). Palmerston was in great anger at the poor feeling of the Turk. "It was scarcely less derogatory to the Sultan to be jailer for Austria than to be purveyor to the Austrian executioners."

It was not till April that Austria gave way and resumed diplomatic relations with the Porte, and still the refugees were kept in confinement. Not till September 185<sup>4</sup> did Kossuth and the leaders leave Turkish territory. It is doubtful if this insistence did any good to Austria, for while Kossuth was kept in confinement he was a martyr and the subject of a never ceasing interest which culminated on his release in his reception in



England and America.

This incident produced a great effect on the imperious and sensitive spirit of the Tsar, following as it did his great successes in Hungary and dimming his pride. It is not too much to claim that in these events connected with the refugees we see another beginning of a course of events which ended in the Crimean War. We find the same elements in the situation: the popular support of Turkey, the distrust of Russia, the outburst of public opinion, and the almost personal rivalry of the Tsar and the British ambassador at Constantinople. Even the later history of Kossuth in England was only to show more significantly what had been the effects of the Russian intervention and the Russian demand for the surrender of the fugitives on public opinion in this country.

Kossuth was released on September 1st, 1851, and embarking on an American man-of-war, he first landed at Marseilles where he had a great popular reception, but was forbidden by the Prince-President to cross France. On October 23rd he landed on English soil, and at Southampton and other places addresses were presented to him, while he was officially entertained by the Lord Mayor of London. At each place he pleaded the cause of his unhappy country with great eloquence and a command of language unequalled by our

greatest orators in our own tongue. (See Cobden's opinion in a letter to Bright in Morley, p.564). The enthusiasm created for the lost Hungarian cause was intense. On November 12th Cobden comments on Bright's speech at the meeting to welcome Kossuth at Southampton that if he had moved there and then "a declaration of war against Russia and Austria it would have been the resolution which would have most perfectly embodied the feelings of three-fourths of those present" (Morley, p.569).

Palmerston came in for a great deal of public applause at this time & votes of thanks for his services to the refugees were passed at the same time as resolutions of sympathy with Kossuth, though Cobden noted (Morley, p.565) that Kossuth himself avoided saying anything in praise of Palmerston no doubt because of the rejection of the claim to Hungarian sovereignty by the British government in 1848 and 1849 while the struggle was actually proceeding. ~~Yet Kossuth expressed a desire to see him and~~ Palmerston agreed to receive him in person, at first at the Foreign Office and then at his own house. But Lord John Russell was informed that if the Foreign Secretary had any communication with the man who led a rebellion against the Emperor of Austria, the ambassador would be recalled. Strongly urged by the Queen (Letters, Vol.II, P.326), who was vastly displeased at the whole

course of the Hungarian agitation, (See Greville, Vol, VI, p.<sup>Nov 16, 1851</sup>~~423~~<sup>414</sup>) and considered that a reception of Kossuth even at Palmerston's private residence would be liable to offend her allies. Austria and Russia, the Prime Minister secured a unanimous vote of the Cabinet to cause Palmerston to give way. But after Kossuth's departure from England, he admitted to the Foreign Office a Radical deputation from Finsbury and Islington to congratulate him on the release of Kossuth. Their address described the Emperors of Russia and Austria as "odious and detestable assassins" and "merciless tyrants and despots". The Queen was furious at the Foreign Secretaries failure to repudiate such language about sovereigns with whom she was on terms of peace and used every effort to persuade Lord John Russell to get rid of him. She even went so far as to decline to believe that he had not seen Kossuth after all (Letters, Vol.II, p.331). It happened that this incident occurred immediately after a serious dispute between the Queen and the Foreign Minister with regard to an official letter of apology to the Austrian government for the treatment which Field Marshall Haynau ("General Hyena") had received at the hands of a crowd of London draymen in return for his odious treatment of women prisoners when stamping out the Hungarian revolution (Letters, Vol.II, p.269).

The agitation which Kossuth's presence caused, though of no importance in itself, and having no immediate effect, kept alive public indignation at the tendencies of Russian policy and had a great deal to do with the persistence of anti-Russian feeling in this country especially among the Radicals, who were supposed to follow Cobden and Bright in a strict policy of non-intervention. On November 4th 1851, Bright wrote to Cobden:-

"I am expected to be at the meeting in the Free Trade Hall (to welcome Kossuth) and to speak. I am in a desperate puzzle what to do, but certainly if I speak I shall go against any notion of fighting for Hungary, or any other country. We had a warm discussion last evening at the League rooms on these points - Robinson and others in favour of having a tussle with Russia some time to put an end to Cossack domination etc. I am very apprehensive that this Hungarian sympathy will breed a spirit which we have hoped ~~was~~ subsiding and will tend to fill the people's heart with pride and self-conceit and with a notion that it is our mission to become knight errants in the cause of freedom to other nations, whilst we are forgetting how much we have to do at home ..... I shall take another line at all hazards and shall endeavour to show that by perfecting our own institutions and by promoting the intelligence, morality and health of our own country, and by treating all other nations in a just and generous and courteous manner, we shall do more for humanity than by commissioning Palmerston to regenerate Hungary by fleets in the Black Sea and the Baltic." (Trevelyan, p.195).

This letter plainly foreshadows that division of Radical feeling which subsequently was to separate Cobden and Bright from their usual supporters when war actually broke out. It gives us in epitome the policy which they followed, and it reveals the fact

that their leadership in internal and economic questions did not extend to foreign policy. The whole Hungarian incident prepared the minds of many English liberals who cared nothing about the Turkish Empire to welcome the Crimean war four years later as a war for freedom.

## VII. DON PACIFICO.

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Palmerston's credit had been much advanced by the negotiations about the refugees, for in 1849 he had successfully resisted the intentions of the two great autocratic Emperors of Europe. But his next use of the British fleet was from the moral point of view, more questionable, and gave the Tsar a good opportunity for retaliation. In effect he used the naval power of England to compel the Greek government to meet the dubious claims of a Portuguese Jew who happened to be a British subject. Another claimant for redress from the Greek government was the historian Findlay. Reparation had been for a long time denied, not merely to the sufferers, but to the British minister and the last demand on January 17th 1850 was followed by a blockade of the Piraeus by a squadron under Sir William Parker.

But Greek independence, declared in 1827, had been guaranteed by three powers:- Russia, France and Great Britain, and the Greek government appealed to France and Russia, who naturally found it an affront to their protection that the negotiations should be carried on at Athens under the guns of a British fleet on the spot, ready to use coercion if the proposals were refused. Palmerston was convinced that the French minister in Greece was encouraging

the Greek king - "the spoilt child of absolutism", and a special favourite of the Tsar (Ashley, Vol.II, p.140). The Tsar, through Brunnow, made a protest against the coercion of small states by the maritime power of England, and the deliberate intention of England to disengage itself from all common obligations and to recognise against the weak no law but its own will, and ended with a guarded threat as to what would happen if such measures continued. (Ashley, Vol.II, p.142).

This was turning the tables with a vengeance. But the effect of the recent embitterment of Russian and British relations was strikingly manifested when this despatch of the Russian Chancellor was published in the "Times". The language of the "Globe" and the "Morning Post" with reference to the Emperor's acts and policy was such that the Russian ambassador wrote to complain of the tone of the London press. Palmerston's answer to Lord John Russell's enquiry is dated May 16th 1850:-

"Any articles in the newspapers to which Brunnow alludes were drawn upon the Russian government by the unprecedented publication of Nessebrode's despatch of March 17th, and the threats made by the "Times" as to what Russia would do to put a stop to our proceedings in Greece ..... With regard to the Russian despatch the feeling in this country has been but one and that one universal."  
(Ashley, Vol.II, p.143).

However he sent a mild and conciliatory reply. Meanwhile a convention had been signed in London disposing of the whole

dispute, but ignorant of this fact the British minister at Athens coerced the Greek government into yielding and paying at once the sums demanded. This method of settlement led to the recalling of the French minister from London, and on May 1st Brunnow intimated the imminence of a similar act by the Tsar. The French Foreign Minister went so far as to make a public accusation of duplicity on England's part and the two countries were on the verge of war. "The French deemed it incompatible with the dignity of the Republic to have any longer an ambassador in London" reports Greville (Vol. VI, <sup>May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1850</sup> p.336). In his view this was "The greatest scrape into which Palmerston ever got, our government being charged with breach of faith and the violation of a compact", (p.332). Palmerston went his way and carried his point, but the Russian, French, and Bavarian ambassadors refused to attend the usual diplomatic function on the Queen's birthday.

For a long time, the relations of the Foreign Minister both with the Court and the Cabinet had been strained to breaking point, of which fact the Letters of the Queen and the Memoirs of Greville teem with evidence. On February 14th 1850 Greville says:-

"The disgust at it (the Greek policy) is universal with those who think at all about foreign matters. It is past all doubt that it has produced the strongest feelings of indignation against this country all over Europe and the members themselves are conscious what a disgraceful figure they cut and are ashamed of it."



As for the Queen and Prince Consort, they were only waiting for the time when Palmerston's colleagues would resolve to get rid of him. On May 18th the Prince wrote to the Prime Minister that his own conviction and the Queen's grew stronger and stronger that "Lord Palmerston was bringing the hatred borne to him personally by all the governments of Europe upon England, and that the country runs serious danger of having to pay for the consequences" (Letters, Vol.II, p.243). The indignation, resentment, and bitterness with which they regarded the Foreign Minister is openly expressed in their correspondence. In the House of Lords a vote of censure on his conduct of this affair was carried. But this step was countered in the House of Commons on June 24th by the moving of a general resolution of support of the government's foreign policy. Palmerston was thus enabled to come forward not so much as the vindicator of that "civis Romanus" Don Pacifico, as the champion of constitutional liberty throughout the continent of Europe. In spite of the alliance against him of Gladstone, Peel, Disraeli, Cobden, Graham, Molesworth and Herbert, the motion was carried in his favour and his popularity increased a hundred-fold. Cobden and Bright, in fact, had great difficulty in reconciling their Radical constituents to their vote. (Trevelyan, p.191)

In view of the development of our relations with Russia, it is

worth noting that Palmerston triumphed over Peelites, Protectionists, and "Manchester" men combined, by his graphic appeal to the nationalist passion of Englishmen, and to the generous hatred of continental tyrannies now firmly characteristic of British opinion and one of the determining causes of later events.

## VIII. THE FALL of PALMERSTON.

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The result of Palmerston's great triumph was to render him independent of the Cabinet and not bound to consult his colleagues, provided he could justify himself before the House of Commons. He carried his independence of the Court to such lengths that the Queen, as a condition of his holding office, insisted on his acceptance of a memorandum dictating the proper procedure in sending out despatches. (Letters, Vol.II, p.264). In addition there was now open warfare between the two Whig chiefs, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary and their natural rivalry was accentuated by the divergence of their opinions on the question of Parliamentary reform. Yet Palmerston held his own till, in December 1851, he expressed approval of the coup d'état by which Louis Napoleon, Prince President of the French Republic, forcibly seized the government of France.

Palmerston had officially instructed the French ambassador in Paris to take the line of strict neutrality, resolved on by the Queen and Cabinet (Letters, Vol.II, p.340), but in private conversation with Walewski, the French ambassador in London, he expressed entire approval of Napoleon's step, and this conversation, reported in Paris, led to a protest from our ambassador there

at what seemed a double policy. The protest gave the Prime Minister and the Queen the opportunity long awaited, and great was the joy which the Queen expressed in her letters that at last the hated minister was no longer Foreign Secretary (Martin Vol.II,p.417). That the dismissal sooner or later was an event which had been long contemplated is shown in a letter from the Prince Consort to Lord John Russell. (Martin, Vol.II, p.418; Letters, Vol.II, p.343). The Queen had contemplated dismissing Lord Palmerston herself, but shrank from the use of the power of the Crown, and Lord John is congratulated that the opportunity was one in which all the right was on his side. A conversation with Napoleon III in 1854 reported in a memorandum of the Prince Consort tends to support the view that the Court saw in the incident an opportunity, as well as an offence against the proper conduct of foreign relations (Martin, Vol.III, p.112).

In the history of our relations with Russia the incident is not without significance. For Palmerston gave his own account of the incident in a letter to his brother of January 22nd 1852:-

"It is obvious that the reason assigned for this dismissal was a mere pretext eagerly caught up for want of any good reason. The real ground was a weak truckling to the hostile intrigues of the Orleans party, Austria, Russia Saxony and Bavaria and in some degree also, of the present

Prussian government. All these parties find their respective views and systems of policy thwarted by the course pursued by the British government and they thought if they could change the minister they would change the policy".  
(Ashley, Vol.II, p.215).

He was certainly mistaken if he thought that the Queen and Prince Consort needed stimulus of any kind, or from any quarter, to encourage them to take this step. In fact it is impossible to read the correspondence on the matter without realising that our constitutional system in the sphere of foreign policy has not always worked with the smoothness usually attributed to it. However disguised, here was a struggle for the control of foreign policy between the Court and the Minister responsible to Parliament.

But Palmerston's version of the causes of his removal from office was adopted by the newspapers, who propagated the view that it was due to foreign intrigue revenging itself for his vigorous foreign policy. The action taken by Lord John was "a foregone conclusion", "the result of poison instilled into his mind by Russian emissaries" (quoted in Martin Vol,II, p.422). The charges of Russian intrigue were such that the Russian ambassador once more addressed a protest to Lord John against the tone of the press (December 27th) declaring that "our representations have had nothing to do with the change that has taken place in the Foreign

Office". But this time the Queen was highly indignant that even the possibility of change in her government at the instigation of a foreign power should even be suggested, and regarded Brunnow's letter as presumptuous (Martin, Vol.II. p.423).

Once more we find an illustration of the ease with which popular sympathy and the animosity of the press could at this time be roused against any action of Russia, real or supposed.

The incident is important for another reason. It directly led to the break up of the Whig ministry, and well might John Russell look back in later life and regret the step he had taken in demanding Palmerston's resignation (Recollections, p.258). For some months now the obscure and insignificant question of the Holy Places of Palestine had been raised by French action. The break up of the Whig ministry enabled the Court to obtain, after a brief Tory administration, its long desired Coalition government, under Lord Aberdeen. At the close of 1852 the question of the Holy Places was settled in a French sense just as Lord Aberdeen's government came into power. And Lord Aberdeen was the friend of the Tsar, and the original depository of his confidences and of the memorandum of 1844 on the relations of Great Britain and Russia in the affairs of the East. Once more the Eastern Question was coming up for solution.

## IX. THE POSITION of the TSAR NICHOLAS in 1852.

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It may be well to pause here, before we proceed to the consideration of the fatal development of the antagonism between Russia and England, to note the remarkable ascendancy which the Tsar Nicholas had obtained on the continent in the year 1852. In many ways the issues of the history of Europe hung on the personal character and the achievements of the Tsar, and at this moment he appeared to be the arbiter of Europe. If central Europe found itself at the end of the revolutionary period in 1852 in the state of 1815 it was to him she owed it. On all the western frontiers of his Empire he had witnessed the disappearance or the weakening of his hereditary allies and the possible formation of states in their place which would have been his declared enemies. Yet in 1852 absolutism was completely triumphant.

The policy of intervention which he adopted was due as much to idealist notions as to the interests of Russia. As in fighting Napoleon Russia had appeared to draw the sword for the liberation of the nations, so in these years the motive of fighting for law and order in Europe served also to secure the Tsar's interests and security. We have examined the results of his armed intervention in the Danube Principalities and in Hungary.

