

PRINTING HOUSE SQUARE.

LONDON, E.C.

January 31, 1915

Do not state

*Need
Yugoslavia*

Noel Buxton, Esq., M.P.
Kensington Palace Mansions,
De Vere Gardens, W.

My dear Buxton,

The Foreign Office's objection that "to promise an Adriatic port to ^{the} Yugo-Slavia" would alienate Italy, is futile. Sir Edward Grey knows perfectly well by this time what the conditions for the formation of a healthy Yugo-Slavia are. He knows also that Italy could pursue no policy more contrary to our and her best interests than systematically to antagonize the Southern Slavs. It is not a question of "giving" an Adriatic port to the future Serbo-Croatian State, but of recognising the simple ethnological fact that the whole of Dalmatia is Slav and that the Italian-speaking portion of the Slav population - something less than three per cent - is an almost negligible minority. Our true policy is to promote an agreement between the Italians and the Southern Slavs on the basis of the principals^{le} of nationality. If this is done, we shall create a solid Italo-

Slav barrier against the German Drang nach Triest, and shall promote the interests both of the Southern Slavs and of the Italians. If the Southern Slavs regard the Italians as friends, they will open their doors wide to Italian language and culture, which they need for their intercourse with the outside world; and the Italians will be able to profit by their geographical situation to extend their linguistic and commercial influence throughout the Balkans. If the Foreign Office were to "promise an Adriatic port to Yugo-Slavia", the Serbo-Croatians would say, "thank you for nothing." In my opinion it would be fatal in any of our dealings with the Balkan peoples to enter at this stage into discussions as to this or that bit of territory, this or that city, this or that strategic position. The essential thing is to tell ^{yes} them that if and when we are completely victorious, we are determined that the settlement shall be made as ^{nearly as} possible ^(ie our formula) on ethnological lines. Italy will not resist this principle. ^{Boris} Her eyes are turned far more towards Asia Minor than towards the Eastern Adriatic shore.

The only alternative to the creation of a big Yugo-Slavia, embracing all the Southern Slav races, would be the retention, in a transformed and federated Austria, of Dalmatia, Istria and probably Croatia-Slavonia, but such a solution would leave the problem unsolved and confront us with a new war in a few years' time.

Yours very sincerely,

H. W. Stead

(Foreign Department)

PRINTING HOUSE SQUARE,

LONDON, E.C.

2nd July, 1915.

*Private**Speed has ruffed.*

My dear Buxton,

Done

Until we know whether Bulgaria is ready to come in on any terms, it is extremely difficult to say what our Balkan policy ought to be. I gather that since the withdrawal of the Russians from Galicia, the attitude both of Roumania and Bulgaria has been increasingly unsatisfactory. Suspicion that Bulgaria or, at least, Ferdinand is bound to Germany and Austria is acquiring consistency. We have no guarantee that even if we attempted to dictate to Serbia that she should abandon the 1912 line to Bulgaria, Bulgaria would then declare herself ready to come in. On the other hand we have the certainty that Serbia would be prepared to fight Bulgaria rather than give her the 1912 line, especially after the betrayal of her aspirations by the Powers in the Italian convention. For this reason it is not enough to promise Serbia "access to the sea" in Dalmatia. Unless Serbia gets Dalmatia there will be no chance of a Balkan settlement. I have reliable information only today that in the little Dalmatian town of Makarska—which has a population of 2000, and from which all the able-bodied males between the ages of 18 and 45 have already been taken for military service, 400 of the remaining males have volunteered for local service against the Italians and that this example is being imitated throughout the whole of Dalmatia. Our failure to follow a far-sighted and constructive policy in dealing with Serbia at the outset has, I fear, made it practically hopeless to work out any satisfactory Balkan settlement until the blunder of assigning the best part of Dalmatia to Italy is remedied.

Done

I gather that steps are being taken to find out whether Bulgaria is ready to come in at any price, and if so, at what price? If she declares her readiness, it will then be a question of considering whether the price can be paid. If she is not ready to come in at any price, we ought I think to cease running after her and to

free!
make arrangements with Serbia for help in the Dardanelles. Such arrangements would be feasible if some of our troops were placed on the Serbia-Bulgarian frontier. But all this is unfortunately "music of the future". Ferdinand of Bulgaria is so consummate a rascal that I doubt whether he will compromise himself for any price until he sees victory inclining definitely to the Entente - and then we shall not want him.

Yours very sincerely,

Wickham Stead

Noel Buxton Esq., M.P.
2, Princes Gate,
S. W.

CONFIDENTIAL.

PRINTING HOUSE SQUARE,

LONDON, E.C.

Lane?

July 8, 1915.

My dear Buxton,-

I believe that the position in regard to Bulgaria is that she will shortly be asked what her intentions are, and that our subsequent attitude will depend on the reply. If it is evasive, we shall know what to do. I believe that Ferdinand, who is a most unmitigated rascal, has tried to lure us into making some compromising statement (not about Serbia or Macedonia) which he would then have been able to misrepresent at Petrograd, or to communicate, as is his wont, to Berlin and Vienna. Fortunately he did not succeed. I feel that more than half the trouble with Bulgaria consists in the disappointed personal ambitions of Ferdinand, who sees that his hope of wearing the Byzantine Crown is unlikely to be fulfilled.

As to Serbia I have long had very definite ideas. We ought at the beginning of the war to have promised her as nearly as possible the ethnographic boundaries of the Southern Slav race, and to have included her formally in the Alliance. In return for this, we ought to have told her that when she receives her extension of territory she must consent to the delimitation of the Macedonian frontier by Anglo-Russian arbitration. In the meantime some of the points west of the Varda which she declares herself ready to cede to Bulgaria ought to be garrisoned by British troops, both as a guarantee against Bulgarian attack upon Serbia and as an earnest of our good faith to Bulgaria.

