

# THE BALKAN SITUATION

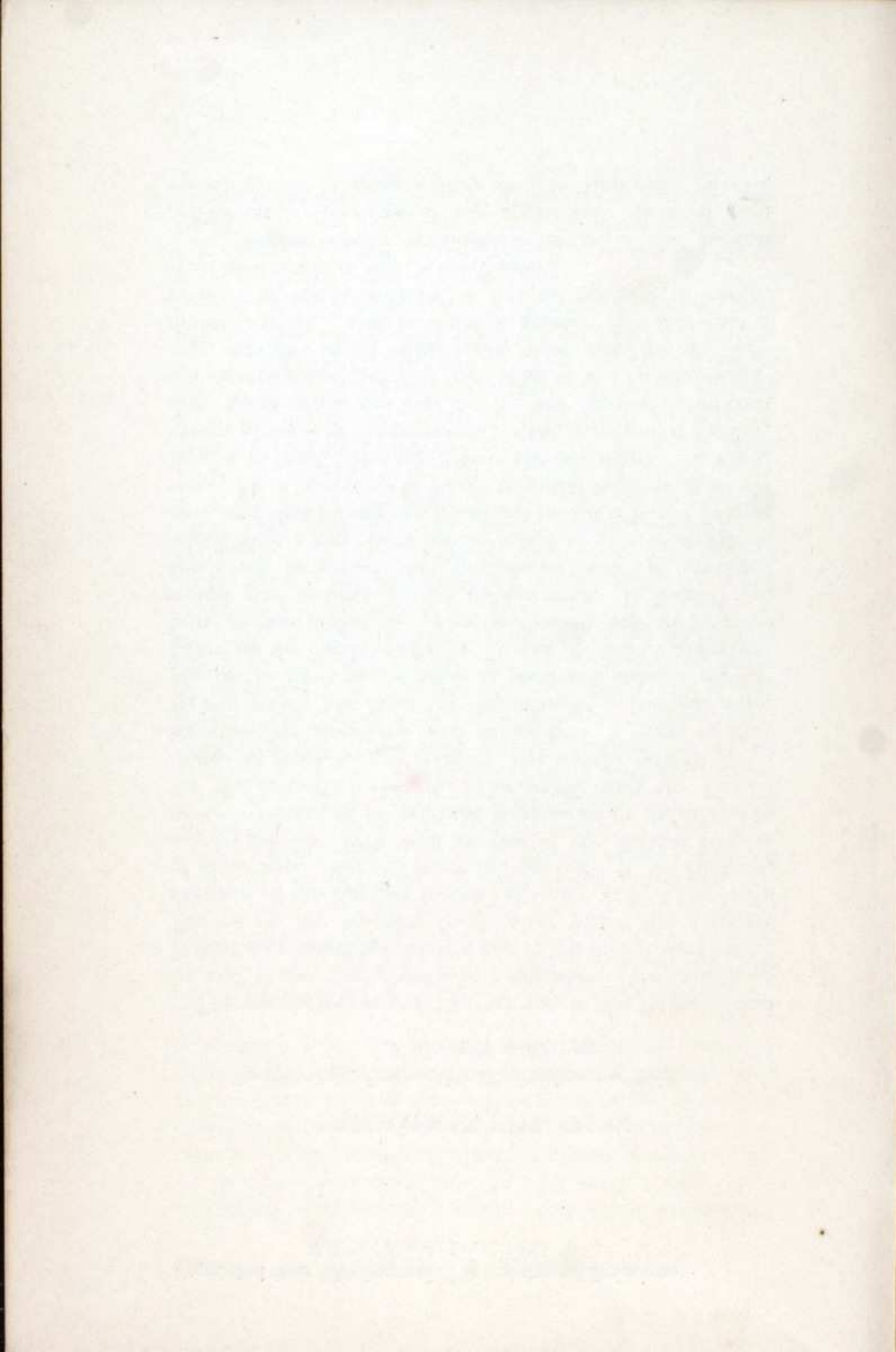
By ALBERT H. LYBYER, Ph.D.

*Professor of History, University of Illinois*

Reprinted from *The Journal of International Relations*  
Vol. 10, No. 4, April, 1920









## THE BALKAN SITUATION

*By Albert H. Lybyer, Ph.D., Professor of History,  
University of Illinois*

The commencement of the war was in the Balkans, and its end began there, when in September, 1918, mutinous Bulgarian regiments opened a gap in the line of the Central Powers on the Salonica front, after which the vigorous advance of the Entente troops led to the first of the series of armistices. But the peace did not begin in the Balkans, nor by March, 1920, had anyone of the Balkan peoples become certain of its political boundaries or its prospects for the immediate future. The world, and the United States as much as any country, has for the present given its attention elsewhere, and shows little interest in that region, which has been for centuries in a political sense one of the most active areas of recurrent volcanic disturbance on the earth's surface. It was the fond and fervent hope of many that the peace settlement now in progress would give security to the Balkan area. It seemed not too much to expect that boundaries could be arranged which after a time each people would be able to accept as just, and that during the transition period a World League would be in operation in whose essential fairness all would be able to trust. But nowhere in the new map of the world except perhaps in the proposals for the partition of Turkey, does there seem destined to be less harmony between ethnographic and political lines than in the Balkan peninsula, nowhere in an equal space more violation of "self-determination," and nowhere a greater certainty that a revision of the boundaries, if not by peaceful processes, than by renewal of war, is inevitable.

