

TELEGRAMS: "UDEMOCON, ESTRAND."  
TELEPHONE: CENTRAL 9712.

THE UNION OF DEMOCRATIC CONTROL.

LONDON: 37, NORFOLK STREET,  
STRAND, W.C.

EDM/EC,

17th May, 1915.

My dear Buxton,

I am a babe on Balkan problems, and my admission of babe-hood will be, I hope, the measure of your toleration in listening to my prattle; but I feel moved to set down a few thoughts which a perusal of your most interesting and informing volume has suggested.

In the first place, why, oh why, is there no map? If you want the ordinary ignorant person like myself to follow all your points with intelligence, and to get a general hang of the position, you must furnish us with a map. So much for that.

[Now] if I read you aright, your main object is to urge Roumania, Bulgaria and Greece to join in this war, and, of course, on the side of the allies. Of course you see in the victory of the allies (consummated by that means) the only way of an eventual settlement calculated to ensure a permanent solution of the political and racial difficulties peculiar to the Balkans, and of placing the future peace of Europe, thereby, on a stable foundation. In effect, you urge that 1,300,000 more males should be flung into the inferno (with all the attendant and incidental miseries which the non-fighting population of those States will suffer) because

*Found among old papers. He was very sound, I think!*

*This worth reading. Cross*

*Destroy when read.*

*X no! We were sound-proved now*

you think that their sacrifice now will prevent further and larger sacrifices of human life later. If I judge accurately, that is your case. As I am sure you loathe war and all its bestialities as much as I do, I am bound to assume that you could not <sup>assume</sup> adopt the immense moral responsibility involved in urging such a course of action, unless you were absolutely persuaded that the effect of it would be such as you anticipate. It is on that assumption I convey to you - for what they are worth, and they are probably worth very little - the doubts and difficulties I experience in accepting your thesis. ]  
To begin with, I observe that doubts alike of the entire accuracy of your own diagnosis, and of your heroic remedy, appear to afflict yourself. Nor am I absolutely clear whether the victory of the allies <sup>will</sup>, in itself, apart from Greece, Bulgaria and Roumania coming in, is calculated in your mind to bring about the results you hope.

For example, you say (p. 16) "If we win, it means the possibility of setting the Balkans on the basis of nationality". Your book makes it quite clear what jealousies and difficulties, as between the Balkan States themselves, would have to be overcome even in the event of the victory of the allies. Serbia will only give up <sup>Macedonia</sup> Macedonian-Bulgarian if she is allowed to enlarge her domain by carving up Austria; Greece will only bury the hatchet in regard to Bulgaria if she can be given territory in Asia; Roumania will only consent to give up the territory she filched from Bulgaria if the

Magyars can be smashed up, and so on. Thus the ideal settlement following a victory of the allies is admittedly problematical, even as among the Balkan States themselves. And what of the Great Powers? What about the ambition of Grand-Ducal, Nationalists and Pan-Slavist Russia? You are strangely silent on the ultimate objects of Russian policy. You are completely silent about the future of Constantinople. Is it to be internationalised? Is it to be Russian? If Russian, you indicate the difficulties of Roumania on page 56. I take it that both Roumania and Bulgaria would feel equally jumpy in having Russia south of them as well as north.

If Russia is to give up Bessarabia, what compensation is Russia to get, if not Constantinople? Galicia? But is a Russified Galicia going to help humanity? With all its faults, the Dual-Monarchy has made of Galicia the only Polish oasis, and has given to the Ukrainians (Ruthenians) <sup>Principality</sup> which Russia not only denies to them in Russian Ruthenia, but which she has taken from them in such parts of Galicia <sup>as</sup> ~~which~~ she has occupied since the war. I understand from various quarters that the Russian treatment of Austrian Galicia recently conquered has been atrocious, and compared with the Hapsburg treatment of Galicia, as darkness is to light. Also, it seems to me, that the wider - or if you like, the more fundamental - problems of Europe as a whole, hardly appear at all in your volume, because the future of the Balkan States is made the exclusive

keynote of the situation. But can the future of Europe as a whole be safely envisaged only in the terms of Balkan States? For instance, you urge (p. 91) as one of the capital reasons why Roumania, Greece and Bulgaria should join the allies, that Russia may be able to concentrate her strength in greater measure against Germany. Granted. But what is the ultimate end of all this to be? What are you going to do with Germany? Do you really imagine it to be possible to confine Germany for ever to a purely Continental role, and even so, within restricted boundaries? Where is Germany to expand? [Johnson closes Africa to her. The Australians close the Pacific. You close the Near East. We dictated her world policy owing to our surface command of the sea (not, apparently, the last word in sea command). Is it not comparable to putting champagne in a bottle and omitting to wire the cork?] The break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire you cheerfully assume, but what is to be the cost? An immense extension of the Russian Empire in Europe, and a more menacing condition of affairs as regards the preservation of our Eastern Empire by the Russian occupation of Turkish Armenia, and by the possibility (probability?) of her installation at Constantinople. How would Russia regard the large Ugoslav Kingdom with the ineffable Peter, the Serbian Victor-Emmanuel, as its rallying point? Until Aerenthal played Isvolsky the still not fully explained

