



Secret Diplomatic History of The Eighteenth by Karl Marx

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Secret Diplomatic History of The Eighteenth

Century, by Karl Marx This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: Secret Diplomatic History of The Eighteenth Century

Author: Karl Marx

Editor: Eleanor Marx Aveling

Release Date: May 14, 2010 [EBook #32370]

Language: English

Character set encoding: ISO-8859-1

*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SECRET DIPLOMATIC HISTORY ***

Produced by Fritz Ohrensall, Martin Pettit and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net> (This file was produced from images generously made available by The Internet Archive/Canadian Libraries)

SECRET DIPLOMATIC HISTORY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

* * * * *

Demy 8vo, pp. 656, xvi. 10s. 6d.

THE EASTERN QUESTION.

Letters written 1853-1856 dealing with the events of the Crimean War.

By KARL MARX.

Edited by ELEANOR MARX AVELING and EDWARD AVELING.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"With all Marx's faults and his extravagant abuse of high political personages, one cannot but admire the man's strength of mind, the courage of his opinions, and his scorn and contempt for everything small, petty, and mean. Although many and great changes have taken place since these papers appeared, they are still valuable not only for the elucidation of the past, but also for throwing a clearer light upon the present as also upon the future."--*Westminster Review*.

"All that Marx's hand set itself to do, it did with all its might, and in this volume, as in the rest of his work, we see the indefatigable energy, the wonderful grasp of detail, and the keen and marvellous foresight of a master mind."--*Justice*.

"A very masterly analysis of the condition, political, economic and social, of the Turkish Empire, which is as true to-day as when it was written."--*Daily Chronicle*.

"The letters contain an enormous amount of well-digested information, and display great critical acumen, amounting in some cases almost to prevision. The biographical interest of the volume is also pronounced, for prominent men of that period are dissected and analysed with a vigour and freedom which are as refreshing to readers as they would be disconcerting to their subjects were they alive. A perusal of the book must greatly tend to a clearer perception of the later Eastern issues, which are now engaging the attention and testing the diplomatic talents of the ambassadors at Constantinople."--*Liverpool Post*.

LONDON: SWAN SONNENSCHNEIN & CO., LIMITED.

* * * * *

SECRET DIPLOMATIC HISTORY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY

KARL MARX

Edited by his Daughter ELEANOR MARX AVELING

[Illustration: Logo]

LONDON SWAN SONNENSCHNEIN & CO., LIMITED PATERNOSTER SQUARE 1899

* * * * *

BUTLER & TANNER, THE SELWOOD PRINTING WORKS, FROME, AND LONDON.

* * * * *

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

In the Preface to "The Eastern Question," by Karl Marx, published in 1897, the Editors, Eleanor Marx Aveling and Edward Aveling, referred to two series of papers entitled "The Story of the Life of Lord Palmerston," and "Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century," which they promised to publish at an early date.

Mrs. Aveling did not live long enough to see these papers through the press, but she left them in such a forward state, and we have had so many inquiries about them since, that we venture to issue them without Mrs. Aveling's final revision in two shilling pamphlets.

THE PUBLISHERS.

Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century

CHAPTER I

NO. 1. MR. RONDEAU TO HORACE WALPOLE.

"PETERSBURG, *17th August, 1736.*[1]

" ... I heartily wish ... that the Turks could be brought to condescend to make the first step, for this Court seems resolved to hearken to nothing till that is done, to mortify the Porte, that has on all occasions spoken of the Russians with the greatest contempt, which the Czarina and her present Ministers cannot bear. Instead of being obliged to Sir Everard Fawkner and Mr. Thalman (the former the British, the latter the Dutch Ambassador at Constantinople), for informing them of the good dispositions of the Turks, Count Oestermann will not be persuaded that the Porte is sincere, and seemed very much surprised that they had written to them (the Russian Cabinet) without order of the King and the States-General, or without being desired by the Grand Vizier, and that their letter had not been concerted with the Emperor's Minister at Constantinople.... I have shown Count Biron and Count Oestermann the two letters the Grand Vizier has written to the King, and at the same time told these gentlemen that as there was in them several hard reflections on this Court, I should not have communicated them if they had not been so desirous to see them. Count Biron said that was nothing, for they were used to be treated in this manner by the Turks. I desired their Excellencies not to let the Porte know that they had seen these letters, which would sooner aggravate matters than contribute to make them up...."

NO. 2. SIR GEORGE MACARTNEY TO THE EARL OF SANDWICH.