But this was not all. In Prussia he used his personal ascendancy over Frederick William the Fourth to compel him to get rid of the constitution he had granted, offering for his service troops which would unite with the still faithful Prussian corps, and finally extinguish revolution in Berlin. In Denmark he protested against the Prussian recognition of the rights of the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, and later declared that the march of Prussian forces into the duchies was an act of hostility to Russia. He preferred to negotiate with Great Britain and republican France a definite ruling on the Danish question, (the Treaty of London) which secured all its possessions to Denmark and denied the claims of German national feeling. His influence on the constitution of the Bund was equally powerful. Prussia had been his faithful ally and his practical vassal since 1814, while Austria had opposed and was likely to continue to oppose Russian policy in the East. Yet the Tsar was resolved not to let Austrian power diminish to the profit of Prussia lest an aggrandised Prussia should be less manageable than the Prussia of 1814. It was the hope of German liberals to reconstitute the German Empire on the basis of the exclusion of Austria. But from 1848-1852, Nicholas multiplied the opportunities for arresting Prussia, compelling her in the humiliating episode of Olmütz to abdicate all pretensions to German



hegemony. At the same time his influence was sufficient to prevent Austria from pushing her advantage to the extent either of forcing her admission into the Zollverein, or the inclusion of her non-German territories in the Bund.

Russian opposition was thus given to both attempts to constitute a great German Empire under either Austrian or Prussian headship. German unity was an impossibility while the Tsar lived. Bismarck cannot be accused of hostility to Russia, but he reports the Prince of Prussia as unable to get rid of the feeling of humiliation suffered by Prussia at the hands of the Emperor Nicholas, and this in spite of his great love for his Russian relations. (Reminiscences, Vol.I, p.103). Bismarck's own opinion was that during the reign of the Tsar Nicholas "we lived like Russian vassals". (Vol.I, p.300).

This apparent dictatorship of Nicholas in reality only remained till it should be tested. It proved to be at the mercy of the first experiment made upon it, just as the real military capacity of Russia was to be revealed by the simple siege of a fortress at one of the extremities of the Empire. Yet till that time should come the Tsar's preponderance was undoubted. The peoples whose aspirations Russia had thwarted kept for her a dull hatred, and even the states she had helped, such as Austria, did not

pardon her for revealing their weakness. As for the western powers Great Britain and France, they had little to fear from the direct attacks of Russian power. But with studied contempt Nicholas had refused to accord to the ruler of France, at first the recognition of his Empire, then of his dynasty, and finally the courtesy which prevailed between crowned heads. France, whatever its government, was an object of what almost amounted to an obsession on the part of the Tsar. We have seen how the British people had for some time been increasingly impressed by the fear of Russian preponderance in Europe, suspecting her designs in India, resenting her aggressive policy in the near and the far East, feeling her sense of humanity outraged by the harsh and brutal treatment of Poles and Hungarians, and distrusting her autocratic form of government. All these underlying causes were exercising a cumulative effect and uniting all parties. The Conservatives, fearing a gigantic imperial power with boundless ambitions, were at one with the Radicals who regarded it as the enemy of public freedom. The influence of Russia was active in every court and a peculiar fear of her in every government. Nor was the fear, exaggerated as it may have been, without reasonable strategic and geographical ground. Austria was exposed without a natural frontier on a vulnerable side and from the borders of Galicia her capital might easily be

threatened. It only needed a permanent advance of Russia southward into the Danube provinces of Turkey to result in an almost complete encirclement. Prussia was faced on the East by the armies of Poland, and the fortresses of the Vistula, while her northern seaboard was at the mercy of the Russian fleet stationed in the Gulf of Finland which was an equally powerful check to all the Scandinavian nations. The naval ~~force~~<sup>supremacy</sup> in the Black Sea, based on the elaborate fortifications of Sebastopol only just completed in 1850, was absolute and complete. Cobden's argument was that Russia was strong defensively, and had no offensive force; but a great power occupying such a position, and actively exercising such a sway, could not be called weak for purposes of offence so long as the Tsar realised his strength and was allowed to use it. With his own capital geographically remote, it was possible for him to exert all his strength on his frontiers, and threaten the leading capitals of continental Europe and the Near East.

This was the aspect of Russian power in 1852, and the remaining portion of the record of these years can be summed up by saying that when the first attempt was made by Nicholas to secure some tangible profit from his position of ascendancy, a coalition against him based on all these disquiets and hates became a certainty. We must realise the existence of such feelings or we shall

fail to understand why the Western Powers were later to press for the destruction of Sebastopol even when the original cause of the dispute was settled and why such opposition was universally shown to Russian possession, real or disguised, of Constantinople, so different from the general acquiescence in the possibility a hundred years earlier. Now, it was realised, it would not only add to the Russian dominion some of the richest provinces in Europe, and the absolute command of the Danube and the Black Sea, but cause her emergency as a great naval power in the Mediterranean, and secure for these possessions an impregnability such as physical conditions had never before given to any Empire. In addition it was felt that the influence on Europe of such an Empire would be politically dangerous and oppressive, and its influence on morals and enlightenment equally perilous. Russia was considered a backward country very little in advance of Turkey in the scale of civilisation. On all these aspects Sir John MacNeill's "Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East" (1854) gives the contemporary opinion.

The truth with regard to British relations with Russia can only be realised in terms of the general situation of Europe at the time. It is easy, as Kinglake does, to enlarge on the triviality of the circumstances connected with the Holy Places as the

cause of a great European war, and to regard the result as due to unconscious blundering and ignorant miscalculation on the part of some of our statesmen, or the malevolence or intrigue of others. But such an attitude does not give its proper weight to the political conditions of the Europe of the mid-nineteenth century, and is as discreditable to the Tsar Nicholas as to British statesmen and diplomatists. In fact, it lays disproportionate stress on the accidents of the political machinery in international relationships, and neglects the action and opinion of society at large which ~~was~~<sup>were</sup> peculiarly strong in this question.

It is equally unjust to the Tsar Nicholas, who in his own way was not devoid of greatness or earnestness of purpose, and we may close this section by considering what was the state of Europe and the East from his point of view. The events of 1848 and the succeeding years had exposed the weakness of some of the most firmly established monarchies in Europe. Austria, Germany, France and Italy had been rescued with difficulty from the terrors of anarchy and dismemberment. He might well ask himself what would be the effect of the workings of the same spirit among the Christian population of a government which had been for a century on the verge of collapse. We need not wonder that the Tsar, confident even before of the certain dissolution of the Turkish

Empire, now believed the moment had actually arrived. The edicts of reform (Tanzimat of 1839) now being put into operation through the insistence of the British ambassador, were themselves exciting alarm and practical opposition among the Sultan's ~~subjects~~, Mahommedan subjects. The war of creeds was blazing more fiercely than ever, and each sect was appealing to its external protector: the Catholics to France, the Protestants to England, the Orthodox to the Tsar. In 1852 the Sultan was menaced by Austria, by France, and by Russia while for ten years the Porte had seemed to have no opinion but that of the British ambassador. Even Austria had been successful in an intervention on behalf of Montenegro and by the sending of an extraordinary embassy to Constantinople on Jan. 30th 1853, together with a mobilisation of an army on the Danube, had compelled the Sultan to recognise the secularisation and the independence of the Prince Bishopric, and the grant of privileges for the benefit of Christians in Bosnia and Herzegov~~ina~~<sup>nia</sup>. But it was the traditional privilege of the Tsardom to be the champion of the Slavs under Turkish rule and Nicholas had intended, irrespective of the unexpected action of Austria, to make the Turks conclude peace. The prompt and vigorous action of Austria and the sudden acceptance by the Sultan of Count Leiningen's ultimatum seemed to reveal the imminent certainty of the death of the "Sick

Man". This certainty was by now become one of the Sultan's fixed ideas, as his action was at once to prove.

## X. THE QUESTION of the HOLY PLACES.

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The immediate cause of the crisis now approaching with regard to the Holy Places of Palestine was the effort of two powers - France and Russia - to revive or expand eighteenth century treaties with the Porte, in the one case the Capitulations of 1740, in the other the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainardji of 1774.

The Capitulations had been conceded by the Porte to Louis XIV in appreciation of the efforts of French diplomacy in securing the Treaty of Belgrade (1739) which confined Austria to a frontier she failed to cross until her occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was permitted by the Treaty of Berlin. They recognised France as the protector of the Latin Church in Palestine, confirming the right to the occupation and custody of the sacred shrines which the Roman Catholic, or Latin, and Orthodox, or Greek churches equally considered sacred. (The long list of these "possessions and prerogatives of the Latin Church in Palestine" is given in the Annual Register 1853, p.230). The interest of France in the Levant goes back much further even than the Capitulations, which made additions to, and gave confirmation of, definite rights which France had enjoyed since Suleiman had granted them



to Francis I in 1535. These exclusive privileges of the "eldest daughter of the Church" were thus derived from a period when the Russian Empire was a thing unknown. The Revolutionary period, dominated by "pure reason" in the spiritual sphere, and including Napoleon's adventure in Egypt, caused the almost complete loss of French power and prestige in the East, though in the continual support given to the Pashas of Egypt in the first half of the 19th century we can see the first attempts to recapture it.

Meanwhile the Capitulations had been undermined by firmans granted to the Greek Church when France was either hostile to Turkey, or indifferent to ecclesiastical concerns. The duty of making a pilgrimage to the Holy Places is one of the precepts of the Greek Church, and insensibly the privileges of the Latin custodians were devolving upon it. After a fire in 1808 which practically destroyed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Latin monks were dispossessed of all administrative rights. A justification was found in the 8th Article of the Treaty of Kainardji between Russia and Turkey which provides for the full liberty and safeguard of Russian pilgrims in the Ottoman Empire and, more questionably, in Article 7 which gives the right to the Russian government to make representations on behalf of the "new church in Constantinople" and its officiating ministers, while "the

Sublime Porte promises to protect constantly the Christian religion and its churches". (Annual Register 1854, p.464). This was a very slender basis for the Russian claims, and the fact was that France had the right given by treaties, Russia the right due to recent custom, and actual occupation.

It would be true to say that this was one of those questions which are never settled, due to the introduction into old conditions of a new and unexpected force - in this case the rise of the Russian Empire. The trivial disputes of Latin and Greek Christians were accustomed to culminate in riots at Easter, and be forgotten and neglected at other times. The claims of the rival parties sometimes came before the Porte as they did in January 1842 with regard to the repair of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and on this occasion Canning advised the Turks to do the repairs themselves. (Lane-Poole, Vol.II, p.233). The question reappeared from time to time, and by now appeared to be one of the necessary evils of the East.

But in 1850 General Aupick, the ambassador of the French Republic at Constantinople, raised the question of the rights usurped by the Greeks and demanded an execution of the Capitulations. In 1851, his successor, de Lavalette, continued the discussion more warmly, and after long delay and infinite disputes

on points connected with the shrines, on February 9th 1852 the Sultan conceded the French demand, this time to be faced with the menace of the Russians. Two typical pieces of Turkish double dealing followed, for the firman issued in March to give effect to the concession to the French reaffirmed the right of the Greeks to "a" key of the shrines and provided that "no change was to be made in the present state of the gate of the Church at Bethlehem". The firman thus satisfied the Russians who insisted on its public promulgation in Jerusalem. Nevertheless on December 22nd the French carried their policy, got their keys, and put up their commemorative Star. The Russian government retaliated by massing an army corps on the border of the Principalities, the usual prelude to a Russo-Turkish war, to be followed, if precedent were a guide, by the occupation of the Principalities and next by a march on Constantinople, just as de Lavalette had made use earlier of the corresponding argument of the Western Powers - a threat to send for the French fleet to the Dardanelles.

It is the thesis of Kinglake's "Invasion of the Crimean" that Louis Napoleon was the instigator and cause of the war which followed. He "took up the forgotten cause of the Latin Church of Jerusalem and began to apply it as a wedge for sundering the peace of the world, when there was repose in the Empire of the Sultan

and even the rival Churches at Jerusalem were suffering each other to rest". (Vol.I, p.44). Nearly every term of this indictment is false in spirit if not in fact. There was no repose in the Empire of the Sultan, for never had that Empire been more disturbed by internal factions and struggles of sects, to say nothing of its international position; the rival churches at Jerusalem had never yet known rest, the "peace of the world" was the unnatural condition of things secured for the moment by the Tsar's repressive efforts, and the cause of the Latin Church was far from being forgotten and had been revived by General Aupick, the ambassador of the Republic.

There was the tradition of three hundred years diplomatic activity behind the step. France had been committed to the defence of the Turkish Empire (as in 1739) long before the question had become vital for Great Britain. Nothing had contributed more to the downfall of Louis Philippe than the way in which French prestige had received the set back of 1840 in a region where its existence was regarded as traditional. The Napoleonic name and heritage called upon the new ruler to act as the arbiter between nations and the champion of oppressed nationalities, by means of diplomacy if not by war.

But the strongest prop he had was the Conservative and

Clerical party, and he had to live up to the hopes, based upon his rise that the Empire would consolidate all that had been won by the Church since 1849. For the Catholic party was expecting France to be actively engaged in assisting in the restoration of the Papacy and the power of the Church throughout the world. The period was one of remarkable Church activity, and missionary zeal, especially in the East. together with the French support given to the Pope at Rome, pointed to a Christian and Catholic crusade of the 19th century which might rival the revolutionary and free-thinking crusade of the 18th. When on May 21st 1850, General Aupick first claimed the old rights of the Capitulations, Catholic writers spoke of it not as a local squabble, but as involving the faith and creed of France, reminding her of the most glorious traditions in her history. Her prosperity, her policy, her rank among nations depended upon it. (Bourgeois, Vo.II, p.28). Easy as it is to ridicule the things in dispute as foolish, and the negotiations as trivial beyond all belief, yet the key and the silver star were merely outer signs of a contest that went back to the separation of Greek and Latin Christianity in the 10th century, and now took the form of a diplomatic dispute between two great powers. Nor were the claims of the Roman Catholic Church specially put forth by any one French ruler, for never were they more vigorously or more openly

pursued than by Louis Philippe. The Alliance ~~of~~<sup>with</sup> the Church drew his successor to the Holy Land, and the curse of an anti-clerical policy is a weakening in national power abroad. But it is only fair to Napoleon to suppose that the diplomatic victory which gave the Latin Church the three keys would have been satisfactory. His conduct to Russia was in fact moderate and conciliatory and the direct opposite of Kinglake's statement, (Vol.I, p.47) that it was pressed with greater vigour after the coup d'état, is true, for the ambassador Lavalette was recalled because of his overbearing tone and unconciliatory manner of dealing with the matter.

But the vigour of the Catholic claims had awakened a corresponding vigour in the Orthodox world. It seemed as if it was proposed to reconsider the progress made since the Treaty of 1774, which had thrown open to Greek pilgrims and monks the East which had once been exclusively under Latin influence. If the Tsar was not in a humour to yield to his international aversion France, neither were the Orthodox Christians prepared to see the Orthodox Emperor bow to a Catholic policy. When the French Catholics were making the most of their new opportunity for pilgrimage involved in the Sultan's original concession, they were met by an outburst of wrath from Orthodox communities in Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Russia. Nicholas, whatever his private sentiments, would have

been between two fires - the wrath of his own people if he failed to act, and conflict with Europe if he did. But Nicholas was as fanatically Russian in policy, as he was Orthodox in religious views. He had therefore to look for means of securing a restoration of that influence with the Sultan which he had practically resigned ~~for~~ the Treaty of 1841 till 1848. As Canning had seen from the beginning, the question of the Holy Places was destined to develop into the larger and more dangerous question of the relations between Russia and the Turkish Empire.

It was at this point that Lord Derby's ministry came to an end. In view of later opinions as to what might or might not have happened if it had continued, we may quote here the Foreign Minister's opinion on the state of the affair, which, on quitting office, he sent to our ambassador at Paris (December 19th).

