Patrick Finney

Raising Frankenstein: Great Britain, 'Balkanism' and the Search for a Balkan Locarno in the 1920s[1]

Scholarly commentary on the Yugoslav wars of succession over the last decade has paid considerable critical attention to the assumptions and historical analogies through which those conflicts were framed and rendered comprehensible by participants and observers. The responses of Western policy-makers and analysts, it is commonly argued, were shaped by negative and stereotypical views of the peoples of the region, characterizing them as somehow backward, barbaric, uncivilized, and locked into historical cycles of fanatical, irreconcilable hatred.[2] This was true of all texts that scripted the violence as fundamentally determined by essentialized ethnicity, amongst which Robert Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts*, a pernicious travelogue that critically shaped US president Bill Clinton's attitudes, was only the most notorious.[3] Simultaneously in broader scholarship on the region through the 1990s, the interpretive paradigm of 'Balkanism' emerged: anthropologists, literary critics and historians situated contemporary caricatures within a longer time frame by tracing how such extremely powerful and enduring stereotypical images of the Balkans and its peoples had coalesced over the centuries in western literary and political discourse.[4] As Maria Todorova put it, 'the Balkans have served as a repository of negative characteristics against which a positive and self-congratulatory image of the "European" and the "West" has been constructed'.[5] Other work explored how the inhabitants of the region negotiated such external perceptions and wielded similar symbolic geographies in order to differentiate themselves from each other.[6] This attentiveness to the politics of representation also manifested itself in

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a burgeoning body of scholarship dissecting the Yugoslav wars without recourse to the oversimplifications and mystifications of policy-makers and in a growing number of general histories of the modern Balkans.[7]

Granting the existence of an identifiable and discrete discourse of 'Balkanism', one obvious question is: does this interpretive device have any utility for the historical analysis of foreign policy-making? On the whole, the extant work — while asserting in a general sense that 'our political imagination, after all, feeds off much the same archetypes as literature'[8] — has been more concerned with outlining the lineaments of the discourse and exploring its crystallization than with tracing what precise political significance it may have had at specific times and places. Perhaps this is not surprising, given the common criticism that discourse analysis approaches are too preoccupied with identifying disembodied systems of meaning and neglect the issue of what power such discourses actually have when they are deployed in concrete social contexts.[9] But the forays that have been made in this direction — such as Katherine Fleming's ground breaking interpretation of the significance of western 'Orientalist' perceptions in great power relationships with Ali Pasha in the early nineteenth century[10] — suggest that there is mileage in trying to connect the assumptions evident in the rhetoric of policy-makers past and present to this long-established and multifaceted hegemonic mode of cultural interchange. International historians have become much more interested lately in questions of identity, perception and representation; even where this work is not inflected with poststructuralist concerns or formally designated as 'discourse analysis', it poses significant questions about the nature of foreign policy by suggesting that it can be the product less of cool *realpolitik* calculation than of very broad systems of meaning prevalent within particular societies.[11]

This case study is concerned with the attitudes of British policy-makers towards the Balkans in the 1920s. Writers on 'Balkanism' have stressed the contributions of Britons to the 'narrative colonization' of the region, and have identified the early decades of the twentieth century as a crucial period when some of 'the most abiding images' of it were created through the 'exploitation of Balkan settings by the British and American entertainment industries'.[12] Moreover, British diplomatic records

of the inter-war period are certainly replete with characterizations of the Balkan peoples which mirror those delineated in the critical literature: judgements which are patronizing, infantilizing and ferminizing. So, did British policy-makers in the 1920s partake of the coherent discourse of 'Balkanism' that was prevalent in popular culture, and if so, to what effect? This is potentially significant since during the 1920s Britain was the predominant power in the European states system, and played a critical role through dominance of international finance in reconstructing the region, making it rather dependent on British goodwill and largesse. These issues are explored here through an analysis of one inter-war attempt to bring order to south-eastern Europe, the search in the mid-1920s for a Balkan Locarno. This may not have been the most important episode in inter-war diplomacy, particularly since the endeavour came to nothing, but it is nonetheless revealing both of prevailing attitudes towards the region and of the nature of Locarno itself.

The Locarno settlement of October 1925 is conventionally regarded as a milestone in the international history of inter-war Europe: a wide-ranging security agreement that ended the post-Versailles period of uncertainty and inaugurated a new phase of stabilization and pacification, only cruelly cut short by the unchaining of the Great Depression. At the heart of Locarno lay a Franco-German treaty whereby both abjured war and agreed to respect their common border, an agreement which was guaranteed by Great Britain and Italy, and which was supplemented by a network of arbitration pacts between Germany and its neighbours.[13] Locarno was, in Arthur Balfour's words, the 'Great Peace' that finally concluded the 'Great War', since acceptance of the legitimacy of some of the key terms of the hated Versailles *diktat* heralded German re-entry into the community of nations and assuaged French fears of *revanche*.[14] Locarno's real significance lay less in its textual detail than in its psychological impact, for it was 'invested with a moral significance transcending the practical importance of [its] results'.[15] It was idealized as representing the end of wartime mentalities, enlightened reconciliation between erstwhile enemies, and the progression of European affairs into a saner and wiser era; indeed, for some enthusiasts it thus represented a 'turning point in history'.[16]

Such euphoria even swept up some of the usually hard-nosed policy-makers involved in the Locarno negotiations. Miles

Lampson, head of the foreign office central department, wrote in a private letter of his amazement at 'the absence of all chicanery', the willingness of each participant to 'explain their particular difficulties in the simplest and most straightforward language', and the fact that the discussions were conducted 'on so high a plane'. There was, he continued, an atmosphere of 'complete equality': 'there is no longer a division into groups; all that is past and gone'. Austen Chamberlain — the British foreign secretary and architect of Locarno — similarly observed that the conference was 'from first to last one of the most amazing things that any of us have ever seen', and firmly believed that the pact would 'mark in history as the dividing point between the era of war and the era of peace'.[17] Although such rapture was subsequently tempered by realization that 'exaggerated expectations' for the future were bound to give way to disappointment, Locarno underpinned the generally optimistic diplomatic atmosphere of the later 1920s in Europe.[18] Chamberlain had long hoped that the realization of a western security pact would have a salutary effect upon those powers 'whose quarrels have disturbed in the past, and whose jealousies disturb today, the peace and tranquillity of other quarters of the world', and during the negotiations he more explicitly enjoined that 'other nations might follow our example'.[19] Subsequently, a plethora of treaties were indeed signed across the continent in an atmosphere of 'pactomania'. A general expectation emerged that comprehensive Locarno-type settlements might be elaborated in other areas of tension where former victors and defeated powers remained unreconciled, which in essence meant amongst the swathe of new states stretching from the Baltic to the Aegean.[20]

Early on in the discussions over the western security pact, it was decided that Britain would not play as prominent a role in such potential arrangements in other parts of Europe. Chamberlain wrote, on 4 January 1925, that

> it is one thing to defend the Channel on the eastern frontiers of the Low Countries and France. It is quite another thing to guarantee the very unstable situation in Eastern Europe which the Peace Treaties have 'Balkanised' with a vengeance.[21]

This recently coined verb indicated how the term 'Balkan' was now established as a pejorative descriptor, irrespective of the realities of the region: far from being 'Balkanised', the peace

settlements there actually established larger, more consolidated, states in contrast to the situation further north on the continent. Chamberlain's language indicates that more than pragmatic political calculation was at work here.[22]

Opinion on this matter was not unanimous, since at least one learned adviser felt that the proverbial instability of the eastern half of the continent made it actually more urgent that Britain should give a formal commitment to intervene if necessary to defend the Versailles settlement and uphold the balance of power there.[23] But ultimately Chamberlain decreed that 'in Western Europe we are a partner . . . in Eastern Europe our role should be that of a disinterested amicus curiae', and rebuffed French visions of a more integrated pact involving British guarantees of Poland and Czechoslovakia.[24] Thus the British defined the essence of the 'Locarno model' as being

> a treaty between one or more ex-allies *with an ex-enemy*, for the settlement of all disputes by some process of conciliation or arbitration and for a system of mutual guarantees in the event of the Treaty being violated.