"ST. PETERSBURG, *1st (12th) March, 1765.*

"Most Secret.[2]

" ... Yesterday M. Panin[3] and the Vice-Chancellor, together with M. Osten, the Danish Minister, signed a treaty of alliance between this Court and that of Copenhagen. By one of the articles, a war with Turkey is made a *casus foederis*; and whenever that event happens, Denmark binds herself to pay Russia a subsidy of 500,000 roubles per annum, by quarterly payments. Denmark also, by a most secret article, promises to disengage herself from all French connections, demanding only a limited time to endeavour to obtain the arrears due to her by the Court of France. At all events, she is immediately to enter into all the views of Russia in Sweden, and to act entirely, though not openly, with her in that kingdom. Either I am deceived or M. Gross[4] has misunderstood his instructions, when he told your lordship that Russia intended to stop short, and leave all the burden of Sweden upon England. However desirous this Court may be that we should pay a large proportion of every pecuniary engagement, yet, I am assured, she will always choose to take the lead at Stockholm. Her design, her ardent wish, is to make a common cause with England and Denmark, for the total annihilation of the French interest there. This certainly cannot be done without a considerable expense; but Russia, at present, does not seem unreasonable enough to expect that WE SHOULD PAY THE WHOLE. It has been hinted to me that £1,500 per annum, on our part, would be sufficient to support our interest, and absolutely prevent the French from ever getting at Stockholm again.

"The Swedes, highly sensible of, and very much mortified at, the dependent situation they have been in for many years, are extremely jealous of every Power that intermeddles in their affairs, and particularly so of their neighbours the Russians. This is the reason assigned to me for this Court's desiring that we and they should act upon SEPARATE bottoms, still preserving between our respective Ministers a confidence without reserve. That our first care should be, not to establish a faction under the name of a Russian or of an English faction; but, as even the wisest men are imposed upon by a mere name, to endeavour to have OUR friends distinguished as the friends of liberty and independence. At present we have a superiority, and the generality of the nation is persuaded how very ruinous their French connections have been, and, if continued, how very destructive they will be of their true interests. M. Panin does by no means desire that the smallest change should be made in the constitution of Sweden.[5] He wishes that the royal authority might be preserved

without being augmented, and that the privileges of the people should be continued without violation. He was not, however, without his fears of the ambitious and intriguing spirit of the Queen, but the great ministerial vigilance of Count Oestermann has now entirely quieted his apprehensions on that head.

"By this new alliance with Denmark, and by the success in Sweden, which this Court has no doubt of, if properly seconded, M. Panin will, in some measure, have brought to bear his grand scheme of uniting the Powers of the North.[6] Nothing, then, will be wanted to render it entirely perfect, but the conclusion of a treaty alliance with Great Britain. I am persuaded this Court desires it most ardently. The Empress has expressed herself more than once, in terms that marked it strongly. Her ambition is to form, by such an union, a certain counterpoise to the family compact,[7] and to disappoint, as much as possible, all the views of the Courts of Vienna and Versailles, against which she is irritated with uncommon resentment. I am not, however, to conceal from your lordship that we can have no hope of any such alliance, unless we agree, by some secret article, to pay a subsidy in case of a Turkish war, for no money will be desired from us, except upon an emergency of that nature. I flatter myself I have persuaded this Court of the unreasonableness of expecting any subsidy in time of peace, and that an alliance upon an equal footing will be more safe and more honourable for both nations. I can assure your lordship that a Turkish war's being a *casus foederis*, inserted either in the body of the treaty or in a secret article, will be a *sine quâ non* in every negotiation we may have to open with this Court. The obstinacy of M. Panin upon that point is owing to the accident I am going to mention. When the treaty between the Emperor and the King of Prussia was in agitation, the Count Bestoucheff, who is a mortal enemy to the latter, proposed the Turkish clause, persuaded that the King of Prussia would never submit to it, and flattering himself with the hopes of blowing up that negotiation by his refusal. But this old politician, it seemed, was mistaken in his conjecture, for his Majesty immediately consented to the proposal on condition that Russia should make no alliance with any other Power but on the same terms.[8] This is the real fact, and to confirm it, a few days since, Count Solme, the Prussian Minister, came to visit me, and told me that if this Court had any intention of concluding an alliance with ours without such a clause, he had orders to oppose it in the strongest manner. Hints have been given me that if Great Britain were less inflexible in that article, Russia will be less inflexible in the article of export duties in the Treaty of Commerce, which M. Gross told your lordship this Court would never depart from. I was assured at the same time, by a person in the highest degree of confidence with M. Panin, that if we entered upon the Treaty of Alliance the Treaty of Commerce would go on with it *passibus æquis*; that then the latter would be entirely taken out of the hands of the College of Trade, where so many cavils and altercations had been made, and would be settled only between the Minister and myself, and that he was sure it would be concluded to our satisfaction, provided the Turkish clause was admitted into the Treaty of Alliance. I was told, also, that in case the Spaniards attacked Portugal, we might have 15,000 Russians in our pay to send upon that service. I must entreat your lordship on no account to mention to M. Gross the secret article of the Danish Treaty.... That gentleman, I am afraid, is no well-wisher to England." [9]

NO. 3.--SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD GRANTHAM.

