

33, PONT STREET,
S.W.

5th March 1906

Dear Mr. Buxton,

Many thanks for your letter (undated) received on Wednesday morning, enclosing a draft of a memorial which it is proposed, on behalf of the Members of Parliament interested in the Macedonian question, to address to Sir Edward Grey.

As you know, I am deeply interested in the Macedonian as well as in the Armenian question, and I am prepared to do my utmost towards obtaining better government in the Macedonian provinces. At the same time I should not care to identify myself with any line of policy which my lifelong experience of the Turkish Government would not justify me in adopting as suitable to attain the ends which both you and I have in view.

I am far from wishing to convey that I disagree with the policy advocated by the Balkan Committee. It would be impertinent for me to go into that. I am sure we should find ground for complete agreement as to the general lines of a settlement in respect to the Macedonian provinces ; and it seems to me, if I may be allowed

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to say so without presumption, that the Balkan Committee have done excellent work in focussing British opinion. At the same time I feel sure you will agree with me that, as practical politicians, what we have got to do is to get our policy carried out. I see no prospect whatever of that desirable result, so long as the policy of our country towards Turkey follows the existing lines. Therefore, I ask myself whether we may not be doing more harm than good by urging our Government to continue the policy of futile pinpricks in relation to such questions as Armenia and Macedonia which we have practised during recent years. In the case of Armenia that policy resulted in an abominable butchery ; and, therefore, even on humanitarian grounds, I confess I shrink from pressing our Government to continue it.

All over the East, I need scarcely remind you, there exists a strong feeling that England ought to resume the leverage over the Government of Constantinople which she has almost entirely lost. Do you remember that remarkable passage in the Political Testament of Fuad Pasha in which he counselled his sovereign in the following words ? -

"Whatever may come to pass, the English people, the most reliable and most wonderful in the world, will be the first

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"and last of our allies. I would rather be the loser of
"several provinces than see the Sublime Porte abandoned by
"England." Those sentiments find an echo among all the
best Turkish officials. I am quite sure that we could easily
recover the position in Constantinople which we have lost in
recent years, provided always that we are prepared to become
serious, and not merely to play with the question, and go
home to our comfortable dinners after an interview at the
Foreign Office, feeling "Oh ! what a good boy am I ! "

(ie has view of us)

[Then we come to the Salisbury attitude, that we should
be putting our money on the wrong horse. My answer to that is
that the winning of a race depends quite as much upon the
jockey as upon the horse. Rather a poor horse, I admit ; but
the German jockey is riding him not only with great advantage
to himself, but in some respects with benefit to the horse.]
Asia Minor is being brought within the civilising influence
of a great railway. Let me here make an important distinction.
England can never follow the policy pursued by Germany of
giving the Sultan a free hand to neglect his treaty obligations
to Europe in respect of the government of his people in
return for commercial concessions. No. Public opinion in
England would, rightly, never sanction such a course. But
we are not called upon to pursue such a policy. It is open

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to us to follow an exactly opposite policy as regards the obligations of the Sultan to Europe. And, in doing so, we should gain considerable support in Turkey itself, even, I venture to say, within Court circles.

But the one condition of success is that we should seriously apply ourselves to the study of the question, how best to resume our ascendancy at Constantinople. It can still be done, though the sands are rapidly running out in the glass. And, once we have recovered our former station, it would remain for us to avoid the errors into which we previously fell in endeavouring to secure reform in Turkey. I know that the Balkan Committee will agree with me in regarding our previous attempts at reform as having been tainted with the seeds of almost certain failure. We tried to tinker at Turkish institutions over the length and breadth of the Empire. The Balkan Committee have wisely recognized that our efforts should be concentrated, at all events in the first instance, upon particular areas presenting special dangers to the peace of the world and also presenting special problems. Such areas are Macedonia and Armenia. I have little doubt but that the Sultan could be brought to grant us our reforms ; but, whatever methods we might adopt, he would certainly require our assistance in

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safeguarding at the same time the continued existence of his own Government. [If he cannot hope to obtain any such assistance from us, he will naturally resist our demands to the very last. We can well say to him : "No reforms, no assistance"; but we cannot say to him : "Reforms and no assistance". Of course you can fall back upon the Concert of Europe; but there are two important players who will certainly not pipe with you, Germany and Russia.]

The question therefore in a nutshell is, it appears to me, this. Are we, or are we not prepared to ask our Government to endeavour to resume their old leverage over the Government at Constantinople. If not, our petitions are more or less invested with an academic character. They may even do harm to the peoples whose sufferings we desire to bring to a happy end.]

Please pardon the length of this letter. I shall be very much pleased to talk over the matter with you, or with any other Members of the Balkan Committee in case you should think it desirable.

Yours sincerely,

H.F.B. Lynch

Noel Buxton Esq.
The Balkan Committee.