On their thinking it emphatically did not necessarily involve a great power guarantee, much less a British one.[25]

The idea of an eastern Locarno to match the settlement of Germany's western borders was promoted for some years by the French, but foundered by the mid-1930s because of mutual suspicion amongst Germany's eastern neighbours, anxieties over possible Soviet participation and, of course, German revisionist ambitions.[26] In Central Europe, any potential Locarno would have had to focus on Hungary as the key defeated power and Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia (technically at this point, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes), Romania, and Italy as the former victors. Initially, the British regarded this as the most promising and practicable possibility, but it too came to naught. Gábor Bátonyi has recently emphasized British responsibility for this outcome, locating their unwillingness to participate in such a pact as a guarantor in the context of a nascent but pronounced disengagement from the affairs of Central Europe after very active intervention in the first half of the 1920s. However, this argument rather downplays the persistent efforts that the British did in fact make to encourage and influence the powers of the region to move towards an agreement, and in any case intractable Hungarian revisionism and inveterate intriguing was the key

impediment: for example, late in 1925, progress towards a pact was halted by the eruption of a scandal over Hungarian forging of French francs.[27]

The other possible site for a second Locarno was the Balkans, where the nucleus would have to consist of Yugoslavia, Greece, Romania and the defeated Bulgaria. Here, it was evident that serious obstacles lay in the way of any pact: fiercely revisionist Bulgaria was most unlikely to consider burying its differences with Greece and Yugoslavia and its ambitions in Macedonia in the name of some general reconciliation. Great power aspirations, particularly those of France and Italy, clashed in the region, and serious political tensions between the former victor powers — in particular Greece and Yugoslavia — would also have to be overcome. In November 1924 the Yugoslavs had denounced their alliance with Greece, ostensibly in protest at Greek failure to give satisfaction over a series of issues, in particular facilities for Yugoslav trade at Salonika, the poor state of communication links with that port and the status of the Slav minority in Greek Macedonia that Belgrade claimed as Serbian. But underlying these problems lay the Yugoslavs' longstanding aspirations to annex southern Macedonia and obtain a territorial outlet on the Aegean. Although negotiations had been held in the spring of 1925 they had come to nothing, largely because the Yugoslavs — flexing their muscles as the coming great power in the region — had made exorbitant and ominous demands which threatened Greek sovereignty and integrity. While the Greeks were operating from a position of weakness given the economic and political instability that had followed their disastrous war in Asia Minor, they were determined to resist such pressure, and the two sides thus remained very far apart.[28]

Despite his unwillingness to participate as a guarantor, Austen Chamberlain was an enthusiastic advocate of these mooted new regional security arrangements. However, this did not mean that he was sanguine about the prospects for success, nor that he believed it was Britain's place to impose peremptorily Locarno-type treaties. On the contrary, his instructions to British representatives in the Danubian and Balkan regions in late October made clear his view that 'nothing can be hurried' since 'time is needed'. Moreover, he was adamant that the key to achieving a second Locarno was a change of heart on the part of Europe's smaller states:

> We will give any help that we can, but salvation comes *from within*. There can be no real peace but by consent. If the great powers impose peace, peace remains an outer garment which can be thrown off at any moment. The Gov[ernmen]ts directly concerned must *will* peace. When they do, there will be real peace.

So, it was for the Balkan states to deliver themselves from evil by living up to the superior example that the great powers had set them. That Chamberlain appeared to believe the propaganda which portrayed Locarno as a rare act of high-minded statesmanship and embodiment of lofty principle was made even clearer elsewhere in the same instructions:

> If the smaller powers wish to be reckoned as morally on an equality with the great powers, they must act in the same spirit and show the same largeness of view and desire of reconciliation as the great powers have done. Whosoever refuses to work for this object not only puts his country in the wrong but shows its littleness.[29]

From the outset, therefore, Chamberlain's rhetoric established an opposition between the moral, civilized Western powers, already suffused with 'the spirit of Locarno' and the habitually selfish, narrow-minded Balkan ones. The successful conclusion of a Balkan security pact would therefore depend on whether those states could transcend their normal immoral natures — 'rising above' their 'local jealousies and feuds' — and approximate their actions and their mentality to those of their betters in the West.[30]

Even before Chamberlain had issued these instructions, there were clear indications that the Balkan states did not accept the implication that Locarno incarnated a more evolved diplomacy that they should aspire to emulate. The Greeks in particular seemed to view Locarno-type rhetoric cynically, as simply another tactical weapon to deploy in their disputes with their neighbours. In the late summer of 1925 the Greek foreign minister Konstantine Rentis, catching the general mood of conciliation, had floated the idea of concluding a series of regional compulsory arbitration treaties which then matured into a plan for a fully-fledged Balkan pact. While this proposal was ostensibly unobjectionable, even laudable, it was also designed rather transparently as 'the cheapest way for Greece to overcome the difficulties in which she was involved with [Yugoslavia]'. That Belgrade recognized this was made clear in a cool response, emphatically stating that any arbitration pact would have to be

signed after Yugoslavia's reasonable and moderate demands had been met: it could not serve as the means to resolve existing disputes.[31] Greece was not going to secure the benefits of an alliance on the cheap, since the Yugoslavs knew that impartial arbitration would not procure the gains they sought: as one British official argued, 'it is force and not justice which will give them what they want at Salonika and in regard to the Minorities'.[32]

The Greeks attempted the same trick again after the Greek–Bulgarian incident of October 1925, which rather reduced their credit with the international community. (After a border skirmish near Petrich, Greek troops advanced some distance into Bulgaria, before being swiftly reined in by the League of Nations; subsequently Geneva despatched a commission of inquiry headed by Lord Rumbold to investigate the background to Greek–Bulgarian tension and to make recommendations to prevent such incidents recurring.)[33] On 2 November they addressed a letter to Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary General of the League of Nations, expressing their willingness to sign up for the compulsory arbitration pact between Balkan states which they alleged the League was gestating. They were, it said,

> glad to be in a position to adhere in principle to such an initiative, the salutary effects of which are quite plain . . . Greece . . . will not fail to associate herself with every measure aiming at the equitable solution of any dispute or conflict which might arise in the Balkans and at the consolidation of general peace, for which peace in the Balkans is a vital and essential necessity.[34]