"Show Drouyn de Lhuys that the Holy Places Question, if roughly handled, is one that may bring on trouble and war. It is one of those points on which the moral power of the Emperor of Russia rests, and I can as much believe that he would give up the despotic principle and have a Russian House of Commons as surrender his prestige over the population of the Greek faith by an appearance of cession on this claim. It is giving Russia an opportunity of bullying and degrading the Porte. The Emperor (Napoleon) has done quite enough to satisfy the parti prêtre without taking up the cause of a minority like the Latins in the East."  
(Malmesbury, Vol I, p.376).

## XI. THE MISSION OF PRINCE MENSHIKOV.

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The form of diplomacy which the Tsar ~~adopted~~<sup>used</sup> to secure the capitulation of the Sultan he adopted from the precedent set by Austria ~~and~~<sup>in</sup> the Montenegrin question - the sending of an extraordinary embassy and a simultaneous mobilisation on the Turkish frontier. The chosen ambassador was Prince Menshikov, and in his mission and its conduct we can see one more illustration of the Tsar's characteristic dislike for the ordinary channels of diplomatic activity. The Russian Diplomatic Study to which we have referred earlier is a work of astonishing frankness. It tells us that Menshikov was selected rather than a diplomatist of experience, on the grounds of his high rank and strong character, and because he was free from the trammels of public service. He was answerable to no one but the Tsar himself for his success or failure, and he was entrusted with proposals which it was not the Tsar's intention to treat as matters for general diplomatic discussion. Through Menshikov the Tsar intended to treat with the Sultan in a personal and direct manner without the interposition or even knowledge of his fellow sovereigns, their ministers or ambassadors. Thus Brunnow's communications about the mission given to Lord Aberdeen were acknowledged to be salutary, moderate,



as definitely concerned only with the Question of the Holy Places, and this was also the assurance given by the Russian ambassador Kisselef to Lord Cowley at Paris (Maxwell, Vol.II, p.9). Yet meanwhile Menshikov was able to carry out not only this ostensible mission, but to make secretly a further demand on the Sultan precisely such as the signatories to the Treaty of 1841 had promised not to make.

The mystification which surrounded the mission was thus deliberately intended and among the deluded was the Russian ambassador in London and perhaps even the Russian Chancellor Nesselrode. As the Diplomatic Study records:-

<sup>reserve</sup>  
"This was very grave.....The Information we gave him (Brunnow) was incomplete and such was the mood of the rest of the English ministers that our ambassador did not dare to make the same communication to Lord Clarendon."  
(Vol.I, p.163).

There were thus two sets of Menshikov's instructions - one for political and one for diplomatic show. During the whole of March and April the English Foreign Minister continued to receive the most explicit assurances that the settlement of the question of the Holy Places was all the Tsar wanted, and that Russia would ask for nothing more. The communications were professedly complete and were believed by Aberdeen to be complete, accompanied as they were by an attitude of personal frankness to the British ambassador

at St. Petersburg. The <sup>du</sup>~~simp~~licity of the Tsar's diplomacy is particularly revealed in the fact fully avowed in the Diplomatic Study that the minister in London, even then with incomplete information, had two different stories for two members of the same government - one for Aberdeen the friendly and one for the Foreign Minister, Clarendon.

For the Menshikov mission was to be accompanied by an equally unconventional and forcible attempt to secure the adherence of the British government to the plans contemplated by the Tsar, and immediately before the departure of the Prince, the Emperor held his famous conversations with Sir Hamilton Seymour, the British ambassador to Russia. So far the British government had not been involved in the question. Canning had been told by Lord Palmerston to hold himself neutral in its early stages (Eastern Papers, Part I, No.12), and when he was not in Constantinople, the British attaché had been directed to adhere to the same attitude by Lord Malmesbury and "abstain from any direct or official interference in a question with which in itself, Her Majesty's Government have nothing to do". (E. P. Part I, No.52; Dec. 14th 1852).

Why then did the Tsar inaugurate his new policy by a confidential communication with ~~the~~ British ambassador? Undoubtedly because Lord Aberdeen, a friend of peace and of Nicholas, had not

~~had not~~ long formed a Coalition government in which Palmerston was prevented from taking the foreign office by the antipathy of the Court. Aberdeen was a man of high character and strong principle, in many ways the exact opposite of Palmerston. At home he was a reformer, but in foreign policy he adhered to the settlement of the Treaties of 1815 and made the same mistake as the Tsar in clinging to sentiments of the past when political conditions had completely changed. To him the Tsar had unburdened himself on his visit in 1844, and to him, as Foreign Secretary, the colourless and correct memorandum on the Eastern Question had been sent. The Tsar was confident of Aberdeen's support, and in his second conversation with the British Ambassador made the extraordinary but characteristic statement that he was convinced that an understanding, (in this the most difficult of international questions) on the basis of his specific proposal for Turkey's partition, could be come to if he could have but ten minutes conversation with Lord Aberdeen. This is not to suggest that there is any reason to doubt the Tsar's good faith in these overtures or his unbounded belief in his own good cause. Within his own lights and judgment he desired the good of Russia and his Church, and he was sincerely interested in a good understanding with England seemingly possible now that Palmerston's rooted distrust would not stand in the way.

The proposals he made showed a genuine desire to find a solution for a hitherto insoluble problem, but in spite of their ~~seeming~~<sup>apparent</sup> foresight and anticipation of the turn things would take in Egypt, they were based on a blind adherence to conditions now long ~~past~~ as far as Anglo-Russian relations were concerned. They were not published till a year later when they served only to increase British infuriation with the Tsar while wounding the Tsar's sensitiveness as he realised that he <sup>had</sup> carried a friendly overture too far. The Diplomatic Study suggests that if the Emperor played the part of principal speaker, the English ambassador played the part of attentive listener.

The conversations, with the answers of the British government, are recorded in the Annual Register 1853 p.245-262, and form part 5 of "Eastern Papers". We can here only very briefly summarise their main ideas. They prove that the Tsar was at last confident that the end of the Turkish Empire had actually arrived and convinced of the urgency of providing a future course of action. It was of the greatest importance that England and Russia should come to a perfectly good understanding and that neither should take a decisive step without the other's cognisance. He had abandoned the dreams and plans of the Empress Catherine but he had obligations to the Christian subjects of the Porte, which

treaties as well as religions and national sentiment compelled him to fulfil. The Turkish Empire would fall to rise no more, and he was certain that it would be better to provide for the catastrophe than to incur the chaos, confusion and uncertainty of a European war, which would be otherwise inevitable. He spoke of the matter as "friend and gentleman" and he was indifferent what other powers ~~sh~~<sup>ou</sup>ld do or think. But England could never have Constantinople, and even if Russia occupied the city, she would not establish herself there, though circumstances might arise if nothing was prepared, which would make him carry out the occupation. He would not permit a reconstruction of the Byzantine Empire, or such an extension of Greece as would make her a powerful state, nor the breaking up of Turkey into little republics - asylums for the revolutionists of Europe. Rather than submit to any of their arrangements he would go to war, and continue it to the last man or musket. The Turkish Empire was a thing to be tolerated, not to be reconstructed. He would not permit the least attempt at reconstruction. As for the Principalities, they could continue as they were - an independent state under Russian protection, and Serbia and Bulgaria could become the same. To counter-balance these advantages to Russia, Great Britain might take possession of Egypt and Crete.

The answers of the British government laid stress on its belief that Turkey still possessed the elements of existence, that England could be no party to any understanding however general that was to be kept secret from other Powers, and that the only means for effecting such a definite solution would be that of a European Congress. Thus a continuation of the policy of 1840 was indicated. But the same mistake was made as in 1844. Instead of denouncing in the most unmistakable language any attempts, present or future, to interfere in the internal condition of Turkey, the British government agreed with a great deal of the Tsar's contentions and only disagreed with the question of the proximity, near or further removed, of an event which was accepted as certain, some time or other, by both countries. In fact Lord John Russell's answer to the Tsar's first conversation spoke of the Russian protection of Christians in Turkey as "Prescribed by duty and sanctioned by treaty" which was all the Emperor required as a recognition of his claim to special interference within the Turkish Empire, and which was the subject of the very disputes which were later to lead to war. Nicholas was dominated by the idea of the certainty of the end of that Empire, and though of course he could only understand the British reception of his communications as equal to a refusal of active support, he evidently was led by the

politeness of their reception to count at least on British neutrality. In fact, the very pacific nature of their reception by us caused Russian Diplomacy to over-reach itself, and the whole blame of the Russian Foreign Office was later to fall on Lord Aberdeen of all people, for not having seen the situation as it really existed, and for having continued to hold out hopes of a peaceful solution until there was no possibility of avoiding war except by a Russian retreat. (Diplomatic Study, Vol.I, p.292, 300).

Meanwhile the Tsar had <sup>re</sup>passed on with his plans, and Menshikov arrived at Constantinople on March 15th 1853, after a rather suggestive review of the Black Sea Fleet and the Russian forces in Bessarabia. His conduct at Constantinople revealed every intention of brow-beating the Sultan's ministers and ignoring all diplomatic interference from the ministers of other powers. In fact the French minister sent for the French fleet to Salamis, and a similar summons to the British fleet was only countermanded by the home government, who instead sent a force far more potent even than the fleet to dominate the Sultan, to inspire the Turkish ministers with courage, and to resist Russian aggression - the great British ambassador, Stratford Canning, now Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. But before his arrival on April 5th, Menshikov had secretly

communicated to the Porte the real object of the new variety of diplomacy - which was not the settlement of the Holy Places dispute, but a secret treaty recognising Russia as the military protector of the Turkish Empire, and an addition to the treaty of Kainardji as a reparation for the past and a guarantee for the future. In four days after Stratford's arrival he had heard of the new proposals and had adopted a plan to meet it. This consisted in persuading Menshikov to separate the Question of the Holy Places from that of the Russian protectorate and solemnly giving Russia all satisfaction on the former point. Accordingly, before the end of April, the dispute as to the Holy Places was settled in the Russian sense, but, in spite of that fact, Menshikov was as menacing as ever.

In considering the new proposals, we must remember that while the actual crushing of all Turkish resistance by Russian arms was a distinct possibility, the peculiar conditions under which the Sultan ruled Christian subjects with community of language, religion and race with the Russian Empire, gave every facility for their painless absorption. According to a census of 1844, the total population of Turkey in Europe was 15 millions, of which only 2 millions were of Ottoman race, 4 millions of the Moslem religion, 1 million Roman Catholic, and 10 million members



of the Greek Church. (See statistical note in Annual Register 1853, p.263). For the Tsar to obtain a legal right of constant criticism, interference, and ultimately of control over the internal government of Turkey, could only in the end result in permanent submission to Russia. The policy of Russia was therefore to deal with the Christian population so as to detach it altogether from allegiance to the Sultan, so that, without any great necessity for violent interference, <sup>it</sup> ~~they~~ would renounce the Turkish yoke, and, as a matter of course, be joined to the Christians under Russian rule. This was why no pains were being spared to establish Russian influence, and to extend a protectorate which had continually increased in practice since the opening of the century. The natural agents of the Orthodox Emperor would of course be the Orthodox priests, and in a civilisation where an exact delimitation of religious and secular spheres was impossible, so long as he held the priesthood, he held the Slav races. However we must notice that Russia's rights did not in reality depend on an old treaty of 1774, whatever the interpretation of its provisions. It was in the insufficiency of the treaties as an instrument for his purposes which impelled the Tsar to further demands. The real causes for difficulty and embarrassments lay far deeper both in past history and in the existing ~~fact~~ conditions - in the nearness of her armies

and the nature of her population. But at this time the Tsar professed to rest his demand on the existing treaty stipulations, and <sup>desired to</sup> secure an act which would set the Russian interpretation beyond doubt, give a guarantee for its execution, and secure Russian influence at the Porte.

Looking at the terms of the treaty of Kainardji (as we have done previously in section 10) we find that its privileges relative to religious matters are all concerned with a particular building provided for in articles 7 and 14, but article 7 is introduced by the words "The Sublime Porte promises to protect constantly the Christian religion and its churches". These words must originally have only been a general engagement to exercise toleration toward the Christian faith. It gave no grounds for Russia to interfere with the ordinary relations between the Porte and its Christian subjects, or to act as arbitrator or protector. Except for the public church of the Greek rite in the street called Bey Oglu in the Galata quarter of Constantinople, Russia legally had no powers to interfere in those religious matters which in the end turn out to be political.

We can see the extent to which the stipulations of the old treaty had grown if we examine the proposals brought forward by Menshikov in the Secret Treaty. In the course of the negotiations

,before his mission came to an end,we can discover what was behind the Russian proposals,and how the Turkish ministers and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe regarded them. This negotiation is important because there was at least one man, the ambassador, who understood "the Question" and all its implications. The Clarendons and the Buols might be interested in diplomatic activities, in the construction of compromises and evasions, in the building of bridges over which one or the other side might find a road for a dignified retreat. But with Stratford the thing at issue was "the Question" - Russian aggression or Turkish reconstruction?

The first article of the Secret Treaty (E.P. Part I, No. 153) declared :-

"The Greek religion should ~~always~~<sup>be</sup> protected in all the churches and that Russia should have the right as in times past to give orders to the churches, both in Constantinople and in other places and towns, as well as to the ecclesiastics."

The second article gave Russia the right of watching elections to the four great Patriarchates of the East and provided for their temporal as well as spiritual privileges,as objects of the Tsar's intervention and care.

The ~~resistance~~<sup>sta</sup> manifested by the Turkish ministers under the eye of Stratford led to a modification of its terms and this time not a treaty but a Sened or Convention was demanded. At the same

time, Menshikov commanded the ministers to abstain from the objectionable practise of consulting and acting on the advice of the British ambassador (Lane-Poole, Vol.II, p.258). On May 5th this Sened for guaranteeing the status quo of the Eastern Church was very strongly insisted on. (E.P. Part I, No.179).

"No change shall be made as regards the rights, privileges and immunities which have been enjoyed by or are possessed ab antiquo by the orthodox churches, pious institutions, and clergy in the domains of the Sublime Ottoman Porte which is pleased to secure the same to them in perpetuity on the strict basis of the status quo."

A second article stipulated that whatever advantages had been or should be conceded to other Christian rites should be conceded to the Greek Church. The suspicions of Stratford are set out in a Memorandum to the Porte, (Lane-Poole, Vol.II, p.264) and are based on the vagueness of the terms, perhaps deliberate; the authority granted over the ecclesiastics with a corresponding vast increase of influence over the Greek population, and the doubt as to whether political or only spiritual influence would be involved. It happened that by this time the question of the Holy Places had been settled and Menshikov had no grievance to complain of. On May 14th the Sened was refused and the Porte itself offered a form of words, emanating from Stratford, (E.P. Part I No.193) at the same time declaring it contrary to international right that one government should conclude a treaty with another

involving its independence on very fundamental matters:-

"The orthodox religion of the East and its clergy as well as those of other Christian denominations shall continue as regards spiritual matters to enjoy under the sovereign protection of the Sultan the privileges and immunities which have been granted to them at different times by the Imperial favour."

There was a consistent effort on Stratford's part, discernable here and throughout the negotiations, to limit the privileges to "spiritual" and thus leave outside ~~its~~ <sup>their</sup> scope altogether all dangerous ecclesiastical jurisdictions and political influences of the clergy, and also to omit words "ab antiquo" which implied the traditional nature of the Russian claims.

The result was the breaking of diplomatic relations, and yet at the last hour Menshikov considered one last form of concession to be accepted at once without variation - neither a Treaty nor a Sened, but a simple Note. In default of its acceptance friendly relations with Russia would be at once ended. In the Note (E.P. Part I, No.210) the objectionable parts of preceding proposals were repeated. The word "spiritual" (and the limitations it included) was omitted, and once more the words "ab antiquo" were inserted. The Turkish answer to the ultimatum was once more based on the words "exclusively spiritual privileges" and "granted under the Sultan's predecessors" (E.P. Part I, No.239).