"Petersburg, 16 (27 August), 1782.

"(Private.)

" ... On my arrival here I found the Court very different from what it had been described to me. So far from any partiality to England, its bearings were entirely French. The King of Prussia (then in possession of the Empress' ear) was exerting his influence against us. Count Panin assisted him powerfully; Lacy and Corberon, the Bourbon Ministers, were artful and intriguing; Prince Potemkin had been wrought upon by them; and the whole tribe which surrounded the Empress--the Schuwaloffs, Stroganoffs, and Chernicheffs--were what they still are, *garçons perruquiers de Paris*. Events seconded their endeavours. The assistance the French affected to afford Russia in settling its disputes with the Porte, and the two Courts being immediately after united as mediators at the Peace of Teschen, contributed not a little to reconcile them to each other. I was, therefore, not surprised that all my negotiations with Count Panin, *from February, 1778, to July, 1779*, should be

unsuccessful, as he meant to prevent, not to promote, an alliance. It was in vain we made concessions to obtain it. He ever started fresh difficulties; had ever fresh obstacles ready. A very serious evil resulted, in the meanwhile, from my apparent confidence in him. He availed himself of it to convey in his reports to the Empress, not the language I employed, and the sentiments I actually expressed, but the language and sentiments he wished I should employ and express. He was equally careful to conceal her opinions and feelings from me; and while he described England to her as obstinate, and overbearing, and reserved, he described the Empress to me as displeased, disgusted, and indifferent to our concerns; and he was so convinced that, by this double misrepresentation, he had shut up every avenue of success that, at the time when I presented to him the Spanish declaration, he ventured to say to me, ministerially, *'That Great Britain had, by its own haughty conduct, brought down all its misfortunes on itself; that they were now at their height; that we must consent to any concession to obtain peace; and that we could expect neither assistance from our friends nor forbearance from our enemies.'* I had temper enough not to give way to my feelings on this occasion.... I applied, without loss of time, to Prince Potemkin, and, by his means, the Empress *condescended* to see me alone at Peterhoff. I was so fortunate in this interview, as not only to efface all bad impressions she had against us, but by stating in its true light, our situation, and THE INSEPARABLE INTERESTS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND RUSSIA, to raise in her mind a decided resolution to assist us. *This resolution she declared to me in express words.* When this transpired--and Count Panin was the first who knew it--he became my implacable and inveterate enemy. He not only thwarted by falsehoods and by a most undue exertion of his influence my public negotiations, but employed every means the lowest and most vindictive malice could suggest to depreciate and injure me personally; and from the very infamous accusations with which he charged me, had I been prone to fear, I might have apprehended the most infamous attacks at his hands. This relentless persecution still continues; it has outlived his Ministry. *Notwithstanding the positive assurances I had received from the Empress herself,* he found means, first to stagger, and afterwards to alter her resolutions. He was, indeed, very officiously assisted by his Prussian Majesty, who, at the time, was as much bent on oversetting our interest as he now seems eager to restore it. I was not, however, disheartened by this first disappointment, and, by redoubling my efforts, *I have twice more, during the course of my mission, brought the Empress to the verge (!) of standing forth our professed friend,* and, each time, my expectations were grounded on assurances from her own mouth. The first was when *our enemies conjured up the armed neutrality;*[10] the other WHEN MINORCA WAS OFFERED HER. Although, on the first of these occasions, I found the same opposition from the same quarter I had experienced before, yet I am compelled to say that the principal cause of my failure was attributable to the very awkward manner in which we replied to the famous neutral declaration of February, 1780. As I well knew from what quarter the blow would come, I was prepared to parry it. *My opinion was: 'If England feels itself strong enough to do without Russia, let it reject at once these new-fangled doctrines; but if its situation is such as to want assistance, let it yield to the necessity of the hour, recognise them as far as they relate to RUSSIA ALONE, and by a well-timed act of complaisance insure itself a powerful friend.'*[11] My opinion was *not* received; an ambiguous and trimming answer was given; *we seemed equally afraid to accept or dismiss them. I was instructed secretly to oppose, but avowedly to acquiesce in them,* and some unguarded expressions of one of its then confidential servants, made use of in speaking to Mr. Simolin, in direct contradiction to the temperate and cordial language that Minister had heard from Lord Stormont, *irritated* the Empress to the last degree, and completed the *dislike* and *bad opinion* she entertained of that Administration.[12] Our enemies took advantage of these *circumstances....* I SUGGESTED THE IDEA OF GIVING UP MINORCA TO THE EMPRESS, *because, as it was evident to me we should at the peace be compelled to make sacrifices, it seemed to me wiser to make them to our friends than to our enemies.* THE IDEA WAS ADOPTED AT HOME IN ITS WHOLE EXTENT,[13] *and nothing could be more perfectly calculated to the meridian of this Court than the judicious instructions I received on this occasion from Lord Stormont.* Why this project failed I am still at a loss to learn. *I never knew the Empress incline so strongly to any one measure as she did to this, before I had my full powers to treat, nor was I ever more astonished than when I found her shrink from her purpose when they arrived.* I imputed it at the same time, in my own mind, to the *rooted aversion she had for our Ministry,* and her *total want of confidence in them;* but I since am more strongly disposed to believe that she consulted the Emperor (of Austria) on the subject, and that he not only prevailed on her to decline the offer, but betrayed the secret to France, and that it thus became public. I cannot otherwise account for this rapid *change of sentiment*