This communication was less the result of an outbreak of Locarno spirit than a prudent manoeuvre by the Greeks to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of international opinion, evade Yugoslavia's demands for the renewal of the alliance and anticipate other, possibly less palatable, suggestions which might emerge from the Rumbold commission of inquiry. The language of Locarno was a useful tool, but its use did not betray any fundamental change of heart. Drummond soon made it clear that the League was not, and would not, be considering any proposal for a Balkan pact (it was not within its competence to do so). Nor had the Greeks made any such concrete suggestion themselves; rather they were simply trying to encourage progress towards an agreement which they hoped might settle all their foreign policy problems painlessly in one fell swoop.[35]

Not surprisingly, these manoeuvres were poorly received. The

Yugoslavs and the Bulgarians were adamant that they would not consider a pact until their own concrete grievances against the Greeks had been satisfactorily resolved.[36] Similarly, the French argued that the Greeks should not put the cart before the horse, but must resolve their differences with Belgrade and renew their alliance prior to any more ambitious settlement.[37] The British essentially concurred and reminded their representative in Athens, temporarily delirious with 'pactomania', that a multilateral security agreement would have to be 'a slow growth resulting from a general consciousness of its need'. This was a question that (in a revealing phrase) 'must be left to its own natural evolution'. The 'slapdash methods' being employed by the Greeks were not well calculated to achieve success, and in the circumstances the timing of their proposal was rather suspicious.[38] The Greeks made some further token efforts to rally the powers to their side, but by early December their initiative in favour of a Balkan pact had failed. Chamberlain concluded that they had been happy 'neither in the moment nor the manner in which they put forward their proposal' and they would have done better 'to settle some minor questions first'.[39]

Little progress proved possible on these so-called minor questions, barring progress towards a pact through these same months at the end of 1925. There were periodic rumours that negotiations between Greece and Yugoslavia might be resumed, but these were without substance. The Greeks had no intention of shifting their position on the key issues — the identity of the Slav minority in Greek Macedonia and Belgrade's claim to administrative, if not territorial, rights over the Yugoslavia–Salonika railway — and the Yugoslavs therefore had no incentive to negotiate. Even though (as the foreign office admitted elsewhere) these were issues that the Greeks felt impinged on their sovereignty and vital interests, their intransigence exasperated London and occasioned an outburst of a very common form of irritation. Commenting on the arguments and counter-arguments, one official noted that this was 'a typically Greek story' and that the sooner the Greeks realized 'that the alliance must precede a pact and that alliances connote a certain amount of give and take on both sides the better'.[40] This presumption that the Balkan peoples were incapable of rising above childish squabbling — overcoming their 'hysteria and nervousness'[41] — and conducting rational diplomatic relations was even more starkly illustrated by Miles

Lampson, who wearily noted that he was 'entirely opposed to our getting drawn into these Balkanics': the Foreign Office even had a special noun to denote the particular character of disputes in south-eastern Europe.[42]

An implied opposition between the abilities and attitudes of the Balkan peoples and those of Western Europe was a persistent factor in British policy. In November 1924, just after the Yugoslavs denounced their alliance with Greece, the Foreign Office had debated how a *rapprochement* might be facilitated. The previous month, Lampson had actually visited the two states while on leave and gained painful first-hand experience of the state of the rail link between Salonika and the Yugoslav border: a journey of some sixty kilometres had taken three and a half hours, even the first class compartment was 'filthy beyond belief', and 'every siding and every bit of double line was blocked with Serb goods-wagons hung up by the Greek railway people'. Lampson concluded that Yugoslav impatience over the railway was quite genuine and justified since the Greeks — 'by nature slack' — were indeed administering it terribly to their northern neighbour's economic detriment. Doubtless there were other, possibly more sinister, motives at work in Belgrade, but all the more reason for the Greeks to remedy this concrete grievance in order to remove an irritant and possible pretext for more drastic Yugoslav action.[43] Chamberlain instructed the British minister in Athens to suggest informally that the Greeks should bring in a 'first class railway manager' — perhaps selected by the secretary general of the League of Nations — in order to 'put them right for you'. 'A good Englishman' could certainly be found, and if the Greeks only wanted 'things properly run, this is the way to do it'.[44] The Greeks proved unresponsive to this suggestion, however, which only reinforced preconceived assumptions.[45] As Lampson lamented, 'the average English mind is not so constituted as to be able to fathom the depths of Balkan intrigue'; but this was perhaps 'probably as well, for we can thus deal with matters in a straight-forward way'.[46]

Given these assumptions it was scarcely surprising that, towards the end of 1925, widespread sentiment in the Foreign Office held that while the statesmen of Central Europe might conceivably conclude a pact, the prospects in the Balkans were remote: even if one were signed, 'it would be nothing but a scrap of paper to be torn up as soon as a favourable war opportunity

offered'. Hence all that could be done at present was 'to get a clear idea of the numerous outstanding difficulties in the way of permanent peace and to try to keep Bulgars, Greeks and Serbs from cutting each other's throats at sight'.[47] In December, a departmental review reached much the same conclusion, albeit couched in more sober language. 'In the criss-cross of chaotic aspirations and the atmosphere of intrigue, fear and suspicion which unfortunately still persists', and with their Balkan nations 'still more faithful to their hates than to the loves', Britain could only 'wait upon events', assume 'the role of benevolent and disinterested observer', and support 'any State which gives evidence of a capacity for stability' and 'the authority of the League in such States'.[48]

The state in which the British placed their highest hopes in this respect was Yugoslavia, and around the turn of the year soundings from there indicated that the prospects for a security pact might improve. In his dealings with the Belgrade government, the British minister Howard Kennard played on Yugoslav fears of Italy, aiming to exploit them in order to advocate increased unity between the Balkan states. He acknowledged that 'one never knows where one is with these people', since they often gave one 'specious assurances' then went off 'on quite the other tack when it comes to concrete business', but he felt that with continued judicious persuasion the Yugoslavs might become advocates of a Balkan Locarno.[49] This view was echoed in the Foreign Office, which advised that while caution was necessary and that the right spirit had to be present amongst all parties, Kennard should take steps to prod the Yugoslavs into proposing a series of arbitration treaties that could form the basis of new regional security arrangements, provided that other outstanding questions were settled amicably first.[50]

Early in 1926, optimism persisted. While the signals emerging from Belgrade were not unambiguous, at least some policymakers were intimating that they wished to settle with Greece in order to move towards a Balkan pact. Kennard had busied himself, agitating in favour of such a development. He reported that it was difficult to be too sanguine 'in view of the proverbial insincerity of Balkan politicians', and that 'we cannot hope to get the true "Locarno-spirit" here within an appreciable period' (indeed 'I fear that you might have to await the millennium before doing so'); but nonetheless he believed that it might be possible yet to

'bring about a Locarno which would commit the Balkan nations to a pacific policy which it would be difficult for them to abandon' (that is, to oblige them to pursue policies which were not in their aggressive natures).[51] The Foreign Office took up this pointer: believing that the railway question was the key to realizing any pact, and that Yugoslav demands for full control over it were unreasonable, the idea was conceived that joint representations should be made to Belgrade and Athens by Britain, France and Italy, urging them to refer the railway question to the League for arbitration, with a view to establishing some form of League administration over it. All this, it was hoped, would lay the ground for a Balkan Locarno.[52] (As with Locarno, the League was commonly taken to incarnate the new diplomacy, replacing the selfish, militarist cynicism of pre-1914 international relations with principled, internationalist behaviour and standards. Even though Britain's own attitude towards the League and these principles was generally rather ambivalent, in instances such as this it was certainly seen as a means to civilize, educate and discipline Balkan statesmen.)