On May 21st Menshikov's mission came to an end and he left

the Turkish capital, while on May 31st Nesselrode demanded the instant acceptance of the last Note, in default of which the Russian troops would cross the frontier - not to make war, but to secure material guarantees for the satisfaction of the Tsar's demands.

Meanwhile these proceedings had been watched with great misgivings by the government at home who were still being assured that nothing beyond the Holy Places dispute was being claimed by Menshikov. This was the first of three pieces of fatal duplicity practised by the Tsar. The demands made by Menshikov when reported seemed to the British government wholly inadmissible, and, taken with the conversations of the Tsar with our ambassador, the subject of grave misgiving. Clarendon expressed entire approval of the action of the Sultan's ministers in a letter to Stratford May 31st 1853, which is an admirable summary of the position:-

"No sovereign having a proper regard for his own dignity and independence could admit proposals so undefined as those of Prince Menshikov and by treaty confer upon another and more powerful sovereign a right of protection over a large portion of his own subjects. However well disguised it may be, yet the fact is that under the vague language of the proposed Sened a perpetual right to interfere in the internal affairs of Turkey would be conferred upon Russia, for governed as the Greek subjects of the Porte are by their ecclesiastical authorities and looking, as these latter would in all things do, for protection to Russia, it follows that fourteen million Greeks would henceforth regard the Emperor as their supreme protector and their allegiance to the Sultan would be little more

than nominal while his own independence would dwindle into vassalage."

To sum up, the Tsar had evidently resolved to retract from the position he had accepted in the Protocol of 1840 that the Eastern Question was a matter of European concern, not to be settled by the action, or in the selfish interests of any one power,

Unable to win the British government to joint action in the matter he had resolved to act alone and secure for Russia a protectorate of the Greek church - the one thing neither the Turks, or Stratford, or the British government, singly or in concert, would admit as justifiable.

## XII. THE EFFORTS to SECURE a SETTLEMENT.

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When Prince Menshikow arrived at Constantinople he was anxious to deny in advance all intention of hostile aggression even if his mission proved a failure. But two months later the breaking of diplomatic relations, coincident with his departure from Constantinople, resulted in the Tsar's order to his troops to advance into the Principalities. This was the second example of that divergence between profession and action which was lending an air of double-dealing to the activities of Russia at this time. On the very same day May 31st, the British Cabinet, feeling it could not avoid taking precautions of some kind, came to the decision to move the fleet to Besika Bay, and put it at the disposal of Stratford. This was done with the specific instruction:-

"that the declaration of war against Turkey, the embarkation of troops at Sebastopol, or any well established fact denoting intentions of unmistakeable hostility would in the opinion of the government, justify him in sending for the fleet". (E.P. Part I, p.194).

Clarendon had previously written to Stratford on May 16th that "it was indispensable to take measures for the protection of the Sultan and to aid him in repelling any attack upon his territory" (Maxwell, Vol.II, p.13).

There is no doubt that this movement of the fleet was a



critical step. Though it had the limited object of simply being near in case of sudden attack on Constantinople, it was at the same time a "demonstration" that the Western powers were prepared to support the Sultan against a policy of violence on the part of Russia. With such a man as Nicholas, however, it was difficult to know which would ~~extend~~<sup>exert</sup> the greatest influence: the fear of danger or the fear of being supposed to have given way because of it. The confusion created by any policy of threat and counter-threat is well revealed in this incident, for Nicholas claimed that he was driven to execute the order for the occupation of the principalities by the movement of the combined fleets although in fact both orders were given on the same day, and it was impossible for him to have known of the decision. On the other hand it was a standard criticism of the government's policy on the part of some of its critics, that a distinct threat for our fleet to pass the Dardanelles if the ~~Pruth~~<sup>Bosphorus</sup> were crossed, would have caused the Tsar to pause in his actions. Yet the passing of the Dardanelles until war was declared upon Turkey would have been a violation of the Convention of the Straits, i.e. of a portion of the very treaty of 1841 on which British government took its stand, and was in fact a subject of bitter Russian attack in December, when the British answer could only be that the crossing of the Pruth

had been equivalent to setting up a state of war, though it had not been so recognised.

For Russia announced that the occupation was not intended as an act of war, but only as a "material guarantee" for the concession of the Tsar's just demands. But while offering this explanation it is possible that he was not greatly concerned as to its reception as he was confident that if he were to be really threatened Austria and Prussia would send an army to the Rhine and keep France in suspense. His confidence was misplaced, and he was now to fail to form a Northern League against the Western powers. Austria was particularly anxious about the Principalities and more ready to mobilise on the Danube, while, as for alliances, fear was impelling her to seek the French rather than the Russian alliance. However it was agreed not to treat the occupation as an act of war, and there was still hope of peace, while Aberdeen with Liberal optimism accepted the theory that the Tsar had no intention to make any declaration of war. Palmerston's policy was that the fleet should proceed to the Bosphorus and if necessary to the Black Sea (Memorandum to Aberdeen of July 4th 1853 in Ashley, Vol.II, p.274). But it is going too far to say as Herbert Paul does (Vol.I, p.311) that war at any price was his object, for

there is every evidence that he and Clarendon worked for peace as hard as Aberdeen, and the question at issue was how best to secure it. Aberdeen was all for moral influence, while neither Palmerston or Clarendon believed in it as either a check on Russia, or a support to Turkey, unless made by a power ready, and known to be ready, to support it materially. From any such indication Aberdeen was averse and in a letter of June 7th to Clarendon he made first use of an expression afterwards famous:-

"As we are drifting fast towards war, I should think the Cabinet ought to see where they are going. I do not object to the proposed draft provided that it is understood that no actual engagement to make war is adopted and that we are still free to take the last step or not as we may think proper."

Both Gladstone and the Duke of Argyll in their retrospect of the Cabinet discussions (Morley, Vol.I, p.36; Autobiography, Vol.I, p.458) deny the common theory that the Cabinet was divided into two set parties in favour of antagonistic policies - one for war and the other for peace. The object of all its members without exception was to discover the best means of maintaining peace. In the end it was the resolution of the Cabinet to suspend all hostile actions till Russia actually took the offensive in the Black Sea, thus providing for the defence of the Turks, while it left freedom to try to settle the question by negotiation.

So four months from the date of the occupation were to pass

in unremitting exertions on the part of the four Powers to bring about a settlement by negotiation, though the time was also occupied in measures of preparation. Never was a declaration of war so delayed, or such opportunities for what amounted to arbitration given, but, as we shall see, the very delay only gave time for the war fever to get a firm grip not of one but of all the nations engaged, proving that a time of reflection before the outbreak of actual hostilities may, under some circumstances, itself serve only the more to endanger peace. In this case there was a laudable ambition on the part of the statesmen of all the powers to discover a formula which would yield the required solution,, only equalled by their disappointment when their efforts were not seconded. It is possible to discover no less than eleven such attempts, but here it will only be possible to trace the evolution of one - the most famous of all, the Vienna Note.

It had its origin in the immediate attempt of the French Emperor to be first in peace if not in war, and he took up the negotiation on June 27th. (E.P., Part I, No.295). As <sup>his suggestion</sup> ~~there it~~ included a definite mention of "spiritual privileges", and the agent for their maintenance was to be the Sultan, it was supported by the British government.

It was just at this moment that the Russian troops actually

crossed the Pruth and the British and French ambassadors agreed to urge the Porte not to treat this as a necessary outbreak of war (See dispatch of July 3rd in E.P. Part I, no.321). Stratford in fact resolved on a negotiation of his own with the representatives of the four powers at Constantinople and tried to work out a blending of Menshikov's note with Reshid's answer to keep the chance of negotiation open as long as possible, but without surrendering the sovereign right of the Sultan (E.P. Part I, no.321).

While these representatives of the Powers were wrestling with the scruples and the increasing enthusiasm for war of the Sultan's ministers, the Austrian government accepted the original French proposal of a month earlier as a likely basis and proposed a Conference in Vienna. Clarendon accepted by telegraph, and a note was issued at once, adopted by the four powers, and forwarded to both the Porte and the Tsar for their consideration and acceptance. It is worth noticing that this note was drawn up in entire neglect of Stratford's parallel negotiation with the Porte at Constantinople, and absolutely without any consideration of the opinion of the Turkish ministers, and, much worse perhaps, without the great ambassador's approval. In fact the issue of his negotiation,—a Turkish ultimatum coupled with a declaration of the rights of the Christians in Turkey to the Sultan's protection,—had been simultaneously

sent to Vienna for transmission to St. Petersburg. It was simply suppressed - so much for the independence of the Porte!

The Vienna note declared (E.P. Part I, 331) among other things that:-

"The government of the Sultan will remain faithful to the letter and spirit of the Treaties of Kuchuk-Kainardji and Adrianople relative to the protection of the Christian religion and that his majesty considers himself bound in honour to cause to be observed for ever, and to preserve from all prejudice either now or hereafter the enjoyment of the spiritual privileges which have been granted by His Majesty's august ancestors to the Orthodox Eastern Church, and which are maintained and confirmed by him; moreover in a spirit of exalted equity to cause the Greek rite to share in the advantages granted to the other Christian rites by convention or special arrangement."

The note thus safeguarded the interests of Turkey by a limitation of the promise to spiritual privileges, and <sup>by</sup> omitting the words "ab antiquo", both of which concessions had been refused by Menshikov. There was a studied ambiguity as to what agent should secure these privileges, and there was a preliminary promise to remain faithful to the spirit and letter of the Treaty of Kainardji, the very interpretation of which was the cause of dispute.

On August 11th it was known that the Tsar had accepted the note, and with complete self-satisfaction the statesmen, conscious that the most difficult portion of the negotiation was over, waited for the inevitable acquiescence of the Porte. Gradually it became known as the month wore on that their efforts were being frustrated

by some fatal influence, and as the current legend was that Stratford could do what he liked with the Porte, that influence could only be that of the masterful British ambassador. Neither the Queen, the Prince Consort, Clarendon or Aberdeen had any confidence in Stratford's desire for peace, or readiness to obey their injunctions, suspecting him, as their correspondence shows, of implacable antipathy towards Russia and of a determination to settle the question once for all. The Queen thought that "Stratford's private letters exhibit clearly on his part a desire for war and to drag us into it" (Letters, Vol.II, p.460, also p.457, 469) Aberdeen prepared her for Stratford's resignation "which she would not at all regret" (Maxwell, Vol.II, p.17) Cowley reported to Clarendon the account of the French ambassador at the Porte that "publicly and officially Stratford had obeyed instructions and called on the Ottoman government to accept the Vienna Note, but lets it be seen that his private opinion is at variance with his official language and he does not bring that personal influence to bear which would have been so useful at the present time" (Maxwell, Vol.II, p.18). The truth of course was that the statesmen responsible for the grand effort of Vienna exaggerated the acquiescent attitude of the Turkish ministers, were ignorant of the rising feeling in Constantinople, and failed to realise Stratford's difficulties

in wrestling with the numerous well-meant but confusing efforts of the Powers. It was perhaps too much to expect that his ruthless intelligence, with its keen sense of the realities of the "Question", would be fired with enthusiasm for the shifty or bungling evasion that had emanated from Vienna. At the same time, whatever his feelings may have been, and however they were expressed, they could in the end have had little effect on the great question of peace or war. The demands of Russia were such as no Turkish minister could have accepted without abasing the Sultan's rule, and infuriating his people, and such as no ambassador, French or English, could have advised him to accept. A representative of less experience and personality than Stratford could have hastened the crisis, he could not for ever have stayed it, at least while Nicholas lived and continued his demands.

It was not till August 31st that the British ministers heard of the final vote of the General Council of the Sultan which refused to accept the note without certain modifications. It objected, first, to the most-favoured-religion clause, (if we may borrow a term from the economic sphere), the equal rights of toleration granted to the Greek as had been granted to other rites. This was on account of the preponderant number of Greeks in Turkey, and the special arrangements concluded with Austria on behalf of



the insignificant body of Roman Catholics. Secondly, it insisted on the addition to the phrase describing the protection of the Christian religion of the words "by the Sublime Porte". This addition revealed in epitome the issue between Russia and Turkey, and implicitly repudiated the Russian claim to a general protectorate over the Greek Christians, to be exercised by the Tsar. The Powers, though regretting the delay, had to agree that the Turkish modifications expressed their original intentions and recommended their adoption by the Tsar.

The Tsar's reply, both in matter and manner, shattered their complacency, as he claimed that, as he had accepted the note without modification, so must the Sultan. This was the very point on which British radical opinion was to split, and on his agreement with the Tsar's position here John Bright based his reasoned objection to the war that followed. (Letter to Abraham Watkin, p.6). The question however was not exactly one of arbitration between two powers. The Sultan was the one whose interests and independence had been imperilled by the aggressive demands of Menshikov's mission and its sequel in the Occupation. In reality, the powers were arbitrating not between Russia and Turkey, but between Russia and themselves, trying to extricate themselves from the necessity of expelling the Russian troops by force from the Principalities.

The Tsar had nothing at stake except his obstinacy and his "honour" though neither of these was inconsiderable, together with the hopes excited among his subjects of a fresh Imperial and religious advance. Nicholas was all the more enraged as he regarded the alterations as solely due to the hated ambassador, whom he called the "Padishah of the Sultan". Stratford in fact, unappreciated by his rather jealous masters in the British government, occupied the very position of influence with the Sultan which it was the very height of the ambition of the Tsar to obtain. Beside such a personal influence treaties and alliances could count as nothing. Great Britain possessed in fact what to Russia was still a subject for envy, and it did not affect the position in the Tsar's eyes that we could not or would not take advantage of that position.

But what were the powers to do? Were they to put pressure on the Porte to accept a form of words acknowledged to be ambiguous? If so, what pressure was possible except the giving over of the Turkish Empire to the will of the Tsar? The situation from the point of view of the British government is well described in a letter of Clarendon to Sir G. C. Lewis of September 12th:-

"We can't press the Turks too hard about the Note - 1st, because public opinion at home would be against it, and 2nd, because otherwise Russia would be established at Constantinople in a twelvemonth. ~~On the other hand,~~ On the other hand, if they yielded and took the unmodified

Note, there would be a revolution which would cost the Sultan his life and his throne. His brother who is already intriguing against him would succeed to the throne and bring into office the most fanatical+ignorant war party that has been known in Turkey for many years." (Maxwell, Vol.II,,p.20).

Nor would some of the members of the British Cabinet have tolerated such a step as the simple desertion of Turkey, and Lord John<sup>Russell</sup>, more warlike than Palmerston, declared he would resign office rather than consider it (Maxwell, Vol.II, p.23).

So Stratford was not recalled and was to receive a tardy but unacknowledged justification from an unexpected source, which showed that he had rightly understood the interpretation which the Russians could and would put upon the note, for Nesselrode had written in confidence to Meyendorf, the Russian minister ~~of~~<sup>at</sup> Berlin, that the interpretations the Porte was seeking to exclude were exactly those which Russia would insist on attaching to the note. The note then had to be given up, for it was impossible to ask the Porte to accept one interpretation when it was fully warned that another would be applied by the other party. The circumstances connected with the interpretation of the note gave opportunity, rather unjustly, for further accusations of Russian duplicity. At this time the war party at Constantinople succeeded in getting the upper hand and contrary to the advice of Stratford and the Turkish ministers, a great assembly of Muftis and Ulemas demanded

the evacuation of the principalities, and the Porte declared war.