in the Empress, particularly as Prince Potemkin (whatever he might be in other transactions) was certainly in this cordial and sincere in his support, and both from what I saw at the time, and from what has since come to my knowledge, had its success at heart as much as myself. You will observe, my lord, that the idea of bringing the Empress forward as a friendly mediatrix went hand-in-hand with the proposed cession of Minorca. As this idea has given rise to what has since followed, and involved us in all the dilemmas of the present mediation, it will be necessary for me to explain what my views then were, and to exculpate myself from the blame of having placed my Court in so embarrassing a situation, my wish and intention was that she should be sole mediatrix without an adjoint; if you have perused what passed between her and me, in December, 1780, your lordship will readily perceive how very potent reasons I had to imagine she would be a friendly and even a partial one.[14] I knew, indeed, she was unequal to the task; but I knew, too, how greatly her vanity would be flattered by this distinction, and was well aware that when once engaged she would persist, and be inevitably involved in our quarrel, particularly when it should appear (and appear it would) that we had gratified her with Minorca. The annexing to the mediation the other (Austrian) Imperial Court entirely overthrew this plan. It not only afforded her a pretence for not keeping her word, but piqued and mortified her; and it was under this impression that she made over the whole business to the colleague we had given her, and ordered her Minister at Vienna to subscribe implicitly to whatever the Court proposed. Hence all the evils which have since arisen, and hence those we at this moment experience. I myself could never be brought to believe that the Court of Vienna, as long as Prince Kaunitz directs its measures, can mean England any good or France any harm. It was not with that view that I endeavoured to promote its influence here, but because I found that of Prussia in constant opposition to me; and because I thought that if I could by any means smite this, I should get rid of my greatest obstacle. I was mistaken, and, by a singular fatality, the Courts of Vienna and Berlin seem never to have agreed in anything but in the disposition to prejudice us here by turns.[15] The proposal relative to Minorca was the last attempt I made to induce the Empress to stand forth. I had exhausted my strength and resources; the freedom with which I had spoken in my last interview with her, though respectful, had displeased; and from this period to the removal of the late Administration, I have been reduced to act on the defensive.... I have had more difficulty in preventing the Empress from doing harm than I ever had in attempting to engage her to do us good. It was to prevent evil, that I inclined strongly for the acceptance of her single mediation between us and Holland, when her Imperial Majesty first offered it. The extreme dissatisfaction she expressed at our refusal justified my opinion; and I TOOK UPON ME, when it was proposed a second time, to urge the necessity of its being agreed to (ALTHOUGH I KNEW IT TO BE IN CONTRADICTION OF THE SENTIMENTS OF MY PRINCIPAL), since I firmly believed, had we again declined it, the Empress would, in a moment of anger, have joined the Dutch against us. As it is, all has gone on well; our judicious conduct has transferred to them the ill-humour she originally was in with us, and she now is as partial to our cause as she was before partial to theirs. Since the new Ministry in England, my road has been made smoother; the great and new path struck out by your predecessor,[16] and which you, my lord, pursue, has operated a most advantageous change in our favour upon the Continent. Nothing, indeed, but events which come home to her, will, I believe, ever induce her Imperial Majesty to take an active part; but there is now a strong glow of friendship in our favour; she approves our measures; she trusts our Ministry, and she gives way to that predilection she certainly has for our nation. Our enemies know and feel this; it keeps them in awe. This is a succinct but accurate sketch of what has passed at this Court from the day of my arrival at Petersburg to the present hour. Several inferences may be deduced from it.[17] That the Empress is led by her passions, not by reason and argument; that her prejudices are very strong, easily acquired, and, when once fixed, irremovable; while, on the contrary, there is no sure road to her good opinion; that even when obtained, it is subject to perpetual fluctuation, and liable to be biassed by the most trifling incidents; that till she is fairly embarked in a plan, no assurances can be depended on; but that when once fairly embarked, she never retracts, and may be carried any length; that with very bright parts, an elevated mind, an uncommon sagacity, she wants judgment, precision of idea, reflection, and L'ESPRIT DE COMBINAISON(!) That her Ministers are either ignorant of, or indifferent to, the welfare of the State, and act from a passive submission to her will, or from motives of party and private interests." [18]