However, before long, these expectations were dashed. Due to a series of misunderstandings generated in a complex series of diplomatic exchanges, the British and French gained the erroneous idea that a bilateral settlement between Greece and Yugoslavia was in fact already imminent, and so Chamberlain abandoned the idea of concerted great power representations. However, when the Greeks transmitted their formal proposals to Belgrade in February, it transpired that contrary to general expectations they had in fact barely shifted position on the railway or minorities, and coming so soon after hopes had been raised this dealt a severe blow to the prospects for a *rapprochement*.[53] Hopes for great power cooperation also evaporated in a welter of recrimination. The British were primarily angry with the Yugoslavs for persisting in their exorbitant demands upon the Greeks, and resolved to keep out of the Greco-Yugoslav dispute — 'leave the thing severely alone' — in the near future.[54] But they were also annoyed with the French for not treating them with confidence which had contributed to the misunderstanding; moreover, it was supposed that the French were encouraging Yugoslav stubbornness for the sake of their own financial and geopolitical interests.[55] The French, conversely, suspected the British of partiality for the Greeks, and feared that if the latter did

not become more cooperative and facilitate a suitable Balkan bloc, Italian influence in the peninsula would expand exponentially to the detriment of their own.[56]

In this context, it became clear through the spring that the prospects for a general settlement were exiguous. The Yugoslavs and Bulgarians discussed arbitration treaties, but since at least some Bulgarians were only keen on a treaty with Belgrade because they hoped it would be the prelude to a joint attack on Greece, this was hardly evidence of a Locarno-mentality.[57] There was talk of a tripartite pact between France, Italy and Yugoslavia that, at French suggestion, would entail defensive alliances, arbitration treaties and a guarantee of existing frontiers, but this was scarcely in accordance with the principles of Locarno since it was a quite old-fashioned alliance of victors. The British, believing that 'stable peace can only come by mutual agreements between ex-enemies', thus looked askance at it, though it was in any case pretty much strangled at birth by Mussolini's reluctance to conclude any accord that might bolster French influence in south-eastern Europe.[58] Later still, as Yugoslav-Bulgarian talks continued, it became clear that far from sincerely desiring reconciliation, the Yugoslavs were simply trying to extort concessions from Sofia under the pretext of seeking a multilateral pact and simultaneously using the spectre of an agreement to intimidate Athens.[59]

Taken together, these episodes convinced the Foreign Office that the atmosphere of pacification required to achieve a Balkan Locarno was quite absent. Officials lamented that, rather than seeking genuine compromise and appeasement, the powers of the region were simply engaged in a 'treaty-making game for selfish purposes'.[60] It would clearly be much harder than anticipated for the Locarno spirit to take root and flourish in the soil of south-eastern Europe, or to persuade Balkan statesmen to rise to the challenge of progressing forwards into a new era for European diplomacy. In the Balkans, arbitration treaties and such-like were not regarded as instruments of conciliation 'but as pawns in the old contest of political intrigue and international jealousies'. The region continued to be viewed as a quagmire of petty hatreds and irrational violence, not sufficiently advanced in terms of public opinion or the calibre of its statesmen to embrace idealistic diplomacy. Indeed, it might even be dangerous or counterproductive to continue to work for mutual reconciliation and a new security

system there: in attempting to emulate the Western powers, governments in the Balkans might only 'succeed in replacing the spirit of Locarno by that of "Frankenstein"'.[61] In the hands of the statesmen of Europe's dark underbelly, the wondrous idealism of Locarno would be defiled, supplanted by a monstrous simulacrum.

It was hardly surprising therefore that although the idea remained on the *tapis* for some years, nothing in the nature of a Balkan Locarno ever emerged. In 1928 a foreign office review noted that 'little or no progress has been made' in extending the Locarno system, chiefly because of jealous regional rivalries between France and Italy, the intransigence of Hungary and Bulgaria, and continuing differences between numerous former allied states. It concluded that movement might be possible, but only if 'the ex-allied states will work to create conditions which will offer some real inducement to their former enemies to forego their hostility'. Thus it observed that while 'a "Balkan Locarno" is for ever on the lips of Yugoslav and Greek statesmen', if they really did believe it to be 'the panacea for all their ills', they should exert greater effort to realize it by making it possible for Bulgaria 'to work with them'.[62] Greece and Yugoslavia did resolve their mutual differences in a comprehensive settlement in 1929, but Bulgarian revisionist ambitions in Macedonia persisted in a manner that precluded any real cordiality between former victors and defeated powers. Though ritual obeisance was constantly made to the aspiration, the will for a general *rapprochement* was lacking. The Balkan Entente that eventually materialized in the very different circumstances of the 1930s was certainly not in the style of Locarno, since it excluded Bulgaria and was at bottom simply anti-revisionist.[63]

From this single case study, it is obviously impossible to draw definitive conclusions about the assumptions of British policy-makers, and judgements about how prevalent 'Balkanist' prejudices were must remain somewhat subjective. In part, this is for technical reasons since the voluminous nature of the potentially relevant archival material means that any scholarly engagement can only be partial and certainly precludes any statistical assessment. Moreover, the thematic basis on which the archives are arranged and indexed is not particularly helpful in an inquiry of this kind, since pertinent comments are scattered piecemeal throughout. Researchers are also likely to form different impres-

sions, depending on how sensitized they are to the theoretical issues in play and on what questions they are putting to the documents. Furthermore, it is undeniably problematic to correlate abstractions about pervasive cultural discourses with the messy realities of the archives: not every utterance upon the region was couched in negative terms, and diverse attitudes can be detected between different policy-makers and over time. But this material nonetheless betrays the existence of a network of deeply embedded essentializing assumptions about the region which were shared widely amongst British policy-makers. That these censorious attitudes are pathologically reiterative of key 'Balkanist' tropes rules out the further possible objection that they are evidence not of 'skewed' perception, but of the fact that Balkan statesmen in this period simply did behave in outlandishly petty, selfish, brutal and dishonest ways.