Six peoples occupy considerable areas in the Balkan peninsula; in the order of the appearance there of men speaking their languages, they are the Albanians, Greeks,



Rumanians, Serbians (including Montenegrins), Bulgarians and Turks. If on any ethnographical map prepared by disinterested scientists, the boundaries arranged or projected at present be drawn, it will be seen not only that most doubts stand resolved in favor of the second, third, and fourth of these peoples, but that a number of areas indisputably Albanian, Bulgarian, and Turkish are being assigned to others.

To be somewhat more specific, it is proposed to reduce the Albania of 1913, which was then cut somewhat too close at the north and the south, by further considerable subtractions at each end in favor of Yugoslavia and Greece. The remainder, further mutilated by assigning Valona and its neighborhood to Italy, is then to be placed under Italian "protection" with or without the consent of the inhabitants. Not only are those Bulgarian portions of Macedonia which were given to Serbia and Greece in 1913 to be left under alien rule, but four other areas, small to be sure, but containing no Serbians, are to be taken from Bulgaria and given to Serbia. Bulgaria has been compelled to surrender her outlet to the Aegean Sea, and has been granted no righting of the wrong done her in the Dobruja in 1913. As for the Turks, the world is little disposed to allow self-determination to peoples of the Moslem faith, but if it were so disposed, the claims of Greece to Bulgarian and Turkish Thrace could not come into court. In a word, not only do the errors of the treaty of Bucharest of 1913, which liberals in all countries have cried out against ever since, appear to be all in process of receiving the sanction of the Peace Conference and the support of the League of Nations, but other simple errors also are about to be committed and placed under the same high guarantee.

How has this situation come about in a world that has been ringing for years with the demand for the rights of small nations, and that has overflowed with sacrifice for idealistic ends and the removal of causes of war? The historian of a century hence may not be as puzzled as are men of today in explaining the inconsistencies of the peace settlement. It is worth while to endeavor as far as is

ilar



humanly possible to look at recent events in Balkan history with his eyes, putting aside the affections and hatreds of postbellum days, striving to evaluate events and estimate political and economic forces without fear or favor, and seeking to assign to each Balkan race as much as but no more than it should have of territorial claims, responsibility for the course of events, and prospective opportunities.

The future historian will trace out and lay bare a maze of Balkan propaganda which will astonish the world. So extensive and pervasive have been the falsification of facts and the deception of public opinion that no news item from the region, no writing by a native of the peninsula whether he be educator, clergyman, scientist, or statesman, and no expression of non-Balkan authors who are partisans to one people or another, can be given credence without the fullest investigation and corroboration. The average American can have little conception of the propagandist cast which during the past five years has been given to all information that has come to him concerning the Balkans. News was subject to adulteration—or indeed sheer invention—at many points from the place of origin through the means of transmission to the news and editorial rooms of the greatest American dailies; editors, statesmen, and speakers were cultivated with the greatest care; every address that was made or article written on the Balkans was scrutinized carefully, and if it contained anything friendly to Bulgarians, Albanians, or Turks, or anything critical of the claims of Greece, Serbia, or Rumania, an answer was promptly prepared, whose energy of statement was often equalled only by its disregard of fact. Every element of "war psychology" was cunningly turned to account by the identification of the former three peoples with the enemy (although the United States has never been at war with one of them, and none of them has ever desired to fight us).

After the armistice all these practices were multiplied ten-fold, with the aim of influencing American opinion, which was little informed as to the true state of affairs in the Balkans, to acquiesce in preposterous claims, and approve a peace settlement which would satisfy, not the



American ideals of fairness and liberty, but the demands of territorial and financial greed.

To cite but a single example, it is hard to imagine what influences were brought to bear upon Mr. G. Ward Price, "Official Correspondent in the Balkan War Zone," or to what extent his judgment was led astray, before he would send a despatch containing the following statements; and it is hard to see how a great journal would print and reprint them without thought of criticism against their self-evident falsity, except on the basis of much propagandist preparation:

A mile from Sofia, near the main road of Radomir, is a muddy compound about 3 acres in extent, surrounded by barbed wire. On October 23, 1918, there were in this pen 103,000 Serbians of all ages, together with 600 Greek civilians, carried off from Serres and Drama; a smaller body of Russians, and a detachment of French . . . the greater majority of the Serbians had laid out in the open day and night, in wind and rain, summer and winter, many of them for three whole years of captivity. They had no blankets or protection of any kind. . . . For drinking and washing water in this enclosure there was a solitary trickle from one small tap.