PETERSBURG, AND A NEAR RELATIVE OF WILLIAM PITT.[19]

Extract.

"There can scarcely exist a doubt concerning the real sentiments of the late Empress of Russia on the great points which have, within the last few years, convulsed the whole system of European politics. She certainly felt from the beginning the fatal tendency of the new principles, but was not, perhaps, displeased to see every European Power exhausting itself in a struggle which raised, in proportion to its violence, her own importance. It is more than probable that the state of the newly acquired provinces in Poland was likewise a point which had considerable influence over the political conduct of Catherine. The fatal effects resulting from an apprehension of revolt in the late seat of conquest seem to have been felt in a very great degree by the combined Powers, who in the early period of the Revolution were so near reinstating the regular Government in France. The same dread of revolt in Poland, which divided the attention of the combined Powers and hastened their retreat, deterred likewise the late Empress of Russia from entering on the great theatre of war, until a combination of circumstances rendered the progress of the French armies a more dangerous evil than any which could possibly result to the Russian Empire from active operations.... The last words which the Empress was known to utter were addressed to her Secretary when she dismissed him on the morning on which she was seized: 'Tell Prince' (Zuboff), she said, 'to come to me at twelve, and to remind me of signing the Treaty of Alliance with England.'"

Having entered into ample considerations on the Emperor Paul's acts and extravagances, the Rev. Mr. Pitt continues as follows:

"When these considerations are impressed on the mind, the nature of the late secession from the coalition, and of the incalculable indignities offered to the Government of Great Britain, can alone be fairly estimated.... BUT THE TIES WHICH BIND HER (GREAT BRITAIN) TO THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE ARE FORMED BY NATURE, AND INVIOLEABLE. United, these nations might almost brave the united world; divided, the strength and importance of each is FUNDAMENTALLY impaired. England has reason to regret with Russia that the imperial sceptre should be thus inconsistently wielded, but it is the sovereign of Russia alone who divides the Empires."

The reverend gentleman concludes his account by the words:

"As far as human foresight can at this moment penetrate, the despair of an enraged individual seems a more probable means to terminate the present scene of oppression than any more systematic combination of measures to restore the throne of Russia to its dignity and importance."

FOOTNOTES:

[1] This letter relates to the war against Turkey, commenced by the Empress Ann in 1735. The British diplomatist at St. Petersburg is reporting about his endeavours to induce Russia to conclude peace with the Turks. The passages omitted are irrelevant.

[2] England was at that time negotiating a commercial treaty with Russia.

[3] To this time it has remained among historians a point of controversy, whether or not Panin was in the pay of Frederick II. of Prussia, and whether he was so behind the back of Catherine, or at her bidding. There can exist no doubt that Catherine II., in order to identify foreign Courts with Russian Ministers, allowed Russian Ministers ostensibly to identify themselves with foreign Courts. As to Panin in particular, the question is, however, decided by an authentic document which we believe has never been published. It proves that, having once become the man of Frederick II., he was forced to remain so at the risk of his honour, fortune and life.

[4] The Russian Minister at London.

[5] The oligarchic Constitution set up by the Senate after the death of Charles XII.

[6] Thus we learn from Sir George Macartney that what is commonly known as Lord Chatham's "grand conception of the Northern Alliance," was, in fact, Panin's "grand scheme of uniting the Powers of the North." Chatham was duped into fathering the Muscovite plan.

[7] The compact between the Bourbons of France and Spain concluded at Paris on August, 1761.

[8] This was a subterfuge on the part of Frederick II. The manner in which Frederick was forced into the arms of the Russian Alliance is plainly told by M. Koch, the French professor of diplomacy and teacher of Talleyrand. "Frederick II.," he says, "having been abandoned by the Cabinet of London, could not but attach himself to Russia." (See his *History of the Revolutions in Europe*.)