The war spirit in Constantinople had now got out of bounds and to protect the Christian inhabitants of the ~~Sultan~~<sup>city</sup> and the Sultan himself from their fanatic spirit, the British and French fleets were ordered up the Dardanelles. It was a cruel dilemma for the Western powers - either to follow blindly in the wake of a Turkish Grand Council and cause a European Question to be guided by such a body, or to see the Russians, as was hourly expected, appear at Constantinople. The actual advice given to Stratford was to use the fleets in any way and any place he chose for the defence of Turkish territory against direct aggression. "If the Russian fleet were to come out of Sebastopol the fleets would as a matter of course pass through the Bosphorus" (into the Black Sea) (E.P. Part I, ~~pp~~ 133). This was the halfway house adopted by the British Cabinet between going all the way with the Turkish Grand Council and declaring war, thus turning ourselves into principles in the quarrel, <sup>and</sup> ~~or~~ leaving the Turk to his fate. But as Clarendon wrote:-

"Peace has been my only object. I won't say at all cost, because the abandonment of the Turk would be dishonourable, and a departure from our British and European policy in the East would be utterly indefensible."  
(Maxwell, Vol. II, p. 28).

Yet still there was hope of peace. Diplomats who had

spent the summer and autumn preparing Notes as a basis for averting war, were now busy devising schemes upon which peace might be restored, before actual hostilities commenced. The Tsar declared that despite the Turkish declaration of war he would not take the offensive. The Conference at Vienna was still proceeding, and Aberdeen was still of opinion that peace was possible, though the Prince Consort in a capable memorandum of September 25th<sup>, and again on Oct 10th,</sup> protested against his policy of drift, and the fruitless attempt to settle the dispute by Notes and particular words and expressions designed to avoid the real objects in dispute (Letters, Vol.II, p.452, 454) The Tsar himself took a hand in the effort to secure peace, and at this time was conducting a personal correspondence with the Queen which once more reveals the view of foreign policy which he held as based on the sovereign's personal will, and the methods of diplomacy he favoured. "In public affairs and foreign relations there is no more sacred pledge than the word of the sovereign with whom in the last word lie the issues of peace or war ..... For him to recoil from danger or to break his word by wishing anything other than he had ever wished would be beneath him." The Queen quite properly answered that personal qualities are not sufficient in international engagements, adding that the most attentive examination of the 7th Article of the Treaty of Kainardji could not make it

susceptible of the extension the Tsar wished to give it (Letters, Vol.II, 458, 459). The Tsar's appeal to the queen to use all her influence for peace thus failed of any success.

The hope of securing the assent and co-operation of the German Powers in what was regarded as a European question was one reason for the determination to exhaust every hope of peace. After another month of frenzied negotiations, the Western Powers and Austria came to an agreement on the terms which Russia should be asked to adopt. On November 29th Clarendon sent to Vienna on behalf of England and France the draft of a collective note and a Protocol of Conference to be signed by the four Powers placing on record the common policy of Europe. It was signed on December 4th and is of great importance as laying down the principle on which the war was ultimately to be fought. It states (E.P. 282) that:-

"The existence of Turkey in the limits assigned to her by treaty, is one of the necessary conditions of the balance of power in Europe and the undersigned record with satisfaction that the existing war cannot in any case lead to modifications in the boundaries of the two Empires which might be calculated to alter the state of possession in the East which has been established for a length of time and which is equally necessary for the tranquility of all the other powers."

This was in fact a reaffirmation of the Principles of 1841. For the moment, the moderation of the Russian government afforded the best of all the opportunities yet given for averting war.

### XIII. THE DECLARATION of WAR.

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But meanwhile there occurred the event which extinguished the last hopes of peace. The Turkish forces, heedless of the efforts still being made, had attacked the Russian forces on the Danube with considerable success, and their ships moved about in open defiance of the great Russian fleet in the Black Sea, which on November 30th retaliated by entirely destroying the Turkish Squadron at Sinope. Although war had been declared for two months, immense indignation was created both in Great Britain and in France - here, because it was considered as only another example of <sup>the</sup> violent duplicity of the Tsar, since his word had been plighted that the Turkish declaration of war would not be followed by any offensive measures on his part. In addition, negotiations were in progress, and the Russian~~s~~ excuse, that the squadron had been met at sea and was transporting troops, was untrue, for it was anchored in the harbour at Sinope and was there smashed to pieces in a "massacre". In France, there was equal indignation, based however, not so much on humanitarian sympathies ~~but~~ <sup>as</sup> on the outrage inflicted on national honour and dignity, since the incident had occurred in spite of the vicinity of the French squadrons, and in spite of the assurance that there was no wish to commence an

aggressive war (See Napoleon's personal appeal and remonstrance to the Tsar of January 1854 in Martin, Vol.III, p.6). It was realised in both countries that affective means must be taken against the recurrence of a similar disaster, and to defend the territory of the Sultan against attack. (E.P. Part II, No.330). On January 4th the momentous step was taken of sending the combined fleets into the Black Sea to secure not only the territory of the Sultan but the complete and exclusive possession of that Sea by the Western Powers. The Russian ships were accordingly "invited" to retire to Sebastopol.

But even yet the Western Powers were not at war with Russia and this step was disguised as a mere protective measure, not directed against the Tsar, though in the letter of Napoleon quoted above this position was neglected, for the French Emperor represented the prohibition of all navigation in the Black Sea as a "material guarantee" to counterbalance that possessed by Russia in the occupation of the Principalities. But even with this opportunity for the definite policy of the Western powers in the form of naval coercion to have its weight, the hopes of diplomatic success were few, though frenzied efforts were still being made by means of a second protocol (January 13th) to influence the Tsar by means of the united opinion of Europe, and consideration



all powerful at this time. However the new proposals (E.P. Part II, No.403) were rejected by the Tsar for they arrived on the day after he heard of the new decision of the British Cabinet. This time, with a deliberate denial of the right of Europe to intervene in the negotiations between himself and the Porte, he insisted that negotiations should be carried on directly between Russia and the Porte either at headquarters or at St. Petersburg. This was a definite rejection of the traditional policy of Europe, and of Great Britain in particular, and with it ended all hope of peace. The Tsar in fact could not forgive the entrance of the naval fleets into the Black Sea, touching as it did the naval "honour" of Russia based on its never defeated course since the time of Peter the Great. On January 22nd he empowered his ambassador in London to ask for explanations and if these were not satisfactory to demand his passports, which he accordingly did on February 4th. On February 7th ~~the occasion~~ the situation was further embittered by the publication of the Tsar's conversations of a year before in answer to the provocation of a Russian paper, which accused the British government of having changed its policy in the interval. In this country the revelation of the Tsar's attitude to the Turkish Empire was of course accompanied by the usual outbursts of public indignation at his duplicity. In Russia the publication

of the interviews was denounced as an unheard of outrage on international and diplomatic *decency*. It is amazing that Aberdeen could still be able to write to Clarendon on the 12th that "war is not inevitable", (Maxwell, Vol. II, p. 40) and in the House of Lords he still adopted a temporising attitude to the question of peace and war. On February 14th <sup>Lord</sup> Clamricarde pressed for information as to the mystifying relations of Great Britain and Russia, and the virtual state of war which existed since the rupture of diplomatic relations revealed on the departure of the Russian ambassador. "If we are at peace what is the peace? And what is the peace which is the object of the war?" In reply, Clarendon made an answer that has since become famous though it is nearly always misquoted:-

"The question has been asked whether we are at peace or war. It is one that is very difficult to answer. We are not at war, because war is not declared; we are not strictly at peace with Russia, the diplomatic relations are suspended. I consider that we are in the intermediate state; that a desire for peace is just as sincere as ever, but then I must say that our hopes of maintaining it are gradually dwindling away and that we are drifting towards war."

War in fact was inevitable because neither the Tsar nor the united opinion of Europe would give way on the matter of the occupation of the principalities, and peace was only possible if some influence could arise to make either Russia or Great Britain

retreat from the positions each had taken up.

The last step was now to be taken. On February 22nd Austria intimated that if the two Western powers would present an ultimatum demanding the evacuation of the Principalities and giving a time limit, she would support them. On February 27th accordingly, the two Foreign Ministers demanded the complete evacuation by April 30th. The Tsar refused to give any answer to the ultimatum and on March 27th the definite declaration of war was made. The Queen announced to Parliament that the negotiations with the Tsar had terminated and that she felt bound to "afford active assistance to her ally the Sultan". Next day the Declaration of War was issued with a history of the steps that had led up to it. (Annual Register 1854, p.531).

#### XIV. THE INFLUENCE of POPULAR OPINION.

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It is possible for a discussion of the origins of the war, based on the conduct of the intricate and long-protracted diplomatic discussions which preceded it, to give the impression that they were its sole determining cause. Nothing could be further from the truth, for one of the most remarkable accompaniments of the period of negotiation was a popular opinion in all the countries concerned which had an all-powerful influence on the actual result.

In Great Britain for months public opinion was dubious, and this is reflected in the attitude of the "Times" which Greville on July 12th 1853 accuses of inconsistency, its leaders and articles by turns leaning to one side or the other. But this was changed after the affair of Sinope. Before that event British opinion was perhaps accurately represented by "Punch" as a sleeping lion vainly prodded by the quills of insistent journalists. After Sinope, it is reflected in a cartoon representing the British lion straining at the leash while Aberdeen remarks plaintively "I'm afraid I must let him go". In fact before the violence of public opinion, the influences tending towards peace were overwhelmed.

An English deputation from the Society of Friends paid a visit to St. Petersburg on February 10th to plead the cause of peace. But they represented no one in England but themselves, and although the Tsar received them in the most friendly manner it is incredible that either he or his Chancellor ~~sh~~<sup>S</sup>ould have believed them to have any influence on public opinion. The Diplomatic Study never suggests that <sup>the</sup> Russians cherished the delusion often attributed to them afterwards that the British force in foreign affairs would be lessened by the influence of the Manchester School. The Radicals, of whom Bright and Cobden had hitherto been the leaders, were in fact full of enthusiasm for the war as a struggle for freedom, and for the right of the lesser states against the preponderant Empire of the North. In their private correspondence there is evidence that Bright and Cobden, though they made a worthy fight for their principles, were aware of the hopelessness of their task. Ten years later in connection with the Civil War Cobden declared in Parliament that at the time of the Crimean War he made up his mind that should a war break out again he would never open his lips from the time the first gun was fired till peace was made. (Speeches, p.570). Writing to Bright in January 1855, he pointed out that there was far more sympathy for their views in Parliament than in the country.

"I defy you from one extremity of the country to the other to find a mixed body of men in which you and I should be so well treated as we were on the last day of the session." (Morley, p.631).

It was in fact the total lack of support in the country that isolated them in the House. Gladstone and the Peelites though they had general leanings to non-interventions had failed to work out a policy that would have averted war, and in fact were in the Cabinet that was responsible for its declaration. Their ardour only cooled with their almost immediate resignation from the reconstructed Cabinet under Palmerston.

So the Court, the veterans of government and diplomacy, all the power of the Press and of business was in favour of the War, and in addition the middle and industrial classes would have nothing to say against it. We have in the memoirs of Greville a valuable testimony to the state of opinion at the time. On 31st January 1854, he records how at the opening of Parliament while the Queen and Prince Consort were well received in the streets, the crowd reserved all their enthusiasm for the Turkish ambassadors. On February 25th he writes:-

"The rage for this war gets every day more vehement and nobody seems to fear anything but that we may not spend money and men enough in waging it. The few sober people who have courage enough to hint at its being impolitic and uncalled for are almost hooted down and their warnings and scruples are treated with indignation and contempt."

The military spirit of the country was roused as it had not been since the Great Peace had been made in 1815, as Cobden with his usual insight was aware. (Morely p.578). The feeling against Russia, however unbalanced, had its origin in a healthy dislike of despotism, but in addition we can discern an instinctive desire almost to fight for its own sake in preference to the "love of peace that was full of wrongs and shams". Tennyson was at this time writing his poem "Maud", full of indignation at the "<sup>civil</sup>~~civil~~war" which was one aspect of the triumph of the Industrial Revolution. In a line afterwards cancelled he rejoiced "that the long, long canker of peace is over and gone"; that "God's just wrath shall be wreaked on a giant liar" (the Tsar); "that the heart of the people beat with one desire, And noble thought be freer under the sun". He protests against the possibility that "An infant civilisation be ruled with rod or with knout" and is resolved "That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease". These and other lines form an admirable illustration of the state of general opinion. The prolonged negotiations instead of giving time for passions to cool gave time for all that resentment with which the people of England had watched the Tsar's actions in 1848 and 1849 to burst forth with an uncontrollable vehemence.

The war fever took many questionable forms among which was

the Press attack on the Prince Consort which accompanied the last stage of the negotiations. It was imputed to the Prince that he was Austrian, and therefore took the Russian side in the Eastern Question, using his influence with the government and particularly with Aberdeen against Palmerston and the Turks. Here was a double misconception for as far as continental policy was concerned the Prince was German and not Austrian, and Austria was not in this matter "Russian". Hatred for Austria was however universal, as she was still living in the odium of the Hungarian victory, while the Prince was paying dearly for the Court's momentary success in dismissing Palmerston. He was hated by the Radicals for Palmerston's sake, and by the old Protectionists for his friendship with the Peelites and the organisation of the Exhibition of 1851, while he was universally suspected of carrying on a correspondence with foreign courts. In December he wrote to Stockman:-

"The defeat of the Turks at Sinope has made people furious: one almost fancies oneself in a lunatic asylum". "My being committed to the Tower was believed all over the country, nay, even that the Queen had been arrested. People surrounded the Tower in thousands to see us brought to it." Martin, Vol.II. p.533, 562.

At the opening of Parliament, the government's declarations silenced but did not satisfy criticism as we can see from a curious incident recorded in Martins Life. When Roebuck's committee wished



to examine the Prince, the Duke of Newcastle was horrified to hear of the existence in the Committee of a belief in a determination on the part of the Prince that the Crimean expedition should fail. (Vol.III, p.219, 221). Yet the Prince could justly claim that he had given no cause for any imputation of a lack of sincerity and patriotism. Sir Theodore Martin tells us that the Prince's papers on the Eastern Question alone from 1853-1857 fill fifty folio volumes (Introduction to Vol.III) so that abundant testimony remains both of his influence and opinion on the war. From what is printed it is evident that the Prince shared the popular opinion of his day, and this is particularly worth notice in any discussion of British relations with Russia, when we remember his intense dislike of Palmerston, his personality, methods and policy. It is simply wide of the mark to represent the Crimean War as Palmerston's war, or Stratford's war. The Court itself had desired peace in the opening stages of the diplomatic struggle and its suspicion of Lord Stratford's desire to drag us into war has been quoted earlier. But once engaged in the war the Court became as deaf as *the country* to all moderating influences. For instance, the Queen insisted that Lord Aberdeen should explain away his answer to Lord Lyndhurst's attack on the government

on June 19th. Lord Lyndhurst, in course of the debate, declared that the Russian Empire had doubled itself in the previous fifty years, & that no peace should be made before the destruction of the fleet and the fortifications of the Black Sea, and ended with words only quoted here as typical of many such speeches from Lord Derby and others:-

"I believe that if this barbarous nation, this enemy of all progress except that which tends to strengthen and consolidate its own power, this state which punishes education as a crime, should once succeed in establishing itself in the heart of Europe, it is the greatest calamity that would befall the human race."

Aberdeen answered in his precise and exact manner, and drew attention to the fact that, at the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829, when her armies were within fifty miles of Constantinople, Russia acquired not an inch of Turkish territory in Europe, nor had she done so in the subsequent twenty-five years. It is a valuable commentary on the feelings of the hour that this speech ran so counter to public opinion that the Queen wrote to remonstrate. It had caused her "very great uneasiness" and she was amazed to hear the "first minister of the Crown enter into an impartial examination of the Emperor of Russia's character and conduct, vindicating him from the exaggerated charges brought against him and his policy when there was enough in it to make us fight with all our might against it." (Letters, Vol.III, p.44; Martin, Vol.III, p.76).