Now there never were 103,000 Serbian prisoners in all Bulgaria during the war; nor could the sturdiest Serbians lying in the open without blankets, survive a single night at some periods of the fierce winter on the plain of Sofia; the foregoing falsities are not however self-evident. But if a small calculation be made, it will appear that not only could 104,000 men not lie down on "about 3 acres," but they could not even stand there! Furthermore, if they must all drink from "a solitary trickle," each must get his day's ration of water in four-fifths of a second!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *New York Times Current History*, xviii, 87. The despatch appeared in the *London Daily Mail*, the *New York Times*, etc., exactly as quoted. It is not impossible that a cipher was inserted by the telegraph agency at Salonica into the number of Serbians mentioned in Mr. Price's despatch. In that case the men in the enclosure might have been able to lie down, but they could not have satisfied their thirst in eight seconds each out of every twenty-four hours. Can it be that *two* ciphers were inserted, and that Mr. Price wrote originally one thousand three hundred? But if so, why did he not offer correction?



Those who know the Balkan peoples cannot be strongly moved by accounts of atrocities committed by anyone of them, especially when presented by citizens of a rival or hostile Balkan state. Not to go farther back in a bloody history which extends over milleniums, but which influences profoundly the thoughts and actions of the present generation, it is necessary only to examine the past twenty-five years to uncover such atrocities on the part of each people—Albanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Montenegrins, Rumanians, Serbians, Turks—that none has the right to point the finger of scorn at any other. No doubt, even after the large percentage of hearsay, exaggeration, and deliberate untruth has been removed from the charges against Bulgarians, Albanians, and Turks, a sickening amount is left. But Serbians of 1885 and 1913, Greeks of 1913 in Macedonia and of 1919 in the Smyrna region, Rumanians of 1913, 1916, and 1919, and all three in the horrible Macedonian days of 1897 to 1908, have the same revolting cruelties for which to atone.

Many westerners, confused by the din of rival claimants, unsympathetic with the bargaining methods of Oriental business when introduced into affairs of state, and unable from personal observation to ascertain the facts, have become skeptical of the possibility of any reliable knowledge of Balkan history, ethnography, or national sentiment. Nevertheless it is possible to approximate the truth, and the world is under the stern necessity of doing this on penalty of paying an incalculable further price for another attempt to settle this unstable region without fairness, enlightenment, or serious concern for the wishes of the inhabitants. The writer has no brief for any Balkan people. He has studied their problems for twenty years but does not pretend to have any infallible solutions for them. He has sought earnestly for the truth, and so far as he has acquired sympathies, these are based upon nothing but an abhorrence of fraud and falsehood and a desire that every people shall have a "square deal." Furthermore, his comparatively brief period of observation has convinced him that the Hebrew prophets were right in foreseeing punishment,



sometimes speedy but always certain and adequate, for those peoples which break the commandments which forbid to steal, lie, covet, and kill, which in international relations include such matters as forcible annexations, the breaking of treaties, the imposition of punitive indemnities, and attempts to destroy the political unity of a people and partition its territory.

Only a few salient facts can be presented here. Early in 1912 Bulgaria and Serbia formed an alliance for the purpose of fighting Turkey, and perhaps Austria. The treaty provided a method for dividing territories that might be taken from Turkey. Serbia agreed not to claim anything south-east of a line that was carefully laid down across Macedonia. A territory north-west of this line might be submitted to the arbitration of the Czar of Russia. Greece came to agreement with Bulgaria a few weeks later, but nothing was said in their treaty about the partition of territory. It may be that no treaty was made before the first Balkan war between Serbia and Greece, but it is clear that they expected to divide Albania more or less equally between them, and the movements of their armies show clearly their intentions to get as much as possible of Macedonia. Montenegro hoped for considerable extension toward the east. Rumania desired some gain in case the others should win.

The enterprise succeeded with unforeseen rapidity and completeness except for the holding out of Adrianople, Yanina, and Scutari. After these fell, Turkey was compelled to cede nine-tenths of her European territory to the Balkan Allies. The great tragedy came over the disposition of this territory. Austria and Italy insisted that an Albanian area should be set off. Whatever may have been the motives of these powers, the preservation of the Albanian people from a divided subjection was a righteous and salutary act. But the immediate effect was to concentrate the attention of the Serbians and Greeks upon Macedonia as an area to be partitioned.