[9] Horace Walpole characterises his epoch by the words--"*It was the mode of the times to be paid by one favour for receiving another.*" At all events, it will be seen from the text that such was the mode of Russia in transacting business with England. The Earl of Sandwich, to whom Sir George Macartney could dare to address the above despatch, distinguished himself, ten years later, in 1775, as First Lord of the Admiralty, in the North Administration, by the vehement opposition he made to Lord Chatham's motion for an equitable *adjustment of the American difficulties*. "He could not believe it (Chatham's motion) *the production of a British peer*; it appeared to him rather *the work of some American.*" In 1777, we find Sandwich again blustering: "he would hazard every drop of blood, as well as the last shilling of the national treasure, rather than allow Great Britain to be defied, bullied, and dictated to, by her disobedient and rebellious subjects." Foremost as the Earl of Sandwich was in entangling England in war with her North American colonies, with France, Spain, and Holland, we behold him constantly accused in Parliament by Fox, Burke, Pitt, etc., "of keeping the naval force inadequate to the defence of the country; of intentionally opposing small English forces where he knew the enemy to have concentrated large ones; of utter mismanagement of the service in all its departments," etc. (See debates of the House of Commons of 11th March, 1778; 31st March, 1778; February, 1779; Fox's motion of censure on Lord Sandwich; 9th April, 1779, address to the King for the dismissal of Lord Sandwich from his service, on account of misconduct in service; 7th February, 1782, Fox's motion that there had been gross mismanagement in the administration of naval affairs during the year 1781.) On this occasion Pitt imputed to Lord Sandwich "all our naval disasters and disgraces." The ministerial majority against the motion amounted to only 22 in a House of 388. On the 22nd February, 1782, a similar motion against Lord Sandwich was only negatived by a majority of 19 in a House of 453. Such, indeed, was the character of the Earl of Sandwich's Administration that more than thirty distinguished officers quitted the naval service, or declared they could not act under the existing system. In point of fact, during his whole tenure of office, serious apprehensions were entertained of the consequences of the dissensions then prevalent in the navy. Besides, the Earl of Sandwich was openly accused, and, as far as circumstantial evidence goes, convicted of PECULATION. (See debates of the House of Lords, 31st March, 1778; 9th April, 1779, and *seq.*) When the motion for his removal from office was negatived on April 9th 1779, thirty-nine peers entered their protest.

[10] Sir James Harris affects to believe that Catherine II. was not the author of, but a convert to, the armed neutrality of 1780. It is one of the grand stratagems of the Court of St. Petersburg to give to its own schemes the form of proposals suggested to and pressed on itself by foreign Courts. Russian diplomacy delights in those *quæ pro quo*. Thus the Court of Florida Bianca was made the responsible editor of the armed neutrality, and, from a report that vain-glorious Spaniard addressed to Carlos III., one may see how immensely he felt flattered at the idea of having not only hatched the armed neutrality but allured Russia into abetting it.

[11] This same Sir James Harris, perhaps more familiar to the reader under the name of the Earl of Malmesbury, is extolled by English historians as the man who prevented England from surrendering the right

of search in the Peace Negotiations of 1782-83.

[12] It might be inferred from this passage and similar ones occurring in the text, that Catherine II. had caught a real Tartar in Lord North, whose Administration Sir James Harris is pointing at. Any such delusion will disappear before the simple statement that the first partition of Poland took place under Lord North's Administration, without any protest on his part. In 1773 Catherine's war against Turkey still continuing, and her conflicts with Sweden growing serious, France made preparations to send a powerful fleet into the Baltic. D'Aiguillon, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, communicated this plan to Lord Stormont, the then English Ambassador at Paris. In a long conversation, D'Aiguillon dwelt largely on the ambitious designs of Russia, and the common interest that ought to blend France and England into a joint resistance against them. In answer to this confidential communication, he was informed by the English Ambassador that, "if France sent her ships into the Baltic, they would instantly be followed by a British fleet; that the presence of two fleets would have no more effect than a neutrality; and however the British Court might desire to preserve the harmony now subsisting between England and France, it was impossible to foresee the contingencies that might arise from accidental collision." In consequence of these representations, D'Aiguillon countermanded the squadron at Brest, but gave new orders for the equipment of an armament at Toulon. "On receiving intelligence of these renewed preparations, the British Cabinet made instant and vigorous demonstrations of resistance; Lord Stormont was ordered to declare that every argument used respecting the Baltic applied equally to the Mediterranean. A memorial also was presented to the French Minister, accompanied by a demand that it should be laid before the King and Council. This produced the desired effect; the armament was countermanded, the sailors disbanded, and the chances of an extensive warfare avoided."