The war fever in England showed no signs of abatement when on August 2nd the Danube provinces were evacuated and the Russian armies recrossed the Pruth, thus removing the "material guarantees" for the Tsar's claims, ~~and~~ the ostensible object of the war. The war went on as if nothing had happened because it seemed beyond discussion that Russia would make another attempt at a moment more favourable for herself. From the outset of the war it had been seen that to prevent such an event there would have to be a great effort to strike at the basis of Russia's aggressive power and this was considered to be the great fortified naval harbour, not long completed, at Sebastopol. It was in fact a month before the declaration of war that Graham, the first Lord of the Admiralty, wrote to Clarendon (March 1st);-

"The operation which will be ever memorable and decisive is the capture and destruction of Sebastopol. On this my heart is set: the eyetooth of the Bear must be drawn: & till his fleet and naval arsenal in the Black Sea are destroyed, there is no safety for Constantinople - no security for the peace of Europe". Maxwell, Vol.II, p.41.

Between the date of the evacuation of the principalities and the date when the fleet was ordered to the Crimea, ~~the~~ public opinion was universally expressed in favour of this extension of the objects of the war. An article in "Times" of June 15th had a great influence on public opinion. (Cook, p.79).

"The broad policy of the war consists in striking at the very heart of the Russian power in the East and that

heart is at Sebastopol. To destroy Sebastopol is nothing less than to demolish the entire fabric of Russian ambition in those very regions where it is most dangerous to Europe. This feat and this only would have really promoted the solid and desirable objects of the war."

A memorandum of Lord Palmerston of the same day contains other arguments for this step. England and France, entered into war at great expense and for a great purpose, "would lose caste in the world if they concluded the war with only a small result. The mere evacuation of the Principalities would be a triumph rather than a defeat for Russia". We should have no security for the future and when next England and France were disunited, she could again attack Turkey. "It seems absolutely necessary that some heavy blow should be struck at the naval power and territorial dimensions of Russia, or the reputation of England and France will materially suffer." Russia should therefore be expelled from Georgia and Circassia <sup>as well as</sup> ~~and~~ the Crimea, the Turks to effect the former and the allied forces the latter. Nor was the usual appeal to economy lacking, for the capture of Sebastopol and the Black Sea fleet would "enable us materially and at once to reduce our naval expenditure and dictate the conditions of peace with regard to the naval position of Russia in the Black Sea." (Ashley, Vol. II, p. 295) In view of the later attitudes it is worth noting that to a greater or less degree Aberdeen and Gladstone shared the same hopes. When

the false news of the fall of Sebastopol arrived, Aberdeen wished it to be destroyed at once, (Maxwell, Vol.II, p.47) while Gladstone wrote to congratulate and to thank Palmerston for the manner in which he urged:-

"When we were amidst many temptations to far more embarrassing and less effective proceedings, the duty of concentrating our strokes upon the heart and centre of the war at Sebastopol." (Ashley, Vol.II, p.300).

One voice, in fact, alone was raised against this step. In the same month Bright wrote the effective and noble letter which must always be a memorial of his fame even to those who disagree with the policy he proposed on this question. But against the opinion of his own day he could do nothing.

In fact the ground had now shifted to what Lord Stratford had called in the letter that terrified Queen Victoria "a very comprehensive war on the part of England and France" and there was a determination that the Tsar must not only abandon his demands, but renounce all stipulations in former treaties on which his arrogant pretensions had been formed. In addition the most extravagant projects were put forward later to secure the permanent extinction of all fears of the preponderance of Russia, in Europe, as well as in the East. With every sign of popular support, Clarendon engaged in a treaty with Sweden directed against Russia with the ultimate object of another expedition to the Baltic to subject

Cronstadt to the fate of Sebastopol (Argyll, Vol. I, <sup>564; Fitzmaurice</sup> ~~Fritz~~, I, 132, ~~564~~). The frontier territories of Georgia, Finland and the Caucasus were to be separated and made buffer states, while Poland was to be reestablished. Well might Granville write to Argyll before the fall of Sebastopol:-

"The nation has been lashed by Parliamentary speeches, by public meetings, and by the Press, into the most extravagant expectations of what we were to attempt or what we were to achieve, so that the general feeling about peace was bound to be one of disappointment and mortification."  
(Fitzmaurice, Vol. I, p. 106).

We shall see later that after the fall of Sebastopol the enthusiasm for the war showed no signs of abatement and that it was only with difficulty that the Queen, the government and the people could contemplate the making of peace before an attempt to secure the "dismemberment" of Russia could be made.

The enthusiasm of the Russian people was equally great. From the inception of the dispute the Tsar had acted as the guardian and protector of the Orthodox Faith, its pilgrims, its holy places and its privileges in the Empire of the Sultan. In each step he had taken, he had been supported by the general enthusiasm of the Russian nation, which looked to an addition to his Empire. Retreat from the position which Menshikov had taken up, or ~~for~~ the occupation of the principalities would have been extremely difficult ~~for the Tsar~~, but after the entry of the fleets in the Black

with the avowed object of shutting up the Russian fleet in Sebastopol, retirement on the part of the Tsar became impossible. A military and autocratic Empire which had been accustomed to strike, where she could, and when she could, against all who ventured to resist her, could not suffer the loss of prestige and pride then involved in giving way. It was denounced in Nesselrode's letter to Brunnow (Annual Register 1854, p.501) as "an act of flagrant hostility" and "as a violence offered to our belligerent rights". It was in fact as decisive for war on one side as Sinope on the other and led to <sup>what was</sup> ~~the~~ equivalent to the Russian declaration of war.

The information from ~~our~~ ambassador at St. Petersburg as to the state of feeling there at the beginning of 1854 made it obvious that even if the Tsar had been disposed to make concessions, the angry passions now aroused among his subjects were making it impossible for him to recede. It was reported that Nesselrode exerted himself in the cause of moderation, but that it was impossible to name any other Russian whose voice was raised in the same sense.

"It is to this very circumstance that is to be ascribed the remarkable unpopularity which now attaches to Count Nesselrode and the intrigues which are on foot against him ..... I hold it to be certain that if peace still exists, it is in great measure attributable to the Chancellor, and that the Emperor is infinitely more moderate than the immense bulk of his subjects ..... I long since stated to your Lordship that a spirit would be evoked

by the Russian policy which it would be found very difficult to lay, but now that the spirit has come forth, so far from the Emperor being amongst those most eager to obey its mandates, it is already very apparent that his popularity is shaken by the resistance which he offers to public opinion while the Chancellor is openly spoken of as an alien, a traitor, and a man bought by English gold."  
(Martin, Vol.III, p.9).

~~On January 29th~~ It is therefore not surprising that the Tsar rejected the personal overture made by Napoleon. His hatred of France had previously caused his rejection of the natural and geographical alliance of France and Russia. The old Emperor hated the new and ended his answer by a declaration:- "Menaces will not induce me to recede. Russia will prove herself in 1854 what she was in 1812" (Martin, Vol.III, p.6). There was something singularly unfortunate about everything the Tsar did at this time, and if he had wished to turn the tide of feeling in France against himself, he could have found nothing more effective than this reference to the events of 1812. While in England the nation pushed on the government, in France Napoleon only with difficulty led the people into war. As was soon apparent this answer of the Russian Emperor changed apathy into eager interest.

Both in the manifesto of February 23rd and in the declaration of war of April 11th (Annual Register 1854, p.533), the Tsar called on his subjects, as a divine mission, to fight for their co-religionists under Turkish rule. The Russians were taking up



arms for their persecuted brethren professing the Christian faith. England and France had ranged themselves by the side of Christianity against Russia fighting for the orthodox faith. So the war was embittered by the hatred of creeds, for the Turks equally regarded the struggle as a holy war. Pan-Slavism had at last awakened Pan-Islamism. For the time of the Vienna Conference there broke out a fierce expression of Moslem frenzy and fanaticism, and even Stratford was to find them "out of hand" (Lane-Poole, Vol. II, p. 306). The aggression of the Tsar awakened the long latent spirit of the Turkish warrior, and the high tone of the Porte found an echo in the Moslem assemblies, which rose in open mutiny and protest against concessions to the infidels. The idea of the British government that the Turks were always negligible and acquiescent, and that their military strength was insignificant, was at any rate not shared by the Turks themselves. They were eager for war and certain of success. Soldiers from Egypt and the distant provinces of the Empire came in answer to the manifesto of the Khalif of the Moslem world and their success against the Russian forces was later a bitter blow to Nicholas.

So in Turkey as in Russia religious enthusiasm once awakened made it impossible to maintain peace. In nine months of negotiation a peaceful settlement had been tried for. The policy of patience and control over the masses of all countries became more

and more difficult to sustain. In the controversy of the Holy Places, as we have seen, lay all the elements of a dispute which in its religious bearings was as old as the division of Latin and Greek Christianity, and of which the political implications could only become prominent with the increasing advance of the Empire of Russia. But every instinct of religious and imperial ambition was wounded by the course of events in Syria. Mere settlement could not restore Russian equanimity, because all the circumstances about it had glaringly revealed the direct influence of the Western powers over a declining and expiring empire. Only a definite victory for Menshikov's mission could have averted war, and pride and obstinacy prevented an entire retreat which would have been conducted under the fixed regard of Europe and the East. The religious fervour of the Russian people, roused in defence of a crusade for the Orthodox faith, outweighed at last all suggestions of policy and prudence.

## XV. BRITISH POLICY WITH REGARD to the WAR.

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We have examined in outline the course of the diplomatic negotiations which ended in the declaration of war, together with the state of public opinion at the time. We may now attempt to answer the question "Upon what principles did the British statesmen act in their opposition to the Tsar's activities with reference to the Turkish Empire?"

"England put her money on the wrong horse." Lord Salisbury's famous dictum of forty years later was based on the conception that we fought Russia on behalf of the Turk; opposed a Christian power in order to secure the Moslem Empire. But it is impossible to read the diplomatic discussions which led up to the war without realising that the expression "the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire" which played a great part in them was only a formula of diplomacy. As in 1840, so now, it described not the actual condition of Turkey as a state, but the resolution of Europe with regard to it. The underlying tone of a great deal of the language of our statesmen reveals the feeling that Turkey had no real claim, such as a civilised power would properly enjoy, over the European dominions she ruled. The Turkish State and government came in for little practical consideration. At the Vienna negotiations

it had no representatives. Its acquiescence in whatever the great powers should resolve was taken for granted. Its ultimatum to Russia was unceremoniously suppressed. The terms on which its very independence was to rest were not accounted a matter for the consideration of the Sultan. Much that proceeded at Constantinople emanated from the influence of the Western Powers and their ambassadors. As for Turkish integrity, Europe had seen province after province taken from the Ottoman dominions, and the very year after the Treaty of Paris was to see the formation of a Roumanian state from a portion of its Empire. European support was in fact equally fatal to the integrity as to the independence of Turkey.

It would be nearer the truth to say that the motive behind our action was the desire for the transformation of the Turkish Empire by British Councils. The "Padishah of the Sultan" in fact exercised an influence over the Sultan and his government that would have completely satisfied the Tsar's ambition to maintain a weak Turkey in dependence on Russia. We may excuse Nicholas if he saw in this struggle the fable reversed, and the lion hunting in the ass's skin. "The Turkish Empire is a thing to be tolerated, but not to be reconstructed" he had declared in his most emphatic manner in 1853. But through British influence, Christian

states capable of self defence and of self government were certain to arise from its ruins in the end. If these countries succeeded in gaining emancipation from the Turk, their independence would certainly be as zealously asserted against the Tsar. From one point of view the whole issue lay in that declaration of Nicholas. A reconstruction of the Turkish Empire must have led at some time to a diminution in the rights of interference in the government of the Principalities undoubtedly secured to him in the Treaty of Adrianople.

Yet, unreformed or reconstructed, it was not the cause of Turkey that concerned our Cabinet. The Duke of Argyle in his retrospect of the Cabinet discussions of 1853 and 1854 records his deliberate conviction that there was not one single discussion on the Turks as a people, or as a government fit to rule over the Empire we were defending. (Autobiography, Vol.II, p.26). The British attitude was that the Russians must be kept out of Constantinople, not that the Turks were bound by the same consideration to be kept in. When the question arose as to whether we should abandon the cause of the Turks if they did not accept the Vienna Note, it was realised that such a course would be absurd, inconsistent, and practically impossible. The very essence of the British contention was that the defeat of Turkey in her resistance

to the Russian demand would be the defeat of Europe and of Great Britain. To abandon Turkey, was to abandon our own position and policy.

The same policy may be seen in the British attitude to the Principalities. Our interest was not that these provinces should maintain their embarrassing and increasingly impossible connection with Turkey, as that they should simply not be Russian. Desirable as it was that they, together with Serbia, should for their own sakes obtain a definite political existence and constitution, yet the only certain interest of Europe was that they should not be Russian even if they fell from the grasp of Turkey. Their dependence on Turkey was justifiable because it formed their sole means of defence, and when we remember that they had scarcely ever enjoyed ten consecutive years of tranquility since the rise of the Russian Empire, we can understand Palmerston's rejection of the idea that the Christian races inhabiting Turkey could be the rightful heirs of the Turk.

"There are no sufficient Christian elements as yet for a Christian state in European Turkey capable of performing its functions as a component part of the European system. .... A reconstruction of Turkey means its subjection to Russia, direct or indirect, immediate or for a time delayed." (Ashley, Vo.II, p.287).

Napoleon III and Gladstone were later to support the contrary policy of constituting them as a barrier against Russia, but that

was due to the possibilities created by the defeat of Russia in the war.

The attitude of British statesmen to the future of Turkey was in fact exceedingly diverse. There were those, and Palmerston was one of them, who believed that Turkey was a country not only qualified for independence but absolutely capable of progress in civilisation. Encouraged with wisdom and firmness, it might well form a substantial barrier against Russia. Turkey was in fact, not the dying man of the Tsar's imagination. (See Palmerston's notes on the Prince Consort's Memorandum in Ashley, Vol. II, p. 286) We may contrast the view of Lord Stratford, based on unrivalled knowledge of the Turks. In 1821 he had wished as a matter of humanity that "the Sultan were driven bag and baggage into the heart of Asia". As a matter of policy however, his opinion was that Turkey would have to be maintained as a bulwark against Russia, yet his numerous outspoken dispatches, both to the Sultan and to the home government, tell of the magnificent attempt which he inspired to reform the internal government of the Turkish dominions in Europe. This was the greatest side of a great man's activities, and he was to end his life realising that the climax of his efforts in the Firman of February 1856, had been to no purpose, because of the lack of European interest in securing

guarantees from Turkey for its practical adoption. Stratford at least was under no delusions as to the nature of the Turk.

The other opinion was that there was no vitality in the Turk, only ruin and decay; that its resources could never be developed and must be virtually exhausted; and that it could last no longer as an independent state. This was the opinion of Aberdeen, Lord Grey, Cobden and Bright. Aberdeen, as the negotiations show, had no belief whatever in the improvement of the Turks. Their whole system was vicious and abominable and he could quote with effect the very despatches sent home by Lord Stratford, with their frightful picture of lawless oppression and cruelty. Cobden's reasoned view of the state of Turkey is shown not only in his speeches but in his "Political Writings" (In the essay "Russia Turkey and England").

"We entertain no fears that our interests would be likely to suffer from the aggrandisement of a Christian power at the expense of Turkey even should that power be Russia. On the contrary we have no hesitation in avowing it as our deliberate conviction that not only Great Britain, but the entire civilised world will have reason to congratulate itself the moment when that territory again falls beneath the sceptre of any other European power whatever."