Much dust has been raised over Macedonia, with the object of obscuring the facts. From Salonica to Monastir



and Uskub, the great majority of the population is Slavic, and nearly all the Slavs from the days of the Bulgarian Empire of the middle ages until 1913 called themselves and were called by their neighbors Bulgarians. Their language is Bulgarian, and when their national sentiment was reawakened in the nineteenth century, they counted themselves Bulgarian. Russian policy in 1878 included them in the greater Bulgaria of San Stefano, following closely the fairly accurate ethnographical maps of the time. They were left to the rule of the Turk, however, because England feared Bulgaria would become a province of Russia, while Austria hoped to secure in the future an outlet at Salonica. Austrian policy strove after 1878 to turn the attention of Serbia, with whom she remained friendly for twenty-five years, away from the closely kindred provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Bulgarians of the valley of the Vardar. In medieval times both the Serbian and the Byzantine Empires have held this territory and people in subjection and some twenty-five years ago Greece also began to present a claim, and to back it, like Bulgaria and Serbia, with school teachers and brigands.

It was Bulgaria's misfortune that all of her "unredeemed" territory fell to be disposed of in 1913, whereas the greater part of that of Serbia was still held with apparent solidity by Austria, of Greece by Turkey, Italy, and Britain; and of Rumania by Austria and Russia. Early in that year the governments of Serbia and Greece began secret negotiations which resulted in the signing of a treaty immediately after Turkey had agreed to the Treaty of London. Mutual support was guaranteed toward holding those parts of Macedonia which each had in military occupation and in case of war with Bulgaria (the possibility of a "sudden attack" by whom was mentioned), a further partition was contemplated extending indefinitely eastward. A month later the Bulgarians, who appear to have known the fact but not the precise contents of the secret treaty, put themselves in the wrong by a sudden attack without a declaration of war.



These facts indicate that the elaborate negotiations between Serbia and Bulgaria looking toward the arbitration of the czar of Russia were only a blind on the part of Serbia, designed to delay matters until the stage should be fully set in Macedonia for the action contemplated in the Serbo-Greek treaty. They paid dearly for this, since their new *Bulgarians* enemies were able by skillful and unrestrained propaganda to blacken their reputation before the world, and to prepare the way for fixing upon the Bulgarians alone the blame for atrocities in which all participated fully according to their opportunities. Surrounded by enemies, Bulgaria's joy over the achievements of 1912 was turned to mourning. She was assigned by the treaties of 1913 a territory largely filled with mountains and inhabited in considerable proportion by Turks and Pomaks (Bulgarian-speaking Moslems). She was compelled to see nearly a million Bulgarians in Macedonia pass from the rule of the Turks to that of the Greeks and Serbians, to give back to the Turks Adrianople and a considerable area around it, and besides to surrender to Rumania a strip of land in the Dobruja which contained only about 2 per cent of Rumanians.

Many recent calculations of the population of Macedonia and Thrace have more or less deliberately overlooked one important element. In the hatred of Turk for Bulgarian, Greek, and Serbian rule; of Bulgarian for Greek, Serbian and Turkish rule; and of Greek and Serbian for Bulgarian and Turkish rule, a very considerable exchange of population took place, often under harrowing conditions, in the years 1912 to 1914. The new portions of Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria lost heavily in non-national and gained decidedly in national elements. Turkish Thrace also saw considerable emigration of Greeks and Bulgarians, and much "consolidation" of Turkish population. Whatever the process, the result was natural and fair, and should be taken fully into account in new dispositions of territory. Greeks from Thrace who settled in "New Greece" in 1913 are not now entitled to recover their former lands unless they give up what they took in the rough exchange.



European diplomacy during the first years of the war was largely occupied with the three Balkan states, Greece, Bulgaria, and Rumania. Not many of its documents have been published as yet, and no attempt will be made here to comment on its intricacies. The result was that Bulgaria entered into the side of the Central Powers late in 1915, Rumania on the side of the Entente in August, 1916, and Greece on the side of the Entente in June of 1917. Bulgaria was successful in occupying until the eve of her armistice all and more than all of her "unredeemed" lands; Rumania was defeated, and forced to a severe and humiliating peace early in 1918; and Greece, after very deliberate preparation, helped with the Bulgarian *débauche*.

The government of Radoslavoff had fallen months before the Bulgarian armistice. That of Malinoff held unofficial communication with representatives of the Entente and America, and appeared to have been promised considerate treatment in case it would abandon the Central Powers. It is clear that the Bulgarian people were possessed for some time after the Armistice with the expectation of a "Wilsonian Peace", according to which the Balkan settlement would give them the territory nationally theirs. Only gradually did they become conscious of the fierce hard spirit of the victors, which changed distributive to punitive justice, and sought that idealistic sacrifice and devotion to principle should be rewarded by land and gold.

Among the neighbors of Bulgaria and Albania, those who had done and suffered the least for the Entente cause demanded insistently the most. All the artifices of propaganda—vilification of opponents, magnification of self, imagined or cunningly distorted statistics, personal pressure of every sort, adulteration of news, skilful identification of present mediocrity with past genius, reiteration of the false until it seemed to be true—were used without ceasing. All this, however, only created an atmosphere. The real disposition to put through the bizarre plan for "stabilizing" the Balkans was not a matter of science, prejudice, or principle, but of "high policy," that is to say, of the policy of a few men highly placed.