"*Lord North*," says the complacent writer from whom we have borrowed the last lines, "*thus effectually served the cause of his ally (Catherine II.), and facilitated the treaty of peace (of Kutchuk-Kainardji) between Russia and the Porte.*" Catherine II. rewarded Lord North's good services, first by withholding the aid she had promised him in case of a war between England and the North American Colonies, and in the second place, by conjuring up and leading the armed neutrality against England. Lord North DARED NOT *repay*, as he was advised by Sir James Harris, this treacherous breach of faith by giving up to Russia, and to *Russia alone*, the maritime rights of Great Britain. Hence the irritation in the nervous system of the Czarina; the hysterical fancy she caught all at once of "entertaining a bad opinion" of Lord North, of "disliking" him, of feeling a "rooted aversion" against him, of being afflicted with "a total want of confidence," etc. In order to give the Shelburne Administration a warning example, Sir James Harris draws up a minute psychological picture of the feelings of the Czarina, and the disgrace incurred by the North Administration, for having wounded these same feelings. His prescription is very simple: surrender to Russia, as our friend, everything for asking which we would consider every other Power our enemy.

[13] It is then a fact that the English Government, not satisfied with having made Russia a Baltic power, strove hard to make her a Mediterranean power too. The offer of the surrender of Minorca appears to have been made to Catherine II. at the end of 1779, or the beginning of 1780, shortly after Lord Stormont's entrance into the North Cabinet--the same Lord Stormont we have seen thwarting the French attempts at resistance against Russia, and whom even Sir James Harris cannot deny the merit of having written "*instructions perfectly calculated to the meridian of the Court of St. Petersburg.*" While Lord North's Cabinet, at the suggestion of Sir James Harris, offered Minorca to the *Muscovites*, the English Commoners and people were still trembling for fear lest the *Hanoverians* (?) should wrest out of their hands "one of the keys of the Mediterranean." On the 26th of October, 1775, the King, in his opening speech, had informed Parliament, amongst other things, that he had Sir James Graham's own words, when asked why they should not have kept up some blockade pending the settlement of the "plan," "*They did not take that responsibility upon themselves.*" The responsibility of executing their orders! The despatch we have quoted is the only despatch read, except one of a later date. The despatch, said to be sent on the 5th of April, in which "the Admiral is ordered to use the *largest discretionary power* in blockading the Russian ports in the Black Sea," is not read, nor any replies from Admiral Dundas. The Admiralty sent *Hanoverian* troops to Gibraltar and Port Mahon (Minorca), to replace such British regiments as should be drawn from those garrisons for service in America.

An amendment to the address was proposed by Lord John Cavendish, strongly condemning "the confiding *such important fortresses as Gibraltar and Port Mahon to foreigners.*" After very stormy debates, in which the measure of entrusting Gibraltar and Minorca, "*the keys of the Mediterranean,*" as they were called, to *foreigners*, was furiously attacked; Lord North, acknowledging himself the adviser of the measure, felt obliged to bring in a *bill of indemnity*. However, these foreigners, these Hanoverians, were the English King's own subjects. Having virtually surrendered Minorca to Russia in 1780, Lord North was, of course, quite justified in treating, on November 22, 1781, in the House of Commons, "with utter scorn the insinuation that *Ministers were in the pay of France.*"

Let us remark, *en passant*, that Lord North, one of the most base and mischievous Ministers England can boast of, perfectly mastered the art of keeping the House in perpetual laughter. So had Lord Sunderland. So has Lord Palmerston.

[14] Lord North having been supplanted by the Rockingham Administration, on March 27, 1782, the celebrated Fox forwarded peace proposals to Holland through the mediation of the *Russian* Minister. Now what were the consequences of the *Russian mediation* so much vaunted by this Sir James Harris, the servile account keeper of the Czarina's sentiments, humours, and feelings? While preliminary articles of peace had been convened with France, Spain, and the American States, it was found impossible to arrive at any such preliminary agreement with Holland. Nothing but a simple cessation of hostilities was to be obtained from it. So powerful proved the *Russian mediation*, that on the 2nd September, 1783, just one day before the conclusion of *definitive treaties* with America, France, and Spain, Holland condescended to accede to *preliminaries of peace*, and this not in consequence of the *Russian mediation*, but through the influence of *France*.

[15] How much was England not prejudiced by the Courts of Vienna and Paris thwarting the plan of the British Cabinet of ceding Minorca to Russia, and by Frederick of Prussia's resistance against the great Chatham's scheme of a Northern Alliance under Muscovite auspices.