Of course, not all Balkan statesmen were characterized in precisely the same terms, but even when British policy-makers developed a high opinion of one of them, it was because of his perceived deviation from the presumed dominant norm. An archetypal example would be Eleutherios Venizelos, the foremost Greek statesman of this period who served as inspiration for the figure of Konstantine Karolides, the Greek premier in John Buchan's *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915). This landmark in the development of the modern spy novel was founded upon a particular characterization of Balkan political intrigue, with Karolides as 'the one big man in the show' who 'played a straight game too, which was more than could be said for most of them'.[64] British policy-makers' perceptions of Venizelos were very similar. True, during the First World War he was not entirely trusted, despite his tireless championing of the Entente cause: in 1916 a senior official remarked that he was 'truly Greek, or rather Cretan in character, and we know what St Paul thought of Cretans'.[65] But after victory he emerged as one of the giant charismatic figures of the Paris peace conference where he 'quickly won a reputation for moderation, wisdom and statesmanship . . . founded on passionate sincerity and strength of will coupled with charm of manner and political tact'.[66] Venizelos became the darling of a coterie of philhellenic British officials, one of whom almost squealed with delight on receiving an autographed dinner invitation;[67] Harold Nicolson also lauded him in the most fulsome terms: 'he *is* my hero, dear old man in his skull cap and his

charming Christ-like smile . . . You see, he is the *winged reason*.'[68] The extravagance of this affection illustrated what a *rara avis* Venizelos was taken to be; later in the 1920s he rather sullied his reputation with murky and ill-judged interventions in the turbulent course of Greek internal politics and, although he continued to be regarded as a cut above the average, the disappointment experienced by his disillusioned British admirers was correspondingly poignant and bitter.[69]

The case of Nicolson also well illustrates the complexities and contradictions of British policy-makers' attitudes. He was one of the central department's acknowledged experts on the region, having served in Constantinople before the war and then been intimately involved in the evolution of the eastern Mediterranean peace settlement through to the 1923 Lausanne treaty, and he had established a wide circle of social contacts with prominent Balkan figures. Steeped in the region's history and culture through his classical education and travel, he was also a prolific author: notably in 1924, in order to coincide with the centenary of Lord Byron's death, he published a biographical study of that 'Columbus' of Britain's imaginative colonization of the Balkans.[70] Nicolson's instinctive philhellenism was tempered by brutal awareness of the diminished state of contemporary Greece and the dictates of *realpolitik*: both sides of this were illustrated when he put up a minute which floated the idea of marking the Byron centenary by returning the Elgin Marbles, but concluded that it would be unacceptable to public opinion.[71] In broader terms his minutes on the Balkans similarly oscillated between expressing positive — or at least idiosyncratically romanticized — views of its peoples and the more conventional hard-headed disparagement.

Nicolson was also prone to reflect upon the region and its reputation in a manner that, while not exactly flattering, rather cut across any notion that he was merely a dumb prisoner of entrenched cultural assumptions. Thus in May 1925, responding to a suggestion that the League of Nations should establish a special commission to monitor dangers to peace emanating from the region, he opined that:

> I should like, myself, to see the word 'Balkans' disappear from the diplomatic vocabulary. The very sound of it produces a nervousness which is not justified by the intrinsic capacity for evil which those countries today possess. Nor is it

> fair on the countries themselves: on the great commercial expansion expected from Serbia, on the high grade of culture prevalent in Rumania, on the future to say nothing of the legacy of Greece. They are sensitive about this opprobrious term, feeling about it what the Dominions feel about the word 'Colonial'. And justly so. Why, therefore, revive an appellation and a theory which had better be forgotten? And which may mislead, in that it implies some qualitative difference between, say, Jugo-Slavia and Czecho-Slovakia, Rumania and Poland, Greece and Italy which assuredly does not exist.

But despite Nicolson's lucidity on this occasion, his plea went emphatically unheeded and so his observation ultimately supports, rather than problematizes, the broader assertion about foreign office prejudices.[72] In 1928 the British representative in Sofia vented his feelings about the 'semi-civilised races inhabiting the Balkan peninsula' and urged that the only means to establish peace there 'on the Locarno or any other system' was to concede frontier rectification in favour of the 'inveterate conspirators and agitators' of the Macedonian organizations operating from Bulgaria. He was subsequently rebuked, but only for questioning Chamberlain's firm decision that it was 'much too soon to think of any alteration of frontiers, the war being only over ten years'; Foreign Office officials tended to agree that parts of the Balkans were 'really an ethnological museum', indeed that 'everything in these benighted countries is mediaeval'.[73]

Analysis of the 'Balkanist' perceptions of British policy-makers also needs to explore how they interlocked with the diverse other ethnic and racial stereotypes that formed their 'mental map' of Europe. Numerous recent studies have begun to explore the significance and role in foreign policy-making of national stereotypes[74] (perhaps especially fruitfully in the analysis of how intelligence was interpreted.)[75] In the case of Britain much more needs to be done, though the potential of such an approach has been demonstrated by Erik Goldstein's explorations of the 'British official mind', by Philip Bell's analysis of 'each country's understanding of the other, and of itself in relation to the other' in Anglo-French relations, and by Martin Folly's intimations of how British attitudes towards the Soviet Union emerged from a complex combination of anti-Bolshevism, geopolitics and deep-rooted class and ethnic prejudices.[76] Moreover, Bátonyi's work on Britain's relationships with the small states of Central Europe illustrates the salience of derogatory preconceptions not dissimilar to those held towards the Balkans: in

the case of the Czechs, for example, British antipathy had its roots in an amalgam of geopolitics, social snobbery and long term cultural suspicion of Slavs.[77]

Although prejudice against the Balkan states was identifiably discrete, some of the disparaging opinions quoted above were in fact directed equally at the Central Europeans, and even occasionally against the French and Italians. Thus the material discussed here supports Vesna Goldsworthy's contention that the British operated a kind of hierarchy of stereotypes, in which Britishness was defined and valorized in opposition to 'a more generalised Continental Other, of which the Balkans were only the most extreme example': 'Britishness and Balkanness stand at opposing ends of the hierarchical diagonal.'[78] This was evident in 1926, when one Foreign Office official commented upon news that the Greek military dictator Theodore Pangalos was proposing to submit himself for election as president: 'it really looks as though there were a chance of Greece settling down to "normal political life" — "normal" in the Western and not in the Greek sense'; a colleague corrected '"normal" rather in the Italian sense'.[79]

The argument can be essayed, moreover, that British policy was 'Balkanist' not merely in rhetoric but in substance. The Foreign Office constantly stressed that Britain had no political interests in south-eastern Europe beyond the preservation of peace and stability — and therefore trade — and insisted that consequently it should avoid entanglement in labyrinthine Balkan disputes. But despite this rhetoric of detachment, and Chamberlain's insistence that Britain was not 'the policeman or pedagogue of the Balkans', working as he prescribed 'for moderation and reconciliation of feuds domestic and foreign' actually embroiled the British in practice very extensively in the region's affairs.[80] Thus it was really semantic sophistry to claim that Britain had no '*active* Balkan policy' — 'no such immediate interest in the Balkans as would dictate a particular solution of any of its many problems' — while simultaneously affirming an overriding interest in 'the restoration of a normal situation resulting in increased trade and thereby a greater opening for British products and British finance and industry generally'.[81]

There was undoubtedly an element of self-delusion at work here, with the British genuinely believing that, in contrast to other great powers who meddled for selfish ends, their intervention was

truly moral and disinterested and therefore likely to ameliorate disputes. Hence Lampson insisted at one point that while the preservation of peace was in one sense admittedly 'a purely selfish aim', it was always combined with 'a more general, I might say, humanitarian, aim — namely, to use our influence as far as possible to prevent quarrels between neighbouring countries'.[82] Other powers understandably resented this tendency to universalize British self-interest as moral principle. Thus in January 1926 the Soviet organ *Izvestiya* argued that the fostering of a Balkan Locarno was motivated less by elevated principle than by a desire to strengthen British influence across the continent:

> The 'Locarno spirit' though it could not be realised in the Balkans nevertheless managed to show its hallmark 'Made in England'. This is the hallmark of Locarno agreements in whatever part of Europe it is endeavoured to make them.[83]

The character of British policy can doubtless be rationalized in conventional power-political terms. With Britain as the preeminent status quo power of the postwar world, however much the British may have yearned for distance from these quarrels, an interest in systemic stability inevitably dragged them in to try to settle them. But it is also striking with respect to the Balkans how the commingled rhetoric and substance of British policy mirrored, even embodied, some signature tropes that Goldsworthy has identified in British popular fiction of the same era: not just the dread of being embroiled beyond escape in the chaotic and polluted Balkan lands — 'a fantasy of threat and a fear of being "sucked in"' — but an exquisite tension between the temptation to intervene to civilize and restore order and the impulsive longing to shun an undesirable exotic Other, a profound ambivalence between attraction and repulsion.[84]

On the narrower question at stake here, contemporaries conceived Locarno as a key political and psychological landmark in international relations in the 1920s. Because historians have heatedly debated its nature ever since, it is difficult to cut through their competing representations to make assertions about its 'reality'. However, the issue of how well-founded or substantial a settlement Locarno actually produced is crucial to determining the relationship between the two world wars: did it lay the foundations for a peace that might have endured but for the new and intractable problems engendered by the Great Depression; or

were the later 1920s mere years of illusion when the long-term problems and instabilities that Versailles had failed to resolve were simply masked, inevitably to resurge?[85] Verdicts on the significance of Locarno for British policy are equally divided: did it symbolize the beginning of British disengagement from the Franco-German problem, or the institutionalization of a British presence at the heart of the continent's affairs?[86] Equally, did Chamberlain and his fellow policy-makers have a calculating *realpolitik* perception of what Locarno represented, or were they themselves victims of its illusions, placing unwarranted, credulous faith in the notion that old diplomacy had been transcended?[87]

This debate was joined by one of the earliest critics of inter-war idealism, E.H. Carr, who observed that the failure to achieve other Locarnos

> disappointed and puzzled people who believed that international problems everywhere could be solved by devices of the same standard pattern, and who failed to understand that the Locarno Treaty was an expression of the power politics of a particular period and locality.[88]

The archival record is mixed, so it is difficult to sustain a picture of British policy-makers either as brutally shrewd cynical *realpolitikers* or utterly naive dupes. But the terms in which Chamberlain and others construed the proposed extension of Locarno principles to the Balkans rested upon an opposition between superior Western powers and less civilized Balkan ones: the crucial issue was whether the Balkan states could rise above their base natures and reorder their relations along the same principled lines as had been done in the West. This rather supports the contention that the British had overlooked how Locarno, for all the mythic significance with which it was endowed, was a treaty like any other, concluded only because of the coincidence at a particular moment of otherwise divergent national interests.[89]

In subsequent years, Chamberlain continued to present the question in these terms: thus in 1927 he wondered whether 'there might yet be found in the Balkans a statesman with the courage and breadth of vision . . . and the broad humanity and devotion to peace' of the architects of Locarno.[90] But the realization of a Balkan pact was not merely a matter of importing a new spirit of idealism and reconciliation into a semi-civilized region, or of dis-

covering hitherto untapped reserves of courage, vision and humanity — there also had to be a convergence of political interest, a suitable combination of satisfiable needs. The blinkers created by 'Balkanist' prejudices powerfully contributed to this fundamental misperception. This is certainly significant if it be the case, as Erik Goldstein has argued, that the failure to complement Locarno with treaties in Eastern Europe and elsewhere was a key flaw in the whole settlement.[91] There is a risk here of reinscribing a crude realist paradigm of international relations, and of deploying further stereotypes by lauding the Balkan peoples for their native cunning. But when one considers the lamentable fate of Locarno — how the 'pleasant but somewhat absurd dream' of 'reconciliation and peace based on fidelity to sworn engagements' was destroyed by the firestorm of the Great Depression and the rise of Nazism[92] — the fact that Balkan statesmen never really developed a Locarno mentality is cast in a different light. In continuing to pursue their own narrowly-defined national interests in traditional ways, perhaps they showed that they perceived the true nature of Locarno rather better than did Austen Chamberlain.

Notes

1. Earlier versions of this article were presented to the Byzantine and Modern Greek Seminar, King's College London, 1999; the 12th Annual British International History Group Conference, Gregynog, 2000; and the 66th Annual Conference of the Southern Historical Association, Louisville, KY 2000. I am grateful for the constructive comments received on each occasion, especially in the last instance from Professor Sally Marks.

2. G. Ótuathail, *Critical Geopolitics. The Politics of Writing Global Space* (London 1996), 187–223; D. Campbell, *National Deconstruction. Violence, Identity and Justice in Bosnia* (Minneapolis, MN 1998), especially 88–93.

3. R. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (New York 1993); P. Melandri, '"Un problème surgi de l'enfer": Les Etats-Unis et les premières guerres de l'ex-Yougoslavie (1991–1995)', *Relations Internationales*, Vol. 104 (2000), 487–506.

4. L. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA 1994); M. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York 1997); V. Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania. The Imperialism of the Imagination* (London 1998); D.I. Bjelić and O. Savić, eds, *Balkan as Metaphor* (London 2002).

5. Todorova, op. cit., 188.

6. M. Bakić-Hayden and R.M. Hayden, 'Orientalist Variations on the Theme

“Balkans”: Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics’, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 51 (1992), 1–15; M. Bakić-Hayden, ‘Nesting Orientalisms: the Case of Former Yugoslavia’, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 54 (1995), 917–31; V. Goldsworthy, ‘The Last Stop on the Orient Express: The Balkans and the Politics of British In(ter)vention’, *Balkanologie*, Vol. 3 (1999), 107–15; D. Norris, *In the Wake of the Balkan Myth. Questions about Identity and Modernity* (London 2000).

7. T. Gallagher, ‘A Balkan History Learning Curve’, *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 31 (2001), 141–55.

8. Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania*, 212.

9. A. Jones, ‘Word *And* Deed: Why a *Post*-Poststructural History is Needed and How it Might Look’, *Historical Journal*, Vol. 43 (2000), 517–41; cf. M. Cabrera, ‘Linguistic Approach or Return to Subjectivism? In Search of an Alternative to Social History’, *Social History*, Vol. 24 (1999), 74–89.

10. K.E. Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte: Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha’s Greece* (Princeton, NJ 1999); cf. her ‘*Orientalism*, the Balkans and Balkan Historiography’, *American Historical Review*, Vol. 105 (2000), 1218–33.

11. F. Ninkovich, ‘No Post-Mortems for Postmodernism, Please’, *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 22 (1998), 451–66.

12. Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania* x; cf. Todorova, op. cit., 115–39.

13. On Locarno generally, see J. Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy. Germany and the West, 1925–1929* (Princeton, NJ 1972); A. Orde, *Great Britain and International Security, 1920–1926* (London 1978); R. Grayson, *Austen Chamberlain and the Commitment to Europe. British Foreign Policy, 1924–1929* (London 1997).