The time has not yet come for assembling and revealing in detail the methods by which the Peace Conference of 1919 arrived at its results. The general lines along which Balkan action was taken appear to have been these. Political and economic arrangements in Europe were on the whole left to France and England in exchange for forbearance elsewhere. The well-agreed, clear-headed French peace commissioners desired to secure themselves against Germany and "Mittel-Europa" by supporting a group of small favored states. These states were to be "strengthened" by giving them large territories and populations within the best attainable military frontiers. The doubtful financial prospects of these states would afford an excellent opportunity for French capitalists and financiers. The states to be favored, in the apparent order of preference, were Greece, Rumania, Poland, Jugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. States not favored were to be trimmed territorially, disarmed, burdened with indemnities too great to be paid, and declared bankrupt under receiverships called "Reparations Commissions." The treatment thus prepared for Germany was applied also to Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria.

A few comments may be made on this policy. It does not strengthen a state, large or small, to be given unwilling population. Generally speaking, the alien elements should be considered as deducted from, and not added to, the numbers of the predominant group. If to four million Greeks—be added one million Greeks, half a million Bulgarians, and a million and a half Turks, this does not in the long run make a state with the force of seven million Greeks, but one with the force of ~~five~~ *three* million Greeks. After having at so great a cost destroyed large empires, why set up small ones?

Again, if the non-favored states are to be disarmed and chained down, why secure the favored states against them by strategic frontiers located often well within the non-favored territory? The authors of this policy were evidently distrustful of its results. Acting high above the realm of ordinary legality, they nevertheless felt that the non-favored peoples could not be considered morally bound by



treaties which had been prepared without their participation, and which they had signed under compulsion of a fear of indefinite military occupation. By such a policy the favored states will all be compelled to maintain extensive military establishments, both to hold down the unwilling annexed subjected elements, and to be prepared against a recovery of strength and revengeful feeling on the part of the non-favored states. The prospect for the Balkans, and indeed for all Europe, is not pleasing.

A description of present conditions in the different Balkan states must be hardly less tentative than a forecast of the conditions there ten years hence, in view of the fragmentary and often doubtful character of the information obtainable. The attempt has its value, however, as a beginning which can be corrected later.

Albania as created in 1913 contained about 11,000 square miles, with a population of perhaps a million. About an equal number of Albanians (according to the test of home languages) was left, in neighboring portions of Serbia and Greece. Differences of religion and dialect have not prevented the Albanians from retaining a sense of unity, which in recent generations has developed toward a genuine national consciousness. The provisional boundaries of 1913 were unfavorable to the new state at the south, in giving to Greece a section of what was then the only passable road of communication from the Adriatic Sea to the rich Korcha basin, and also at the north in assigning on historical grounds the towns, then Albanian, of Ipek, Diakova, and Prisrend to Serbia, thus separating the Albanians of the hills from their market towns. The government under William of Wied was an experiment which failed to have a fair trial because of the outbreak of the Great War. The prince fled, and Greece and Italy promptly occupied areas at the south. Later Italy extended her holdings, France occupied Korcha, and the Austro-Germans and Bulgarians, after the defeat of Serbia, took possession of the northern half of the area. Although their whole land was thus in the fighting, it can hardly be said that the Albanians themselves took any part in the war.



The mountainous character of most of the country has contributed to prolonging among the people a tribal organization in the north and a feudal régime in the south. The oppressions of the Turkish government were manifested by occasional punitive expeditions, but its backwardness and usual inaction were always visible in the absence of public improvements, such as good roads, bridges, and drainage systems for the fertile lands of the coast plain. Education was repressed not only by Turkish lack of enterprise, but because the leaders of the three religious groups were all disposed to teach in other languages than the Albanian.

Whether Albania can possibly be worse off now than in 1913 is open to question, but certainly nearly everything is lacking there. The best arrangement for the immediate future would be an enlargement of territory sufficient to correct the evils of the 1913 plan, and the temporary guidance of a disinterested nation which would initiate economic improvements, further education in the Albanian language and aid in the development of a unified system of self-government. The energy and ability of the population needs only fair opportunity to build a sturdy little state with qualities like those of the Scotch and the Swiss. The country would start with no capital, but also with no debt, and under efficient management, it could in the long run repay the assisting power in full. Switzerland could perhaps best fulfill the task, dwelling also in a mountainous country, with the habit of road-building, and a system of local liberty. Most of the Albanians in Paris in 1919 asked for the United States as mandatory, often with an urgency of entreaty which could hardly fail to obtain the desired result if it were possible to bring it fully and fairly before the American public. Italy is slated to be the mandatory or protector of Albania. The chief criticisms against this plan are that Italy cannot be considered disinterested, or disposed to withdraw after a time, having long coveted the land; that she needs all her capital for home improvement; that her presence will tend to embroil the Albanians more deeply with their neighbors the Serbians and Greeks; and



that an outside power of great strength will thus be given a firm foothold in the Balkan peninsula. It is of course true that Italy has the power to maintain order, that she has a small Albanian element in her own population which would prevent her action from being wholly unsympathetic, and that she understands the building of roads—at least for military purposes—and the development of economic possibilities.