But important as this question is and great as its influence was on the members of the government, this was not the point at issue. There may have been much hope of the regeneration of Turkey if it did not fall into the hands of Russia, but there was



no belief in the regeneration of the Turks. It was the disposal of the Government, not the merits or demerits of the race, which was the real object of Europe to solve. As the Prince Consort wrote, before the end of 1853, "it would be a war, not for the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, but for the interests of the European powers of civilisation" (Martin, Vol. II p.527). We never really put our money on the Turkish horse.

What then was the positive motive of Great Britain? It was that the Tsar had raised an issue which never lay between himself alone and the Turk alone; that the interference single-handed of the northern power must be resisted; that it was not to be tolerated that Russia should work her will upon Turkey as an outlawed state. The Tsar rested his claim on his right and duty of protecting the Christian subjects of the Porte. But in that duty other powers would give no precedence to Russia. The British policy was to adhere to the principles laid down in the Treaty of 1840, which had been negotiated by Palmerston, and under our inducement had gained the adhesion of the whole power of Europe. That agreement we considered to contain the only principle compatible with peace - the denial of isolated action against Turkey with a view to acquiring special rights and powers. As the British declaration of the causes of war (March 28th 1854)

has it, the rejection of all <sup>our</sup> attempts ~~at~~ <sup>to</sup> meeting the Tsar's demands was due to the fact, that "security was not offered in the shape of a special and separate stipulation with Russia". That special and separate right was rejected not by Great Britain alone, but in three protocols by the united concert of Europe.

The history of the Vienna negotiations revealed this other difference, that while Europe required that the Christians should be protected by the Porte under whose government they lived, Russia was obviously desiring to protect them against their sovereign. No one power had done more to protect the Christian subjects against the corruption and religious fanaticism rife in Turkey than the British ambassador, and in all his attempts to secure the carrying out of the provisions of the Tanzimat of 1839 he had been opposed by the Russian agents. What the alternative reconstruction of Eastern Europe by the Tsar meant could be inferred from the condition of his own dominions. The British position was therefore that the regeneration of Turkey equally with its defence was the policy of a united Europe to be adopted on the principle of no selfish advantage to any one power.

So the positive course of the British government was to enlist the ready support of France, and to secure the active participation of Austria and Prussia in the policy of 1840; to encourage the powers to resist any demand on the part of Russia

tending to secure special rights, which, when added to her great preponderance of military power and geographical position of advantage, would in the end make her the arbiter of the fate of the Ottoman Empire. There is therefore in all the discussions of the question from the British point of view an unceasing insistence on the European concert and on the vindication of the public law of Europe against a wanton disturber. Nothing is more striking in the discussions which not only preceded but accompanied the whole course of the war, than the development of this idea of a united Europe and a law of Europe. Perhaps inherited from the Pax Romana and the ideals of the Holy Roman Empire, a consciousness of a community of interests had been born out of the struggle against Napoleon and had been embodied in the treaties of 1815. It was still alive in the arbitration schemes which accompanied the Great Exhibition. These ideas received a notable set back in their failure to operate during the course of the war, and in the disillusionment that followed it, but that they were present in British policy before the war broke out is undeniable.

From the time of the occupation of the Principalities, considered as a breach in the public law of Europe, right down to the making of the peace there was an unceasing and remarkable effort to bring about a settlement by diplomatic methods and to this end

to secure the active co-operation of Austria and Prussia in the cause of Europe. Nothing reveals this aspect of British policy more clearly than the series of letters which passed between the Queen<sup>Victoria</sup> and the King of Prussia in the opening months of the war. The King had appealed to the Queen to use her personal influence to prevent warlike measures against the Tsar, suggesting that Great Britain, ashamed of the motive cause of the war, the defence of the Turk, was waging a war for an idea ('ein Tendenzkrieg') connected with the preponderance of Russia and the restoration of the European balance of power. The King questioned whether such a "war for an idea" was morally justifiable - altogether a remarkable anticipation of the tendency of later opinion on the war. (Martin. Vol.III, p.41).

The Queen's answer includes this passage:-

"I would understand this language if I heard it from the Kings of Hanover and Saxony. But I have hitherto regarded Prussia as one of the Great Powers which since the peace of 1815 have been the guarantors of treaties, guardians of civilisation, defenders of the right, the ultimate arbitrators of the nations. And, for my part, I have felt the divine responsibility of this sacred office without undervaluing at the same time the heavy obligation, not unconnected with danger, which it imposes on me. If you abdicate these obligations you have also abdicated that position for Prussia and should such an example find imitators, then the civilisation of Europe would be delivered up to the play of words; right will no longer find a champion, the oppressed will no longer find an Umpire." (Letters, Vol.III, p.18).

The Queen adds that the most important clause in the contemplated treaty of alliance consisted of the promise by the Powers not to desire in any case to derive from the war any advantage to themselves. The King's answer to this letter acknowledges that he "cannot and will not side with Russia because Russia's arrogance and wickedness have caused this horrible trouble", but he considers that Napoleon should thank God that his view of Russian policy and his fidelity to the Queen prevent him from making the Emperor begin this Turkish war on the other side of his own frontier. The Queen's answer points out that Prussia had acknowledged in Protocols (signed with Austria, France and England) that the preservation of the integrity of the Turkish Empire was a European interest, and that his policy seemed to leave England and France to defend this European concern with their wealth and blood while he reserved to himself only an unworthy moral co-operation.

Nothing shows more clearly the existence of this appeal to the conscience of Europe. The European concert was never in active operation, but it was very nearly so, and the war was all but obviated by its efforts. Hitherto public enemies of Europe had been coerced by the efforts of one power or the united efforts of several, but now there was a serious attempt made to anticipate

and achieve the work of war by substituting diplomatic concert for a mere military coalition, and using moral instead of physical force. And but for the backwardness of the German powers and especially of Prussia, upon whose action that of Austria depended, the effort would have been successful. Whatever may be said about the "war-fever" in England, it was a wholly disinterested passion. Englishmen had nothing to gain by war and nothing to lose by peace. It was for no selfish object, but from motives of public right and moral indignation against a disturber of the peace, that we entered the war. It is an illustration of the appeal which resistance to Russia made at the time upon minds of many different kinds that Molesworth, the representative in Aberdeen's Coalition of the non-interventionist Radicals became one of the greatest enthusiasts for war in the Cabinet and that Gladstone to the end of his life firmly maintained the justice and expediency of the war. (Morley, Vol.I, p.367).

For what alternative was there? There was but one, held by a most insignificant section of the country headed by Cobden and Bright. Their view was that the old doctrine of a balance of power was an antiquated superstition; that Russia's power was useless for offence; that Russia's despotic system would in time become freedom; that our policy was wrong from the beginning; and

that we should not have interfered whatever the consequences to the Ottoman Empire. Bright was to declare in November 1854 that the English policy was one which in his conscience he believed to be as criminal before God as it was destructive of the true interests of the country. But though backed by unswerving conviction, by real moral passion, and by the greatest debating and oratorical art in the country at the time, it was impossible to convince anybody of opinion of the truth of their contentions. A policy based on these convictions, though rational and consistent if announced before the diplomatic struggle, and persevered with to the end, would have met with the passionate condemnation of the British people, who considered such views as plainly inconsistent with national honour, national policy, and the safety and interests of Europe. It is true that no article in any treaty bound us to the defence of the Turkish Empire. But its maintenance had long been an admitted principle of our policy and there was in addition a virtual obligation arising from our position in Europe. It is true that we could have avoided war at any time. We could have announced that we had changed our policy and did not intend to risk the enmity of Russia in 1853 as we had done that of France in 1839. We might have neglected every consideration of our duty of upholding the public law of Europe and played the part of

Prussia. Nothing but the evasion of the issue was needed to avert the war, but it would have meant the loss of the influence of a great power - to our influence, not so much in the selfish sense as much as the legitimate influence and trust which the people of the day regarded as an advantage to the civilised world.

Did we drift into war? This historical misquotation of the expression of Aberdeen and Clarendon is common, and the idea behind it has the weight of Bismarck's opinion (Vol.I, p.211). The original expression was "towards war", and we drifted towards war because we had adopted a policy, adumbrated by Pitt, declared by Canning, and acted upon in 1840 by Palmerston from which we would not retract in 1853. The disguised rigidity of our policy, faced by the equal rigidity of the policy of the Tsar, caused both countries through the development of circumstances to drift towards a state of war. What uncertainty there was in the Cabinet, it is well to remember, even in the case of Aberdeen, was never concerned with our ultimate policy but only with the intentions of the Tsar. The notion that the government drifted into war in the sense of moving involuntarily in that direction is wrong, and opposed to all the facts revealed not only in the diplomatic negotiations of the time, but in the correspondence of the principal actors published since. Nor is it suggested for a moment in the



Russian Diplomatic Study, which takes in fact the opposite view that England deliberately and consciously engaged in war to destroy Russian prestige in Europe, bent on weakening Russia in the general interests of Europe, as understood by Palmerston and the British politicians, and weakening her above all in the East where she was, though innocently, believed to entertain designs against Turkey. There is not a little to be said for this Russian view that the war was not made for Turkey, nor as a result of a policy of drift, but with a deliberate intention of sustaining the solid interests of our own country, in which, according to the Russian Foreign Office, it was entirely successful.

In fact if anyone drifted into the war, it was the Tsar, who was led on, step by step, under the force of circumstances, to consequences he never exactly foresaw and measures he did not intend. The mission of Prince Menshikov, the occupation of the Principalities, the refusal of the amended Vienna note, and the affair of Sinope were a series of blunders which lost to Russia all chance of retiring from a contest which she ought never to have undertaken. Much of the cause was personal to the Tsar himself, but the position of domination he had acquired in Europe in 1852 had as its consequence that he could only maintain it by a renunciation of all plans of selfish advantage, while his own

dictatorial passion, the traditional ambition of his race, and contempt for the fancied weakness of the Turkish nation lured him to destruction.

It is interesting to note that this was practically the view of Count Orloff, expressed to Clarendon in a conversation at Paris in 1856 (Martin, Vol.III, p.446). It is not impossible that Prince Menshikov's mission was intended only to restore Russian influence at the Porte, and to secure for it definite stipulations and sanctions under law, and the facts of his mission, its secrecy, the changes in its extent and <sup>the</sup> scope and form of his demands go towards confirming the truth of Stratford's first impression that it was his object to avoid risking extreme consequences, and that the policy of Russia was her common policy of gaining her ends by threat, without recourse to violence. The Tsar was at last to be faced by a united Europe, a prospect which might have made another man pause, but then it was too late for retreat.

## XVI. THE PEACE.

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It is not intended in this essay to consider the conduct of the war or the diplomatic discussions at Vienna which were a running commentary on its progress. From the time the British and French governments resolved to extend the sphere of operations from the Danube to the Crimea, it was obvious that the war would be what Stratford had called "a very comprehensive one", and that peace would never be made simply on terms of the status quo ante bellum. If the allies succeeded they would undoubtedly take some precaution against the necessity of similar efforts, and so before the expedition first landed in the Crimea, we hear of the necessity of making Russia give up even the once admitted claims to a semi-political protectorate in the Principalities and over the Greek Church generally; her possession of the principal mouth of the Danube; and her capacity for aggression against the Turkish Empire consisting in the existence of her fleet and fortifications in the Black Sea. Such a gigantic set-back in the course of Russian development for the past hundred years was unthinkable in the case of the greatest military power of the day, without very striking disaster and defeat. So although attempts were made

by the formulation of the "Four Points" in August 1854, and in the Vienna Conference in February 1855, in spite of the unexpected death of the Tsar on March 2nd 1855, peace was seen to depend ultimately on the results of the ~~so~~ge of Sebastopol. So long as the fate of the great basis of Russian preponderance in the Black Sea was in doubt, insuperable difficulties would prevent any satisfactory solution. What the Russian attitude still was on March 20th 1855 may be seen from a conversation which Lord John Russell had with Gorchakov in the course of the abortive Vienna Conference, and which he reported to Clarendon.

"Russia would not consent to limit the number of her ships; if she did she would forfeit honour. She would be no more Prussia. I might ask why she wanted a force in the Black Sea, he would tell me plainly that they did not want Turkey and would be glad to maintain the Sultan, but now that was impossible: he must perish."  
Maxwell, Vol. II, p. 27.

The Allies, however, had committed themselves to the reduction of Russian power in the Black Sea, not only in words, but in deeds in the Crimea. In addition their amour propre imperatively demanded the fall of Sebastopol. In the end the French triumph in the capture of the <sup>M</sup>Malakoff Fort, together with the consolation to Russia <sup>military</sup> ~~inciting~~ honour in the capture of Kars soon after, made peace a possibility. The fall of Sebastopol did not end the war, but it was its turning point. Peace had become a

certainty, for the war was now very unpopular in France, where it had always been, to a great extent, the Emperor's war, while in Russia the exhaustion and disorganisation was incredible. In fact, although the French Emperor in the flush of enthusiasm after the war was full of grandiose plans for the reconstruction of Poland as a constitutional monarchy, and a general revision of political conditions in Europe (See Maxwell, Vol.II, p.97; Argyll Vol.I, p.583), the state of feeling in Paris demanded peace on terms far short of those for which the war was undertaken.

But in England public opinion was strongly in favour of continuing the war. Palmerston had truly reflected it when in August he had spoken of the consequences of the fall of Sebastopol "Our danger will then begin - a danger of peace and not a danger of war" (Ashley, Vol.II, p.320). Having lived for a generation under the shadow of the northern autocracy, it was difficult to realise how enormous the defeat of Russia had been, and what incredible national weakness had been revealed in the total military incapacity of her generals, and of her machinery of supply, either to defeat the Turks on the Danube, or to defend a fortress at one extremity of her dominions, remote from the capital. But it was soon obvious that if the war went on, it would be without French help, and on November 23rd he was forced

to write a letter in his most direct style to Persigny declaring that Great Britain was quite able to carry on the war alone with the aid of Sardinia and Turkey. So when an ultimatum, really concerted with France alone, was proposed on December 16th by Austria, to include a provision for the neutralisation of the Black Sea, he consented to its despatch, perhaps, like the Queen, expecting and hoping for its rejection, for she only looked for an accession of Austrian arms as a result of it (Letters, Vol. III, p.52). While the Tsar was considering his answer Palmerston was writing to the British ambassador at Vienna that he was quite confident of obtaining better conditions in a twelvemonth having in view the exhaustion, internal difficulties and distresses of Russia. He was resolved to go on with the war till the necessary conditions were obtained. "The British nation is unanimous in this matter. I say unanimous for I cannot reckon Cobden, Bright and Co for anything" Ashley, Vol.II, p.325. "Russia was not half beaten enough" was the universal opinion. So the approval from court, government and people, of the fresh peace proposals was very superficial. Greville records the popular opinion that "it would prove quite easy to crumple up Russia and to reduce her to accept such terms as we chose to impose upon her" (Nov. 16th) ~~January 7th 1856~~. On January 15th the Queen sent a letter to

Clarendon which reveals the fact that a great cause of the distaste for peace was a lack of military glory due to the failure to hold the Redan fort in the last stage of the siege of Sebastopol.

"Her feelings cannot be for peace now, for she is convinced that this country would not stand in the eyes of Europe as she ought and as the Queen is convinced she would after this year's campaign. The honour and glory of her dear army is near to her heart above almost anything and she cannot bear the thought that the "failure of the Redan" should be our last fait d'armes and it would cost her more than words can express to conclude a peace with this as the end." (Letters, Vol.III, p.163).

She cherished the ideal of wishing for no peace that would fall short of rendering such a war for ever impossible. "England's policy had throughout been the same, unselfish and actuated by the desire of seeing Europe saved from the pretensions of that barbarous power Russia" against which she hoped for safeguards for the future. (Letters, Vol.III, p.169). Such opinions were not only those of the Court and the Cabinet, Greville notes on January 22nd 1856:-

"The intelligence of peace at hand gives no satisfaction here and the whole Press is violent against it, and thundering against Russia and Austria, warns the people not to expect peace and invites them to go on with the war. The Press has succeeded in inoculating the public with such an eager desire for war that there seems a general regret at the notion of making peace."