[16] The predecessor is Fox. Sir James Harris establishes a complete scale of British Administrations, according to the degree in which they enjoyed the favour of his almighty Czarina. In spite of Lord Stormont, the Earl of Sandwich, Lord North, and Sir James Harris himself; in spite of the partition of Poland, the bullying of D'Aiguillon, the treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji, and the intended cession of Minorca--Lord North's Administration is relegated to the bottom of the heavenly ladder; far above it has climbed the Rockingham Administration, whose soul was Fox, notorious for his subsequent intrigues with Catherine; but at the top we behold the Shelburne Administration, whose Chancellor of the Exchequer was the celebrated William Pitt. As to Lord Shelburne himself, Burke exclaimed in the House of Commons, that "if he was not a Catalina or Borgia in morals, it must not be ascribed to anything but his understanding."

[17] Sir James Harris forgets deducing the main inference, that the Ambassador of England is the agent of Russia.

[18] In the 18th century, English diplomatists' despatches, bearing on their front the sacramental inscription, "Private," are despatches to be withheld from the King by the Minister to whom they are addressed. That such was the case may be seen from Lord Mahon's *History of England*.

[19] "To be burnt after my death." Such are the words prefixed to the manuscript by the gentleman whom it was addressed to.

CHAPTER II

The documents published in the first chapter extend from the reign of the Empress Ann to the commencement of the reign of the Emperor Paul, thus encompassing the greater part of the 18th century. At the end of that century it had become, as stated by the Rev. Mr. Pitt, the openly professed and orthodox dogma of English diplomacy, "*that the ties which bind Great Britain to the Russian Empire are formed by nature, and inviolable.*"

In perusing these documents, there is something that startles us even more than their contents--viz., their form. All these letters are "confidential," "private," "secret," "most secret"; but in spite of secrecy, privacy, and confidence, the English statesmen converse among each other about Russia and her rulers in a tone of awful reserve, abject servility, and cynical submission, which would strike us even in the public despatches of Russian statesmen. To conceal intrigues against foreign nations secrecy is resorted to by Russian diplomatists. The same method is adopted by English diplomatists freely to express their devotion to a foreign Court. The secret despatches of Russian diplomatists are fumigated with some equivocal perfume. It is one part the *fumée de fausseté*, as the Duke of St. Simon has it, and the other part that coquettish display of one's own superiority and cunning which stamps upon the reports of the French Secret Police their indelible character. Even the master despatches of Pozzo di Borgo are tainted with this common blot of the *littérature de mauvais lieu*. In this point the English secret despatches prove much superior. They do not affect superiority but silliness. For instance, can there be anything more silly than Mr. Rondeau informing Horace Walpole that he has betrayed to the Russian Minister the letters addressed by the Turkish Grand Vizier to the King of England, but that he had told "at the same time those gentlemen that as there were several hard reflections on the Russian Court he should not have communicated them, *if they had not been so anxious to see them,*" and then told their excellencies not to tell the Porte that they had seen them (those letters)! At first view the infamy of the act is drowned in the silliness of the man. Or, take Sir George Macartney. Can there be anything more silly than his happiness that Russia seemed "reasonable" enough not to expect that England "should pay the WHOLE EXPENSES" for Russia's "choosing to take the lead at Stockholm"; or his "flattering himself" that he had "persuaded the Russian Court" not to be so "unreasonable" as to ask from England, in a time of peace, subsidies for a time of war against Turkey (then the ally of England); or his warning the Earl of Sandwich "not to mention" to the Russian Ambassador at London the secrets mentioned to himself by the Russian Chancellor at St. Petersburg? Or can there be anything more silly than Sir James Harris confidentially whispering into the ear of Lord Grantham that Catherine II. was devoid of "judgment, precision of idea, reflection, and *l'esprit de combinaison*"?[20]

On the other hand, take the cool impudence with which Sir George Macartney informs his minister that because the Swedes were extremely jealous of, and mortified at, their dependence on Russia, England was directed by the Court of St. Petersburg to do its work at Stockholm, under the British colours of liberty and independence! Or Sir James Harris advising England to surrender to Russia Minorca and the right of search, and the monopoly of mediation in the affairs of the world--not in order to gain any material advantage, or even a formal engagement on the part of Russia, but only "a strong glow of friendship" from the Empress, and the transfer to France of her "ill humour."

The secret Russian despatches proceed on the very plain line that Russia knows herself to have no common interests whatever with other nations, but that every nation must be persuaded separately to have common interests with Russia to the exclusion of every other nation. The English despatches, on the contrary, never dare so much as hint that Russia has common interests with England, but only endeavour to convince England that she has Russian interests. The English diplomatists themselves tell us that this was the single argument they pleaded, when placed face to face with Russian potentates.

If the English despatches we have laid before the public were addressed to private friends, they would only brand with infamy the ambassadors who wrote them. Secretly addressed as they are to the British Government itself, they nail it for ever to the pillory of history; and, instinctively, this seems to have been felt, even by