I know that the Convention so hastily and foolishly made with Italy militates against the complete realization of this programme; but I am still strongly of opinion that as much of it as possible ought to be taken in hand without delay, and particularly the recognition of Serbia as a formal Ally.

This increase in her international status would have its effect on the Bulgars, who would be more anxious not to be left out; it would be extremely valuable after the war; and it might enable us to promote what has long been in the minds of the most farsighted Serbians---a politico-economic union with Bulgaria.

*between Serbia and**Why did he be loyal to us?**Not even for the Bulgars**???*

The hope of getting help from Greece in the immediate future is faint, and I think she should be left to go her own way until we can squeeze her without fear of complications. As soon as we see how things go in Russia, and feel sure that an Austro-German offensive in force against Serbia is not probable, we might ask Serbia to let us have 50,000 troops for help in the Dardanelles. If the western frontier districts were garrisoned by British troops, this could be done without any likelihood of Bulgarian attack, even if Bulgaria had not signified her intention of siding with us.

I am convinced that the policy of unmitigated courtship of Bulgaria without heed to the danger of alienating her sympathies would doubly defeat its object. We ought so to play our cards that the hands of reasonable Bulgarians like Gueshoff and Teodoroff may be strengthened, and those of Austrophil rogues like Ghenadieff be weakened.

Yours very sincerely,

Wickhamsted

Noel Buxton, Esq., M.P.,
2, Prince's Gate, S.W.

PRINTING HOUSE SQUARE,

LONDON, E.C.

Heed

January 29, 1915.

My dear Buxton,-

I have read your memorandum with great interest, and heartily agree with nearly every feature of it. The only points at which I should feel inclined to suggest amplification would be those which refer to the extension of territory to be promised to the Southern Slavs. I think it is important that the Serbo-Croatians should know that, in the event of a complete victory on the part of the Allies, they would receive not only Bosnia-Herzegovina and "access to the sea in Dalmatia," but the whole of Dalmatia with the possible exception of some Italian enclaves, at least half of Istria, Carniola, Southern Corinthia, and Croatia-Slavonia up to the Drave. Our only chance of creating an effective barrier to the pressure of the German block in Central Europe lies in the creation of a compact "Yugoslavia," to include Slovenes, Croates and Serbs. The fusion of these various elements into a united State will be a matter of some difficulty, but the work is essential to a satisfactory settlement. We should also, I am convinced, do our best to convince the Italians that it is a vital interest for them to come to a thorough understanding with the Southern Slavs, and to regard them as allies

and friends, not as potential enemies. Otherwise we shall have terrible strife in the Adriatic before many years are pasted, and the Austro-Germans will certainly profit by the opportunity to create further trouble.

With kind regards,

Very sincerely yours,

H. Steel

Noel Buxton, Esq., *M.P.*
2, Princes-gate,
S.W.

Need!

July 5 15

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Yours very sincerely

(signed)

Wickham Steed

TELEPHONE,
PARK 4112.

A. 21.4.41.

Speed
sd yr journal
attach in folio

7, LANSDOWNE HOUSE,
LANSDOWNE ROAD, W.N.

18th April, 1941.

Dear Noel-Buxton,

If you had not made what seemed to me a gratuitous attack on Vansittart I should not have made what you call an attack upon you. There is no question whatever that, in his general reading of German history, Vansittart is right - as I know from long experience and study. And it seems to me sinister that attempts should be made to hammer him because he has hammered the Germans (in the plural), as every one of my German friends (who are many) feels they should be hammered.

You want to know in what way I think you were misled by Hitler. I think that you and several other British peers were either misled or thoroughly mistaken when, as honourable men with no antecedent liking for murderers or other criminals, ^{you} went to pay your respects or to confer with a murderer and a criminal. How you or Lothian or Stamp could ever have touched Hitler's hand or accepted an invitation to meet him after June 30, 1934, passes my comprehension. It is one thing for an Ambassador or other diplomatic official, whose duty may require him to hobnob with rascals, to treat Hitler formally as though he were a decent human being; but it is quite another thing for men of independent public position to countenance, directly or indirectly, a man who has ordered the torture and the murder of hundreds of decent Germans, especially pacifists, in his concentration camps, and has called himself "the supreme court of German justice" after having procured the murder not only of his own villainous associates but of men like General von Schleicher and his wife, and Dr. von Gerlich, the leader of the Bavarian Catholics.

I do not expect of you a higher standard of conduct in such matters than I have myself observed. I have never met Hitler and would on no account meet him. But I met Mussolini in April 1918 - four and a half years before his "March on Rome" - and got the distinct impression that he was a criminal. Consequently I have

never set foot in Italy since he came into power nor have I ever given my hand to a Fascist.

As to Ferdinand of Bulgaria, I knew that he had sold himself body and soul to Austria from 1908 onwards; and though O'Beirne, Bouchier and others would not believe it, I told them, as I told Sir Edward Grey in September 1914, that their belief in Bulgaria was ill-founded and that any effort to get hold of Ferdinand would be love's labour lost. When I assured them that something like a binding convention already existed between Vienna and Sofia in 1914 they asked me (foolishly, as I thought) "if I had seen it?" I had not seen it but I had sources of information in Austria that enabled me to guess the lie of the land.

This is, roughly, why I think that you were mistaken and misled in your views about Bulgaria,

Yours very sincerely,

Wickham

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Noel-Buxton, M.P.