But the Tsar yielded, in face of very strong opposition in

in his own country led by the Grand Duke Constantine, and on January 31st the Queen's speech opening Parliament announced the preliminaries of peace, on which Greville remarks:-

"Who would ever have thought that tidings of peace would produce a general sentiment of disaffection and disappointment in the nation!" (Jan. 31st 1856).

On February 1st, preliminaries were signed and Napoleon arrived at the height of his ambition. He had formed an alliance with Great Britain, had been received by the Queen in England and had stood by her side at the tomb of Bonaparte. Now Paris was to be the scene of the Peace Conference on February 25th. Clarendon was the British representative and had the advantage of knowing the negotiations which led to the war from start to finish. The spirit in which he set out is shown in a letter of January 26th:-

"I make no illusion to myself as to what is will be my fate. No peace that is within attainable limits can satisfy the excited people of this country. John Bull will be glad enough to put an end to the war, but he will be without mercy for the terms on which peace is made." (Maxwell, Vol.II, p.114).

When the peace Conference had begun at Paris it was Greville's opinion that if Lord Clarendon were to return and to announce that the failure of negotiations necessitated the continuance of the war "he would be hailed with the greatest enthusiasm" and the ardour for war would break out with redoubled force". (Feb. <sup>24th</sup> ~~23rd~~ 1856).



Yet it was one of the bitter results of the war that in spite of all we had done for the cause of public law and the rights of weaker states, we had failed to win either the love or the gratitude of the world. On the day that Clarendon left for Paris the Prince Consort wrote to King Leopold:-

"We know very well that England is hated all over the Continent ..... All sorts of charges are brought against us - that we are actuated by excessive hatred against the Russians that peace in Europe does not suit our plans; that our object has been to use and make a tool of France for our own objects in the East, because of India etc." (Martin, Vol.III, p.447).

The work of our representative at Paris was therefore not light. Great Britain was in fact isolated. The Emperor was all disposed to friendship with Russia, and in spite of personal letters between himself and the Queen, it was a difficult situation. The France of two years ago no longer existed and almost at once Clarendon had to write and advise the Cabinet to "prepare and consider what to do if France and England no longer hold together" (Maxwell, Vol.II, p.117). On March 12th he wrote:-

"The negotiations are a year too soon, and I have no doubt another campaign would have enabled us to impose very different conditions on Russia, but France was determined on peace, and whatever Palmerston in his jaunty mood may say, we could not have done anything for we should have had all Europe against us at once and the United States would soon have followed in the War". (Maxwell, Vol.II, p.121).

He repeated this suggestion of a Coalition of Europe against England in a letter to the Queen of March 30th (Letters, Vol. III p.184).

So after five weeks discussion the Treaty of Paris was signed on March 30th and was ready for ratification. There was no indemnity, and only the smallest cession of territory, which was contrary to all British hopes that Russia would be forced back beyond the Caucasus at least. It was only with difficulty that Kars was restored to Turkey, and to secure that, Bomarsund, the fortress on the Aland Isles which was the only thing we had to show for our naval campaign in the Baltic, had to be restored. But the future fortification of these isles, which command the Swedish capital, Stockholm, was prohibited in the treaty, and strengthened by a separate Convention. Bourquenay the French delegate said that there was no visible indication who were the victors and who the vanquished from an inspection of the treaty. In England, neither Court, Press, Parliament or people were inclined to disagree with him. The Queen writing to congratulate Napoleon on April 30th confessed to "sharing the feeling of the majority of her people that this peace is perhaps a little premature." (Letters, Vol. III, p.186; also to Palmerston, p.180 and Clarendon, p.185). Opposition was strong in Parliament, Lord

Derby in the House of Lords ended an attack upon it with the words "So much for the capitulation of Paris", and Lord Granville on April 29th records the fact that the Proclamation of peace that morning was hissed at Temple Bar (Fitzmaurice, Vol. I, p.178).

History tells us however that no peace made in England since 1700, except that of 1814, has ever satisfied the people of this country, all others being denounced at the time as ignominious and premature. There was, in reality, no need for disappointment in this case, for we had accomplished in the course of the war the exact triumph of that policy for which we had taken up arms. The Treaty took under the Collective Guarantee of Europe, the independence of the Ottoman Empire, and, separately, <sup>that</sup> of the Danube Provinces and Serbia, and the neutrality of the Black Sea. This was in exact accord with that policy of 1840 which had continued till the outbreak of the war. The conditions of peace were amply satisfactory to the best interests of Great Britain without being unduly oppressive to Russia. Yet the setback Russia had received was enormous, and never again was Europe to live under the shadow of the Russian menace, real or fancied. Nicholas' Russia died in the war, and at home the consolation of many Russians was that "Russia had fallen not so much before the forces of the Western Powers, but as a result of its own internal

weakness". (See opinions quoted in the Oxford Russia, p.324). An epoch of Russian as well as European history ended with the death of Nicholas, and the destruction of his naval harbour. From the national point of view, never in her whole history had she signed such a treaty as this for never before had she been compelled to consent to the surrender of territory.

Nor was there lacking in the stipulations of the treaty adequate security for the future, and Palmerston with characteristic understanding of the realities of the situation saw in it a "settlement that is satisfactory for the present and which will probably last for many years to come, of questions full of danger to the best interests of Europe". (Letters, Vol.III, p.183). Granville claimed later that <sup>Palmerston</sup> ~~he~~ only expected a life of seven or ten years for the Black Sea clauses, from which the Conference of London relieved Russia in 1870 (Morley, Vol.II, p.349). He probably would have agreed with Bismarck (Reflections, Vol.II p.114) that they were "politically absurd and therefore in the long run impossible." Enough for Palmerston if they served their turn.

The most obvious result of the treaty was the new opportunity secured to the Ottoman Empire, now freed from all dictation and interference, to become a worthy member of the states-system

of Europe. Its failure to make good use of that freedom was to cause the gradual but inevitable creation of national states out of its Empire, while the complete abrogation of Russian pretensions made their independence a possibility. Only after that had been secured could we place a living barrier between Russia and Turkey - "the breast of freemen". If the Sultan's heritage had been divided up in 1829, when Turkey was at its weakest, or in 1853, the Balkan states could not have existed as they do to-day, and the usual resolute policy of Russification must have turned them by the end of the century into Russian provinces like Finland and Poland. In fact what had been saved by the war was not the effete rule of the Sultan, but the future of nations as yet unknown. The best summary of the results of the war is the simple fact that the Eastern Question so far as it has found a settlement, has found it on definitely non-Russian lines.

We may summarise the main provisions of the Treaty according to the questions which gave rise to the struggle.

1. Independence and Integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

Article 7. The Porte was admitted by the six powers to "participate in the public law and concert of Europe".

The powers engaged to respect and guarantee collectively the "independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

2. Russian preponderance in the Black Sea. Art. 11-13.

The Black Sea was neutralised, "its waters and ports opened to the mercantile marine of every nation" but "interdicted to the flag of war". No arsenals, Russian or Turkish, were to be established.

3. The Christian subjects of the Porte. Art.9.

The Sultan announced to the powers his intention to ameliorate their condition" without distinction of creed or race, "but the powers expressly repudiated the right to interfere" either collectively or separately in the relations of the Sultan with his subjects. This repudiation of all guarantee for the due observance of the Firman of February 21st 1856 was fatal, in the opinion of all who realised the true nature of Turkish rule. As Stratford said "It confirmed the right and contradicted the hopes of the Christians". (Lane-Poole, Vol.II, p.442).

4. Territorial Arrangements. Art. 3, 4, 20, 21.

Kars was to be restored to Turkey and the Crimea to Russia. Russian territory was diminished by the Delta between the North and South mouths of the Danube and a strip of Bessarabia.

5. The Danube. Articles 15-18.

The navigation of the Danube was to be opened on

equal terms to the ships of all nations, and regulated by an international commission.

6. The Principalities. Articles 21-27.

Russian renounced her exclusive religious and semi-political protectorate, and this was collectively ~~to be~~ undertaken by the Powers. Though under Turkish suzerainty they were to enjoy "an independent and national administration", and a Commission and a national Convention in each province ~~was~~<sup>were</sup> at once to deliberate on their future organisation, according to the wishes and interests of all classes of society.

7. Serbia. Articles 28-29.

A similar Collective guarantee was given to its "Independent and national administration". No armed intervention was to take place in either Principalities or in Serbia without previous agreement of the powers. These provisions were the most valuable positive stipulations of the Treaty and only need to be compared with the Organic Statute of 1829 and the Act of Balta Limau of 1849 to appreciate the ~~advances~~ towards independence. They were now rid both of the Russian and the Turk and the way was open for their inevitable union.

Attached to the treaty were three Conventions. The first forbids the fortification of the Aland Isles, the second reaffirm-  
ed

"the ancient rule of the Ottoman Empire", according to which the Straits are closed to foreign ships of war while the Porte is at peace. There was attached also the famous Declaration of Paris regulating the conduct of maritime war. An additional and separate treaty between Great Britain, Austria and France guaranteed the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire, its infraction to be a casus belli.



## XVII. CONCLUSION.

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The passing years have brought the circumstances of the conflict between Great Britain and Russia - its inception, its conduct, and the peace with which it concluded, into what Gladstone called "the abyss of odium". Retrospective criticism has tended to the view that if the war was not what John Bright called it - a crime, at least it was a blunder, and that it ought to have been, and could have been avoided. Sir Robert Morier writing in 1870 described it as "the only perfectly useless modern war that has been waged" (Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 215). Lord Salisbury twenty years later still said that "England put her money on the wrong horse". Kinglake's history reveals Great Britain as the ignorant tool of an unscrupulous adventurer. The histories of Spencer Walpole and Herbert Paul follow him in everything but his appreciation of the Russian menace. To Walpole "the sole result of the war was to set back the clock for fourteen years" (Vol. VI, ch. 1). The lives of the great Liberals, Gladstone Cobden, Bright, Aberdeen, are marked by <sup>the</sup> detestation or doubt with which these subjects regarded the war. On the other side the lives of Palmerston, Clarendon and the Prince Consort, though full of interesting material, are written without inspiration or any

considerable grasp of political principle. A political study of Palmerston, in particular, at all commensurate with his importance and influence on the development of British Foreign Policy is still lacking. Lane Poole's masterly biography of Stratford is too long and bears the air of a vindication rather than that of an impartial study. On the whole it is almost impossible to come to a study of the Russian war and the events which led up to it without being at first influenced by the weight of adverse opinion.

Yet is that opinion all that can be said about the events of these years. The Duke of Argyll writing at the end of the century declared himself utterly unrepentant for the part he had played in it. Gladstone, in spite of his great campaign against Turkish atrocities later, maintained to the end both the justice and the expediency of our action at the time. In fact we must agree with his opinion that just as feeling and not argument made the war popular, so it is feeling and not argument that regards it as "perfectly useless". There was not lacking cause in plenty for disillusionment with the diplomacy, the conduct and the conclusion of the war, and it is possible to see in the failure of the Turks to take advantage of their opportunity with its tragic results <sup>to</sup> ~~in~~ the Christian population, together with the impermanence of the Black Sea clauses, a practical tearing up of the Treaty,

and a negation of the causes for which we fought. But if it is impossible to indict a whole nation, it is perhaps equally futile to indict a generation. The causes of the struggle between Great Britain and Russia were of the broadest kind and lay in the general situation of Europe at the time. No war was ever more popular. It was only reluctantly entered into by the government, but it was with greater reluctance still that the country could be brought to face its conclusion. Was this a gigantic fraud with which Palmerston in London and Stratford in Constantinople deluded the nation? Was it simply due to a total lack of political insight as to the future of Russia and Turkey, or to a senseless national pugnacity? We can recognise the popular passion of the time and realise that war could have been averted at any time in 1853 and 1854 by a decent acquiescence in the plans of the Tsar. But it is only necessary to put the question "If Turkey was the wrong horse to back, was Russia the right one?" Support of one ~~of~~ the other was involved in the situation. Non-intervention in the existing state of Europe was equivalent to the support of Russia, as its advocates at the time fully realised. Turkey was the right horse in 1853, if a vicious one.

To see the war in its proper perspective, we must consider it as the inevitable outcome of a struggle that had lasted in a more or less disguised form since 1848 and even before. In the

arrogant attitude of Russia to Europe since 1815 and in the ever increasing audacity of that attitude since the accession of the Tsar Nicholas, in the existence of a threatening military autocracy claiming to take the lead against liberty all over the continent, is to be found the true explanation of the events of 1854 and 1855. The revolutionary epoch of 1848-1850 had resulted in a time of disquiet and alarm. It was the belief that animating all the peoples of Europe that the political conceptions of Western civilisation were threatened which forced our fleets and armies to the Black Sea and the Baltic. And the later incapacity to realise what seemed the danger of Europe at the time is only a standing disproof of that view of the war which regards it as "perfectly useless". We gained no territory and obtained no indemnity, but that was in accordance with one of the conditions according to which we declared war. Apart from that, its great effects came indirectly and were momentous and powerful as nothing else was between 1815 and 1870. It is surely no exaggeration to claim that while Nicholas lived and Russia was undefeated, not only would there have been no Balkan nations, but no united Italy and no united Germany. The memory of 1830 and 1849 suggests what would have been the influence of a dominant Russia in the reconstruction of Europe which could not have been delayed

much longer. What was wanted to redress the position in Europe was not the defeat of some isolated claims, but the ~~general~~ overthrow of Russia's general attitude of Dictatorship and pretension. ~~The~~ military defeat, irrespective of the terms of peace served to ~~discredit~~ ~~defeat~~ the spirit ~~of militarism~~ of autocratic militarism, and revealed the rottenness of the sinister fabric of power with which the great Empire confronted Europe. Without our intending it, the siege of Sebastopol secured this fundamental necessity with astonishing completeness. The strength of Russian aggression against Turkey, as against Europe, lay not in treaties so much as in the facts and conditions of which those treaties were an almost unnecessary expression. So the great result of the war was effectually to alter the facts and conditions of Russia's position in Europe. When the time came for her next advance, all the conditions had changed, and the overthrow of the territorial provisions of the peace and the safeguards in the Black Sea were of slight importance in the modified outlook created by the opening of the Suez Canal. When Lord Derby in 1870 declared that he would fight for the neutrality of Egypt but not for the neutrality of the Black Sea, he expressed exactly the same British attitude to the Ottoman Empire which had been Palmerston's. Napoleon had said "Who is master of Egypt, is master of India", and into Egypt

we stumbled in spite almost of ourselves, and yet fulfilling those uncodified principles of foreign policy which have never ceased to operate.

We may even accept Spencer Walpole's dictum that "the sole result of the war was to set back the clock for fourteen years" We may agree that Russia in that time regained her old frontier in Europe, denounced the treaty, added huge acquisitions to her Asian territory, became master of Kars, and had never ceased till the day he wrote to advance her frontiers till she should reach the outlet for which all nations strive - the sea. Passing over the obvious implication that the strength of Russia undefeated would have been all the greater and her advance the more rapid, we can realise that setting the clock back can yet effect a great deal. In this case it gave time for Turkey to prove the anachronism of her rule in Europe, for the Christian states to arise one by one from her ruins, and above all for the formation of a United Germany. Impossible to contemplate while Nicholas lived, it became a practical possibility in the altered conditions due to the war. The final and complete end of Russian preponderance was announced in the same year as the denunciation of the Black Sea clauses, when the German Empire took upon herself for the next generation that task of creating the balance of Power in Europe

for which,as we have seen,Palmerston had in vain looked to Austria.

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