If the plan of the treaty of London should be carried out, by which considerable areas were to be detached from the north and the south of the Albania of 1913 for the benefit of Serbia and Greece, the prospects of the Albanians would be miserable indeed. Cut into three parts like a small Poland, she must then await freedom through many weary years. While her people would not be likely to lose their home language, they would tend to become grouped as Roman Catholic, Moslem, and Greek Orthodox, and their education would be in Serbian, Italian, and Greek, a separation which would hinder greatly the establishment of reunion. Many of her people would perish in a series of insurrection and brigand operations. In short, left as regards personal liberty worse off than under the Turks, her small area would hold within it the continued possibility of disrupting the world peace.

4, Bulgaria will contain, if no part of Western Thrace be returned to her, about 35,000 square miles, and 1,500,000 people. At present the Bulgarians have plenty of home-grown food and depreciated paper money, but are very deficient in manufactured products, especially clothing, medicine and hardware. After the heavy losses of three wars, they have made no net progress toward the national unification for which they believed they were fighting. Of excellent repute eight years ago, as steady workers, thirsting for education, disciplined, ready to sacrifice all for freedom, they see themselves now proclaimed as outcasts of civilization. They are not likely again to try the fortune of war, though they have freed themselves from the leaders who lost all for them by bad judgment and shortsighted diplomacy. They seem determined to resume doggedly



the labors of peace, not yet devoid of hope that through the League of Nations some of their territorial wrongs will be righted. Their losses of Macedonia, the four areas assigned to Serbia, and the strip in the Dobruja which Rumania holds, have already been discussed. Something more may be said about Thrace. In the portion of Thrace assigned to Bulgaria in 1913, there were at that time by Greek figures about 9 per cent of Greeks and 11 per cent of Bulgarians, the remaining 80 per cent being Turks.<sup>2</sup> This is, however, on the basis of religion; actually about half of the "Turks" were Bulgarian speaking Pomaks, and probably more than half of the Greeks were "Bulgarophone Patriarchists," or Bulgarians who looked to the Greek Patriarch at Constantinople as their religious chief. It is likely, therefore, that a majority of the inhabitants spoke Bulgarian at the time of acquisition. But during the next two years many of the Greeks went to Macedonia, many Turks crossed the eastern frontier, and many Bulgarians came from Macedonia and were settled on the lands vacated by the Greeks and Turks. As explained above, this was roughly a fair exchange. At the present time, therefore, the area is overwhelmingly Bulgarian by language, and may have a majority of Exarchists, or members of the Bulgarian church. As regards eastern Thrace as far as the Enos-~~U~~ridia line, which was recognized as Bulgarian by the treaty of Bucharest, but which was recovered by the Turks a few weeks later, the population was in 1913 by religion apparently about 40 per cent Turkish, 40 per cent Greek, and 15 per cent Bulgarian. But at present, owing to the similar exchange of population, the proportion of Turks is probably about 60 per cent. Bulgaria would have had no ethnographic claim to this region in 1913 had she been assigned the territory of her nationals in Macedonia. At the present time,

<sup>2</sup> There was no regular census in these areas prior to 1913, and all "statistics" are estimates based on imperfect Turkish returns, and Greek and Bulgarian church rolls. The figures given by Prof. Soteriades of Athens, used above, show a close relation to those of Amadori Virgilij, a Philhellene Italian, who made estimates about the year 1907, giving most weight to those from Greek sources.



in case it is taken from the Turkish majority, her claim is superior to that of Greece unless the latter should recede territory in Macedonia which in 1912 was inhabited by Bulgarians. Should Greece retain the Macedonian territory and also be given both Bulgarian and Turkish ~~Constantinople~~, much of her land must be empty a long time for want of inhabitants. The true modern Greek—who both speaks the Greek language and belongs to the Greek Orthodox Church—is not so much a farmer as a trader, seaman or gardener. He cannot easily be induced to follow the plough. He is glad to be a landlord, with tenants of other races working his land. But Turks and Bulgarians do not like being his tenants. Bulgarians (with Serbians and Slavs generally) take naturally to farming. If Bulgaria remains within her present boundaries, and receives these continuing streams of refugees from Serbian and Greek Macedonia, the Dobruja, and Thrace, the disproportion of the density of population which already exists as between Greece and Bulgaria will be heightened.<sup>3</sup> In such case there will very likely be a considerable emigration from Bulgaria to the Americas, whereas that from Greece will probably diminish.