14. Arthur Balfour to Austen Chamberlain, 16 October 1925, quoted in R.S. Grayson, ‘Austen Chamberlain’, in T.G. Otte, ed., *The Makers of British Foreign Policy. From Pitt to Thatcher* (London 2002), 159.

15. G.A. Grün, ‘Locarno: Idea and Reality’, *International Affairs*, Vol. 31 (1955), 480.

16. J. Shotwell, ‘A Turning Point in History’, *International Conciliation*, Vol. 229 (1927), 9–21.

17. Miles Lampson to William Tyrrell, 9 October 1925; Chamberlain to Eric Drummond, 16 October 1925, both reproduced in Foreign and Commonwealth Office Historians, *Locarno 1925, Spirit, Suite and Treaties* (2nd edn London 2000), annex.

18. Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 28 November 1925, in R.C. Self, ed., *The Austen Chamberlain Diary Letters* (Cambridge 1995), 286.

19. Speech by Chamberlain, 24 June 1925, *Hansard*, 5th series, 185, 1569; Chamberlain to Tyrrell, no. 49, 17 October 1925, *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939* (hereafter *DBFP*), series 1, 27, 893.

20. J.B. Duroselle, ‘The Spirit of Locarno: Illusions of Pactomania’, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 50 (1972), 752–64.

21. Minute by Chamberlain, 4 January 1925, *DBFP*, series 1, 27, 256.

22. Todorova, op. cit., 32–4.

23. Memo by Headlam Morley, ‘British Policy and the Geneva Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes’, February 1925, reprinted in J. Headlam Morley, *Studies in Diplomatic History* (London 1930), 171–92.

24. Minute by Chamberlain, 21 February 1925, London, Public Record Office, Foreign Office Series (hereafter FO) 371/11064; ‘Memorandum by Mr Chamberlain for the Cabinet’, 14 May 1925, *DBFP*, series 1, 27, 499–500.

25. Memo by Howard Smith, 'The Adaptability of the Locarno System to Central and Eastern Europe', 15 February 1928, *DBFP*, series 1a, 4, 263.

26. A.J. Praż Mowska, *Eastern Europe and the Origins of the Second World War* (London 2000), 21, 58, 89, 114, 148.

27. G. Bátonyi, *Britain and Central Europe, 1918–1933* (Oxford 1999). Bátonyi thus perhaps sets the bar rather high in his definition of 'engagement' and 'intervention', and consequently elides some of the nuances in British policy.

28. A.J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs, 1926* (London 1928), 165–71.

29. Minute by Chamberlain, 24 October 1925, FO 371/10701; embodied in a circular dispatch to Vienna, Budapest, Prague, Bucharest, Belgrade and Rome, *DBFP*, series 1a, 1, 64–5.

30. FO to Howard Kennard, tel. 84, 27 October 1925, FO 371/10701.

31. George Ogilvie-Forbes to FO, no. 338, 27 August 1925, *DBFP*, series 1, 27, 234.

32. Minute by Harold Nicolson, 1 September 1925, FO 371/10768.

33. J. Barros, *The League of Nations and the Great Powers. The Greek-Bulgarian Incident, 1925* (Oxford 1970).

34. FO to Milne Cheetham, no. 642, 4 November 1925, and enclosures, FO 371/10673.

35. Drummond to Alexander Cadogan, 4 November 1925, and enclosures; minutes by Charles Bateman, 9 November 1925 and Chamberlain, 10 November 1925, FO 371/10701.

36. Kennard to FO, no. 428, 11 November 1925; William Erskine to Bateman, 5 November 1925, FO 371/10701.

37. Quai d'Orsay to Bernard de Serrigny, tels. 294–7, 9 November 1925; Charles de Chambrun to Quai d'Orsay, no. 129, 12 November 1925, Paris, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, série Z Europe (hereafter MAE Z), Yougoslavie, 52.

38. FO to Cheetham, tel. 134, 11 November 1925, FO 371/10701.

39. Minute by Chamberlain, 2 December 1925, FO 371/10701.

40. Minute by Bateman, 1 December 1925, FO 371/10768.

41. Memo by Bateman, 'Memorandum respecting the Balkan Problem and British Policy in the Balkans', 4 December 1925, *DBFP*, series 1a, 1, 208.

42. Minute by Lampson, 3 December 1925, FO 371/10768.

43. Minute by Lampson, 21 November 1924, FO 371/9897; Lampson to Cheetham, 27 November 1924, *DBFP*, series 1, 26, 409–11. From the mid-1920s FO officials were encouraged to visit the regions for which they were responsible in order to acquire local knowledge (minute by Lampson, 5 July 1925, FO 371/10700); the resulting reports make fascinating reading and indicate that understandings of the region were certainly not the product of simple ignorance.

44. Minutes by Chamberlain, 23 November 1924, 25 December 1924, FO 371/9897.

45. FO to Cheetham, tel. 138, 19 December 1924, *DBFP*, series 1, 26, 445.

46. Minute by Lampson, 17 December 1924, FO 371/9897.

47. Minute by Bateman, 27 October 1925, FO 371/10701.

48. Memo by Bateman, 'Balkan Problem and British Policy', 4 December 1925, *DBFP*, series 1a, 1, 203–13.

49. Kennard to Lampson, 24 December 1925, FO 371/10701.

50. Lampson to Kennard, 28 December 1925, FO 371/10701.

51. Kennard to Lampson, 7 January 1926, FO 371/11239.

52. Memo by Howard Smith, 'Balkan Pact', 22 January 1926; memo by Howard Smith, 25 January 1926, FO 371/11239.

53. Kennard to FO, no. 54, 8 February 1926, FO 371/11343; FO to Marquess of Crewe, no. 455, 10 February 1926, *DBFP*, series 1a, 1, 419.

54. Lampson to Kennard, 22 February 1926, FO 371/11343.

55. Minute by Chamberlain, 8 February 1926; Howard Smith to Kennard, 15 February 1926, FO 371/11343.

56. Note by Jacques Seydoux, 18 February 1926; Joseph Grenard to Quai d'Orsay, tels. 63–9, 21 February 1926; René Besnard to Quai d'Orsay, tels. 164–8, 27 February 1926, MAE Z Yougoslavie, 53.

57. Erskine to FO, no. 43, 4 March 1926; minute by Bateman, 10 March 1926, FO 371/11239.

58. FO to Crewe, no. 455, 10 February 1926, *DBFP*, series 1a, 1, 418–19; minute by Howard Smith, 24 February 1926; Graham to FO, no. 193, 3 March 1926, FO 371/11242.

59. Erskine to FO, no 78, 5 May 1926, FO 371/11217.

60. Minute by Tyrrell, 9 March 1926, FO 371/11242.

61. Minute by Arthur Aveling, 3 March 1926, FO 371/11242.

62. Memo by Howard Smith, 'The Adaptability of the Locarno System', 15 February 1928, *DBFP*, Series 1a, 4, 267; cf. D. Mitrany, 'The Possibility of a Balkan Locarno', *International Conciliation*, Vol. 229 (1927), 22–36.

63. D. Kitsikis, 'Les projets d'entente balkanique, 1930–1934', *Revue Historique*, Vol. 241 (1969), 115–40; P. Papastratis, 'From the "Great Idea" to Balkan Union', in M. Sarafis and M. Eve, eds, *Background to Contemporary Greece* (London 1990), 2, 153–79.

