

19th July, 1917.

CONFIDENTIAL.

Noel Buxton, Esq. M.P.,
House of Commons, S. W.

My dear Buxton,

Many thanks for your letter and your interesting notes on arguments current in Parliamentary circles.

On one point I quite agree with you - that the comparatively good feeling which exists between Austrian diplomacy and that of America might well be used to help us to study the situation with fuller knowledge.

There are several attractive points about your scheme; but I have very grave doubts as to whether it is practicable.

1. It seems to me, in the first place, incompatible with the claims of Serbia, Italy, Roumania and Greece ^{or} Italy, if she only obtains Trentino, will have fought in vain. She could have had as much for remaining neutral two years ago. ^{sic.} Serbia will never "surrender" Macedonia unless she is certain of achieving her national unity, which your scheme excludes. On the other hand [?] Bulgaria will not be satisfied with merely Macedonia and the Dobrudja; but demand ~~the~~ Morava valley and ~~the~~ common frontiers ^{w:k} of Hungary. Your scheme gives Kavala and most of Greek Macedonia to Bulgaria, which I fear would be regarded by M. Venizelos as a gross betrayal. Roumania would lose, not gain, territory as a result of war, and would have to renounce her most cherished national aspirations.

Among all these Powers you would find it very difficult to get assent to your scheme.

2. You make the assumption that Austria is ready to adopt a federal system. I am inclined to think at present that

this is very doubtful. All evidence so far, is against the theory - such as the Emperor's Speech from the Throne, the Clam-Martinic Programme, the opposition of Slav deputies, Seidler's scheme of constitutional revision, etc. I cannot think that the Magyars will ever consent to federalism on a racial basis, (which would rob them of Croats, Serbs, Slovaks, and Roumanians, i.e. half their country) unless reduced to it by military defeat. This view of mine is supported by the constitutional debate in the Hungarian Parliament on the 5th July, 1917.

3. Your Map, I notice, renounces any idea of realising ^{was: 15 ad} Polish Independence, by leaving Western Galicia to Austria.

4. I cannot think that a union with Montenegro would be regarded by Serbia as an adequate reward for the loss of Monastir. For one thing this union was decided in principle between the two countries before the war broke out. It is in any case inevitable, whatever the issue of the war. Again, Montenegro can never provide Serbia with a proper access to the sea. Antivari, from my recollection, is an open roadstead, rather like Mallaig in the West Highlands, with high mountains behind it, and a perfectly inaccessible and roadless hinterland.

I don't feel that your scheme really satisfies the ideal aspects of the war, and I see very strong practical reasons against it being accepted. But I am greatly interested in it, and very glad that people like you are giving their minds to this question.

Yours very sincerely,

John Buchan

Department of Information.

8th February, 1918.

Psychic

Noel Buxton, Esq. M.P.,
12, Rutland Gate, S. W.

My dear Buxton,

Many thanks for the enclosed note. [I have evidence of the same kind, and I have evidence also of the opposite view. It is a tangled business guessing at the psychology of our foes.]

Yours very sincerely,

John Buchan