No-

I do not agree  
about Africa,  
the Pacific, or  
Asia Minor.

ms

?  
-  
trick in 1908, Russia had times without number sacrificed Serbia to Austrian friendship. She was prepared to do so at that moment, and her recent interest in Serbia has been purely selfish. Bulgaria, first helped, then used as a cat's paw by Russia, may well hesitate to plunge. Roumania, for several reasons, must be in similar straits.

These doubts bring me to the point of asking whether the ideal settlement you urge would not have as much chance of eventual accomplishment if Bulgaria, Roumania and Greece remain neutral in this war. Until I am more clear than I am at present as to the policy of Official Russia, and the extent to which our Foreign Office understands what that policy is, and is prepared to support it, and until I see any signs of the future of Germany being regarded in the light of common sense, I confess to great difficulties in the way of accepting as sound the policy you urge with so much force. <sup>have</sup> if you attempt to work out your ideal future for the Balkan States on a basis of retention by Greece, Bulgaria and Roumania of neutrality, and on a basis of something like an <sup>military</sup> ~~imperial~~ stalemate throughout the whole war area.<sup>2</sup>; ~~A~~ Europe exhausted and <sup>emptied</sup> ~~desolated~~; its dynasties and Governments trembling on the brink of dissolution; social misery everywhere swelling into dull fury at the whole ghastly business; forces in every land gathering strength and cohesion for a constructive policy of permanent peace; events

Cant  
do it!!

in general forcing the rulers and diplomatists to combine for the purpose of eliminating future causes of war, saving themselves from annihilation, and forced by that very internal pressure to regularise the Balkan States more or less on your own lines - willing to make sacrifices as the sole means of saving their own dynasties and castes from being submerged in the universal anarchy? It seems to me that your assumption of Austro-Hungarian disruption, and its accompaniment - which I suppose would be inevitable - of an attempted confinement of Germany, <sup>in Europe</sup> if not an admitted <sup>epitome</sup> disruption, of her political unity, making of her another Poland, will leave Russia the absolute and uncontested dictator of the whole of Eastern, and in addition, of Central Europe and (perhaps) mistress of Constantinople and commanding all the strategic land routes to India. Why, in that event, should Roumania, Bulgaria and Greece place themselves, of their own free will, in the position of facing that mighty Power, thus weakened and exhausted by yet another campaign?

I see more hope in an Austro-Hungary and Russia both continuing to exist, but so exhausted and weakened as to be literally compelled to adopt an internal liberating policy towards Poles, Finns and Serbo-Croats, and literally compelled also to make considerable sacrifices to the Balkan States, which would induce the latter in turn to make

sacrifices to one another.

Many of these questions will no doubt appear to you amateurish and irritating. But I take refuge in my declared babe-hood to excuse them.

I want to ask one or two more questions:

p.99. What are the definite promises Austria and Germany have made ?

pp. 43, 98. Is it permanent, this focussing of Southern Slav eyes on Belgrade ? Is the idea of a more liberal minded Austro-Hungarian Empire, in which there might be three great national entities (instead of two) united in a central force, really henceforth impossible ?

You show clearly, in the case of Bulgaria, that nationality may be due to political and even ecclesiastical, and not national racial sympathies. You admit that Italy wants a Colony in the proper sense of the term. You repudiate her ambitions in Dalmatia, which, however, are looming largely in the papers at present. But whatever may be <sup>her</sup> their views in regard to Dalmatia, here again my query with regard to Germany crops up.

The policy (I do not say it is yours. I do not believe it is yours for a moment) which will give Britain, France, Russia and Italy openings for expansion all over the world, and deny them to Germany, seems to me to be literally insane if a permanent European peace is to be ensured.

Chas. Roden Buxton Esq.

- 8 -

17/5/15.

Forgive this long screem.

Yours sincerely,

*Chas. Roden*

---

Chas. Roden Buxton Esq.,  
6 Erskine Hill,  
Golders Green, W.