64. Quoted in Goldsworthy, op. cit., 88–9.

65. Minute by Arthur Hardinge, [?] June 1916, FO 371/2620. The reference is to Titus, 1, 12–13: 'It was a Cretan prophet, one of their own countrymen, who said "Cretans were always liars, vicious brutes, lazy gluttons" — and he told the truth.'

66. M.L. Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor, 1919–1922* (London 1998), 67.

67. E. Goldstein, 'Great Britain and Greater Greece, 1917–1920', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 32 (1989), 344–5.

68. Nicolson to Vita Sackville-West, 29 November 1920, quoted in J. Lees-Milne, *Harold Nicolson: A Biography* (London, 1980–1), 1, 155, original emphasis; cf. D. Roessel, *In Byron's Shadow. Modern Greece in the English and American Imagination* (Oxford 2002), 196–201.

69. For example Charles Bentinck to Nicolson, 24 January 1923, FO 371/8826.

70. For biographical detail, see Lees-Milne, op. cit., 1; H. Nicolson, *Byron: The Last Journey* (London 1924); on Byron as 'Columbus', see Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania*, x, 14–41.

71. Minute by Nicolson, 'The Byron Centenary', 2 April 1924, FO 371/9892. The philhellenic tradition made Greece something of a special case amongst Balkan countries in terms of how it was viewed by outsiders: see Roessel, op. cit. On Anglo-Greek relations and questions of identity, see further T.W. Gallant, *Experiencing Dominion. Culture, Identity, and Power in the British Mediterranean*

(Notre Dame 2002); M. Miliori, 'Ambiguous Partisanships: Philhellenism, Turkophilia and Balkanology in XIXth Century Britain', *Balkanologie*, Vol. 6 (2002), 127–53; R. Tzanelli, 'Haunted by the "Enemy" Within: Brigandage, Vlachian/Albanian Greekness, Turkish "Contamination", and Narratives of Greek Nationhood in the Dilessi/Marathon Affair (1870)', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 20 (2002), 47–74.

72. Minute by Nicolson, 23 May 1925, FO 371/10700. Note also that Nicolson's argument here was that changed geopolitical circumstances meant that the Balkans were no longer 'the powder magazine of Europe'; he did not address whether essentialized characterizations of the Balkan peoples were justified.

73. Rowland Sperling to Orme Sargent, 22 March 1928; Sargent to Sperling, 5 April 1928; minute by Bateman, 18 October 1928, FO 371/12856; Kennard to Sargent, 8 December 1928, FO 371/12857. It is important to be wary of generalizing about the British attitude to frontier rectification on the basis of such single statements, however apparently unequivocal. British policy certainly envisaged alterations to the territorial status quo in favour of ex-enemy powers by peaceful negotiation at some point in the future ('Memorandum by Mr Nicolson on British Policy Considered in Relation to the European Situation', 20 February 1925, *DBFP*, series 1, 27, 318); moreover, even though the general attitude toward frontier rectification in the Balkans was that it would be 'folly' (memo by Bateman, 'Balkan Problem and British Policy', 4 December 1925, *DBFP*, series 1a, 1, 212–13), it was also recognized that circumstances might produce territorial adjustments — perhaps in favour of ex-Allied states such as Yugoslavia — to which 'we could hardly object' (minute by Lampson, 13 June 1925, FO 371/10767).

74. For example, H-E. Volkmann, ed., *Das Rußlandbild im Dritten Reich*, (Cologne 1994); W. Geier, *L'Image de la France dans l'Allemagne nazie, 1933–1945* (Nantes 1999); A. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds: The United States and India, 1947–1964* (Ithaca, NY 2000); G. Strobl, *The Germanic Isle: Nazi Perceptions of Britain* (Cambridge 2000).

75. P. Jackson, *France and the Nazi Menace. Intelligence and Policy-Making, 1933–1939* (Oxford 2000); A. Best, *British Intelligence and the Japanese Challenge in Asia, 1914–41* (London 2002).

76. E. Goldstein, 'The British Official Mind and Europe', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 8, (1997), 165–78; P.M.H. Bell, *France and Britain, 1900–1940* (London 1996), 1; M. Folly, *Churchill, Whitehall and the Soviet Union, 1940–45* (London 2000), especially 39–75.

77. Bátonyi, op. cit.; cf. P. Neville, 'The Influence of the Prague Legation on the Making of British Foreign Policy 1930–8', unpublished paper delivered at the British International History Group 12th Annual Conference, Gregynog, 2000.

78. Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania*, 209, 9.

79. Minute by Greenway, 23 March 1926; minute by Oliver Harvey, 24 March 1926, FO 371/11334. The regretful tone of British comments after Pangalos's ouster in 1926 illustrated the ingrained belief that the Greeks were insufficiently mature for constitutional democracy (minute by Greenway, 23 August 1926, FO 371/11335) and this view persisted well into the 1930s (Papastratis, op. cit., 175); conservative British opinion held similar views regarding the Italians and Mussolini (R.J.B. Bosworth, 'The British Press, the Conservatives, and Mussolini, 1920–34', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 5 (1970), 163–82).

80. Minute by Chamberlain, 21 May 1925, FO 371/10695.

81. Minutes by Lampson, 17 May 1925, Lampson, 18 May 1925, Chamberlain, 21 May 1925, original emphasis, FO 371/10695.

82. Memo by Lampson, 17 March 1926, enclosed in Chamberlain to FO, no. 19, 17 March 1926, FO 421/310.

83. 'The Locarno Spirit in the Balkans', *Izvestiya*, 16 January 1926, translation enclosed in Robert Hodgson to FO, no. 80, 27 January 1926, FO 286/953.

84. Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania*, 42–111.

85. P.M.H. Bell, *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe*, 2nd edn, (London 1997), 16–43.

86. P. Grosser, *Pourquoi le 2e Guerre Mondiale?* (Brussels 1999), 62. Recent judgements on British policy have been relatively benign, viewing it as a constructive effort to create a continental balance of power: E. Goldstein, 'The Evolution of British Diplomatic Strategy for the Locarno Pact, 1924–1925', in M. Dockrill and B. McKercher, eds, *Diplomacy and World Power. Studies in British Foreign Policy, 1890–1950* (Cambridge 1996), 115–35; F. Magee, '"Limited Liability"? Britain and the Treaty of Locarno', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 6 (1995), 1–22.

87. Cf. Grayson, *Chamberlain and the Commitment to Europe*, and D. Dutton, *Austen Chamberlain. Gentleman in Politics* (Bolton 1985).

88. E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939* 2nd edn (New York 1964), 106.

89. Grün, op. cit., 477–85.

90. FO to Percy Loraine, no. 54, 27 January 1928, quoting a speech by Chamberlain in November 1927, FO 371/12923.

91. Goldstein, 'Evolution of British Diplomatic Strategy', op. cit., 134–5.

92. Duroselle, op. cit., 764.

Patrick Finney

is a lecturer in International History at the Department of International Politics, University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Recent publications include a guest edited themed issue on 'Memory, Identity and War in South Eastern Europe' in *Rethinking History*, Vol. 6 (2002). He is currently working on a cultural history of the inter-war Versailles system.