The financial burdens upon Bulgaria are very heavy. Besides the external pre-war debt (about \$225,000,000), the expenses of the occupying troops, the return of commandeered property (estimated on a generous scale), and some \$440,000,000 in gold value as indemnity; Germany, Austria, and Hungary are being required to surrender to the Entente their war claims against Bulgaria. The per capita load of foreign debt will be very heavy for so poor a land. The government will besides be obliged to deal with a vast internal debt. On the credit side is to be placed a great reduction of army expenditure, and the fact that agricultural products, of which in normal times Bulgaria has a considerable surplus, will command good prices in

<sup>3</sup> In 1912 the population per square mile in Greece was about 105, and in Bulgaria about 133. A comparison of these with similar figures for American States is instructive as regards the much greater density of country population in the Balkan peninsular.



western Europe for some time to come. But from 1900 to 1912, in time of peace, Bulgarian imports regularly exceeded their exports, and the balance was obtained by borrowing abroad. It seems impossible that the country can export the equivalent of even the interest on the debt of approaching a billion dollars in gold. Certainly in order to pay their debts, the Bulgarians will have to use their labor power to the utmost. If they succeed ultimately in lifting the load, and are able to keep out of war, they will become economically strong; their agriculture will have been greatly developed and the high cost of foreign products will have stimulated home manufacture greatly.

Bulgaria as a country of land-owning farmers is in small danger from Bolshevism. She may take up many of the ideas of more moderate socialism. The present government and the people generally are very averse to war, but it will not be easy to restrain refugees from the "unredeemed" territories so as to prevent their organizing brigand bands and violating the frontier.

Greece played so small a direct part in the war that she lost little in money and men. Great numbers of her citizens gained greatly in shipping and commerce. But her finances were in perilous condition before the war, and the military expenses after the war are a grievous and continuing burden. She bids for the entire periphery of the Aegean Sea, and hopes to take sufficient toll on the outward and inward trade of the hinterland to carry the expense of empire. She does not now demand Constantinople, but plans to clasp it from the two sides, and take it at the next juncture. Should she receive both Thrace and Smyrna, it is not easy to see how she will be able to carry the burden of her necessary military establishment, although she relies for the maintenance of her positions upon the disarmament of Turkey and Bulgaria by the Entente. It is far from impossible that she will be compelled to become an economic protectorate of France. Her people have not had their courage and self-sacrifice developed by such strenuous and undivided participation in the struggles of the past ~~two~~ years as is the case with her neighbors.

ten



The success of Greece since 1911 is a singular tribute to the ability and efficiency of one great man, M. Venizelos. He stands so much alone that he found it necessary to appoint himself representative of Greece in the Council of the League of Nations. In spite of the fact that his country, on the whole, helped one side about as much as the other during the great war, he appears to have obtained from the heads of the French and British governments the promise of the great extension of territory for which he seeks. It appears to be the intention in Europe, although Greece has theoretically a constitutional government, to maintain him in power indefinitely; the collapse that would come with his fall is too serious to be contemplated.

*cane* The dangerous rival of Greece at present is Italy. In Albania, the Dode~~case~~se, and Asia Minor, their claims overlap. Italy is many times larger than Greece, but she has not enjoyed a like favor since the armistice. She is for one thing unlucky in that those whom she wishes to prevail over—Greece and Yugoslavia—are counted as having been on the Entente side, whereas the opponents of Greece—Bulgaria and Turkey—were unmistakably on the other side. Greece has so far made more progress than Italy in attaining her aims for the above reasons and because of more extensive and skilful propaganda, greater persistency, and better unity of direction. Should she obtain most of her present claims, she must needs look forward to the active opposition of a recovered Russia. It might in the long run be no more profitable for her to become the opponent of states much larger than herself than it has been for Bulgaria and Turkey.

*Rumanian* Rumania is already suffering from the acute indigestion which Greece longs to acquire. The election held a few weeks ago returned a constituent assembly in which the largest party was Transylvanian, and a very considerable one was composed of farmers from Bessarabia. The people of Transylvania were as a whole better off educationally and economically under Hungary than the people of independent Rumania. The ~~Bulgarian~~ element among them, however, was largely deprived of political rights.



Rumania has now a fantastically large internal debt, which is being increased rapidly by the military enterprises of its government, in the effort to obtain wider frontiers towards Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Russia or Ukrania. In contradistinction to Serbia and Bulgaria, Rumania has been a land of large estates and peasant tenants. This makes her peculiarly open to revolutionary impulses from the Russian side. The new land law is expected greatly to mitigate this situation, but it hardly goes far enough. The rich soil and minerals of Rumania may in time enable her to escape the toils of western European financiers. She would do well to agree with her neighbors, and in particular, now that she may obtain all of her unredeemed land, to restore to Bulgaria what she exacted in 1913.

