

George S. Papadopoulos, *England and the Near East, 1896-1898*. Thessaloniki, The Institute for Balkan Studies, 1969. Pp. 300.

This is a scholarly, detailed study of British policy and interest relative to the Ottoman Empire and the Eastern Mediterranean during the Salisbury administration, as the Nineteenth Century drew toward a close. It was a critical period, not only in the development of British policy in the Near East, but of British relations with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, France and Italy as a new era of world politics was opening. France and Russia were now in alliance, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy had formed the Triple Alliance, and Great Britain stood in isolation, not quite as "splendid" as it had seemed to be. The Ottoman Empire appeared in a state of decrepitude, not entirely innocuous, and there were very serious questions calling for resolution, not only as to British policy and interest, but as to those of the other Great Powers. Great Britain, France, Imperial Russia and Austria-Hungary, of course, had long established interests in the area, but Germany was a new comer, roughly since the advent of William II to the throne of the newly-established German Empire. It has been noted that Great Britain, whatever its interests, had, not a Near Eastern, but an Indian policy with its impact in the Near East. In the event of the demise of the Sultan's Empire what should British policy be?

Mr. Papadopoulos treats of these basic problems as they centered around the Egyptian, Armenian and Cretan questions in the period of 1896-1908. After providing his readers with a well-considered historical background, which sets the diplomatic landscape for the development of Lord Salisbury's policy, he deals with Egypt and the Dongola Expedition, the Armenian and Cretan problems during 1896, the Constantinople massacres and the efforts at reform in the Ottoman Empire, and he closes with the Cretan war and the peace settlement in 1898, which led to Cretan autonomy under Prince George of Greece. But temporary solution of the Cretan problem was one thing. Other crises, like those involving Macedonia, were to follow, as we know, until the Ottoman Empire receded into history, granted its inability—shared with other modern empires—to meet the force of nationalism among its varied peoples, the Turks themselves included.

As Mr. Papadopoulos observes, immediately after 1898, Great Britain was too much engrossed in South Africa and elsewhere to take any initiative in imposing further reforms on Sultan Abdul Hamid, a task which

was left primarily in nearby Austrian and Russian hands. The period of 1896-1898, in his view, marks the end of an era in Great Britain's association with the Near East and the beginning of a new period. For Great Britain, he holds, there were three principal aspects of the problem: 1) the strengthening of the British position in Egypt, where Lord Cromer was already at work, and the continued development of the British administration in the neighborhood of the Suez Canal; 2) the readjustment of the British attitude relative to the defense of Constantinople and the Straits to meet the situation created by new circumstances; and 3) the improvement of the condition of the Christian subjects of the Sultan's Empire—the Slavs, Greeks and Armenians. The dominating background lay in the growing estrangement with Germany, and the movement away from the Triple Alliance and, gradually and ultimately toward the Entente Cordiale with France (1904) and the understanding with Imperial Russia (1907).

The author also observes that "the most remarkable feature in Salisbury's policy was his repeated efforts to come to an understanding with Russia," behind which lay the "inevitable conclusion" which he had drawn from failure to convince his Cabinet to permit use of the British fleet in the Dardanelles. With the exception of Egypt, Great Britain no longer had any real hold on Ottoman territories, and little interest, as such, in the Turkish portions of the Empire. In these circumstances, the basic policy was to strengthen the British position on the Nile and to "withdraw as much as possible from all responsibilities at Constantinople." While this marked the end of traditional British policy, and reform in the Ottoman Empire was dissociated from protection, the development was gradual, and there was much caution. As Sir Philip Currie, the British Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, observed in June 1897, the Cretan War had demonstrated that the Ottoman Empire was not yet ready to pass into history, and the Western Powers looked upon reform as the only safe and legitimate means of maintaining Ottoman integrity, "and their geographical position must lead them to consider the maintenance of maritime power in the East of the Mediterranean as the only possible counterpoise to the preponderance of Russia in that quarter." In Currie's view, British prestige and interest would suffer "by a departure from the policy which, with more or less success, we have pursued at Constantinople during the greater part of this century," and he favored continuation of the effort at general reform. The ultimate dénouement came after World War I.

Of Greek Cypriote origin, Dr. Papadopoulos has written his book on the basis of very extensive archival research and on pertinent published documentary and other works. He has provided his readers with a most useful appendix, with documents on proposals for reform in the Ottoman Empire, Currie's views on British policy, and he concludes with an excellent selected bibliography. This book is not only a well-documented, well-written and thoroughly scholarly monograph dealing with a critical period in the development of British policy concerning the Ottoman Empire. It is an introduction to the new period which begins with the Twentieth Century and the onset of the high politics which led to the tragedy of World War I. It will repay very careful reading and study.

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Foreign Relations of the United States. Volume II. The Council of Foreign Ministers. Edited in The Historical Office, Bureau of Public Affairs, Department of State. Department of State Publication 8497. Washington, D.C.: U.S.G.P.O., 1970. Pp. 1586. \$ 7.50.

Although there has been some complaint as to the lateness of their publication, a point which may be contested when publications of other foreign offices are considered, there can be little complaint as to the completeness of the regular volumes of *The Foreign Relations of the United States*. This volume is no exception. Devoted to the Council of Foreign Ministers, it is replete with documents and minutes which carry the reader through the year 1946. In many ways it is a prelude to Volumes III and IV, which were devoted to the Paris Peace Conference in 1946 (*Balkan Studies*, XI, 1, pp. 200-202), in view of the Council's preparatory work, and it should also be read along with Volumes VI and VII, which were devoted to the problems of Eastern and Southeastern Europe and the Near East.

Students concerned with Southeastern Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East and North Africa will find the present volume of much interest, particularly as to the problems of Northern Epirus,