Serbia has earned great sympathy for her unexampled sufferings during the war, in spite of which she resolutely refused to make peace with the enemies who held all of her land, as did Rumania. Her losses from battle, privation, and disease were the greatest in proportion that were endured by any of the combatant nations. She has now been placed at the head of a vastly increased area, with a population three times that which she held before the war, and perhaps six times the present number of actual Serbians. The majority of the new state lies outside the Balkan peninsula. Formerly in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, this majority, in spite of various restrictions and oppressions, is more prosperous, better educated and better trained politically than the people of Serbia. Therein lies the ground of great future difficulty. A party of Serbians would subordinate all the rest in a unified kingdom of Greater Serbia, in which the Serbians would play a preponderant role. There can be little doubt that the great majority of the non-Serbs, while willing to join in a federal government, are not willing to admit the Serbians as a ruling group over them.

The case of Montenegro is in point. Montenegro was promised restoration as one of the small nations for whose rights the war was fought. In December, 1918, certain Serbians aided a minority party of Montenegrins to assemble



a packed convention, which voted the incorporation of Montenegro into Serbia. The evidence is strong that a large majority of the Montenegrins are willing to abandon King Nicholas and join Jugoslavia as a federated state, but that a similar majority is averse to the loss of the name and autonomy which has made the Black mountain famous across the centuries.

Serbian Macedonia also is a liability and not an asset in Jugoslavia. Its people are nearly enough akin to become good Serbians in the course of time if there had never been a Bulgaria. But having become attached to the Sofia government, and in touch with many thousands of refugees in Bulgaria, there is small prospect that they will ever love Belgrade. And should this improbable event occur, they will probably proceed to embroil Serbia with Greece, since Greece holds the coveted outlet to the sea through Salonica. The only peaceful solution of the Macedonian problem seems to be that Bulgaria should come into the Yugoslav union, and thus recover a political relationship to Macedonia. Such a union is unlikely, for both Greece and Italy will oppose it actively, since it threatens the attempts both are making to cut the Slavs from the sea and take toll of their trade.

Jugoslavia, like Greece and Rumania, as well as Czechoslovakia and Poland, has also an appalling financial prospect, considering that to a pre-war debt is added a great war debt and the necessity of heavy armament. The small and fettered non-favored powers, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Albania, will all be bitterly hostile, but cannot soon be dangerous. But there exist first-rate boundary troubles with Italy and Rumania. The type of peace that has been attempted in central and southeastern Europe promises not less militarism than before the great war, but more. Small empires have been set up, modern children of the dragon's teeth. They have men and food, but they must import the weapons and trappings of war. In fact, their militarism constitutes for them a financial burden of much the same impossible weight as the indemnities of the non-favored states, so that all promise after a few years to



be laden crushingly, and to be financial provinces of the great creditor nations of the reconstructed world.

The powers that have predominated in the Balkans during recent decades, Austria and Russia, have lost their influence during the war. Italy and France are striving to take the place of their former allies. Though the lire is worse depreciated than the franc, Italy is the nearer neighbor, and she is promised a direct foothold in Albania. The role she appears to be taking up is the cultivation of the non-favored states, which is the easier since her relations are strained with both Greece and Yugoslavia. Czechoslovakia and Rumania may become more drawn in the same direction than toward France, but will be restrained by their common attitude toward the Hungarians, a people who have not in the depths of defeat lost all their combativeness.

In the presence of these rival forces, the United States having nearly withdrawn from the field, and England tending to do likewise, there seems but a remote prospect for a successful economic reunion of the Austrian lands (which would have to include the pre-war Serbia and Rumania, and perhaps Poland) or of a revival of the Balkan League of 1912 (Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, Montenegro). There is a greater possibility of coöperation between Serbia, Rumania and Greece, as in 1913. But Rumania is not needed by the other two to restrain disarmed Bulgaria, and she has her dispute over the Banato with Serbia. The "Balkan Balance of Power" is gone beyond recovery, with a Greece of six or seven millions and a Bulgaria of four and a half millions, over against Rumania and Yugoslavia with twelve to fifteen millions each.

Finally, what can be conjectured as to the relations of the League of Nations to this transformed, but unimproved Balkan situation? The council of nine men, each holding a prominent part in the activities of his own government, cannot be expected until its personnel has been changed to modify the policy that has prevailed since the armistice. Only one of the Balkan states is represented, and M. Venizelos is not likely to favor relaxation of the bounds of Bul-



garia and Albania, while he would support Jugoslavia as against Italy, and Rumania as against Russia. One or two decades hence, the spirit of the times will perhaps be changed, and the League of Nations may then be expected to ameliorate conditions. Such a development ought strenuously to be striven for, for its only alternative is the renewal of devastating wars. If the League of Nations should become an instrument for rigidly enforcing the severities of the current settlement, it would better never have been, for it would but postpone and therefore magnify an inevitable catastrophe. America could not remain outside the disaster, and if for no other reason than self-interest, she should work to secure for the League a real power and a healing spirit.

*Errata - p.418 Constantinople = Thrace  
p.420 Dodecansei = Dodecanese*







