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**The Eastern Europe Britain
Wanted: Serbian Independence as
recorded in British Newspapers,
1867**



Honors Thesis

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Department: History

Advisor: Anca Glont, Ph.D.

May 2020

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Abstract

This is a study of Victorian British foreign policy reflected in newspapers. The study focuses on data obtained from the British response to Serbian independence in 1867. The Conservatives focused on ways to keep the balance of power in Europe. The Liberals were guided by their belief in progress and debated amongst themselves if the Balkan countries were ready to be independent nations. However, neither group knew much about Serbia or what was happening there. The newspapers reflected that Britain had little interest in what Serbia wanted but rather reflected what Britain wanted Europe to look like and how Serbia fit into that picture.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my thesis advisor Dr. Anca Glont. She not only helped guide me through this project but also gave me invaluable advice for pursuing a career in history.



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Introduction

“We have no very great confidence in the vitality of the Turkish Empire. We could look without any great alarm to the promised retirement of the Turks into Asia, and the establishment of a Greek Empire at Constantinople; but we desire to see this great ruin, if it is to come, a gradual one. We do not want to see Turkey broken up before the Christians are ready for self-government, and whilst they must still be the mere tools of Russia; and we want no more bloody Eastern wars.”¹

This article from the *Globe* written on March 13, 1867 reveals more about the British liberal writing it than the subject written about. Today, there is the country of Greece, but there is no Greek Empire that succeeded the Ottomans, so why then did this author think that a Greek Empire would arise which would encompass all the Christian provinces of the former Ottoman Empire? Because the author believed in the idea of progress. It did not matter what was actually happening. What mattered was the author’s desire to prove that his unique outlook on liberalism and progress was correct. Greece fit into this outlook as the origin of the modern world, and hopefully, with Britain’s aid, once again one of its luminaries. If progress existed, then the backward Ottoman Empire would fall and make space for a bright shining beacon of Western civilization: the Greek Empire. Progress, as it related to the decline of empires and the establishment of nation states, did not exist by itself. It was an idea used by British liberals to cast judgments on nation states and empires and to further their arguments about race and religion determining one’s level of civilization.²

¹ *Globe*, March 13, 1867, 4.

² For the readability of this paper, I use the terms Ottoman Empire/Ottoman and Serbia/Serbian, but few British newspapers did the same. The majority referred to it as the Turkish Empire and the Ottomans as the Turks. Similarly, Serbia was spelled Servia. Slavs were sometimes Slavonians. I use the current spellings of the terms. Lastly, I use term Muslim to refer to the people who practice Islam, but in the newspapers, the term Muslim was never used. The newspapers used several terms, including Moslem and Mussulman. However, I preserve the terms used in quotes that the newspapers used.

Thus, Serbian Independence and naturally the break up of the Ottoman Empire added to the ongoing conversations in Britain around Christianity and Islam, race and progress, and imperialism and nation states. These concepts were created and had to be maintained; they did not exist by themselves nor were they self-evident.³ Serbia was a way to prove one's political outlook. The events in the Balkans themselves were not important, but the British press couched the events in the ideological, national, and local issues of Britain because Serbia could be used as a test case for the British. The liberals were eager to prove the existence of progress; while the conservatives were eager to present the idea of progress as dangerous. Serbia offered another arena for them to debate their ideas. Serbian independence would also provide an arena for the regional interests of each of the parties' rank and file; highlighting each region's special concerns, as well as their deviations from the party's orthodoxy.

Progress, Christianity, and race were at the heart of the ideological issues present in Britain's view of Serbian Independence. Progress was often contested between the liberals and conservatives in Britain. The conservatives did not believe in nor desire progress because rapid change for the sake of change proved dangerous to the stability of governments and empires. However, the liberals believed progress was the backbone to every major world event. Christianity emphasized a shared bond between the British and the Serbians, and every newspaper was eager to prove its Christian credentials. The Victorian era was viewed as the rise of skepticism and secularism within Britain, but the newspapers showed off their Christian beliefs.⁴ Christianity was still an important aspect

³ Sadiyah Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 4.

⁴ Timothy Larson, *Contested Christianity: The Social and Political Contexts of Victorian Theology* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004), 1.

in the identity of the British. The importance of religion also lent itself to the morphing idea of race in Britain. Skin tone did not necessarily mean a person was white at this time. The British also categorized a person's race by determining how civilized they were, and a person's faith categorized them on this civilization scale as well.⁵ Christians were a far more advanced race than Muslims to Victorian Britain, which raised questions about Muslims ruling Christians. Liberals even used race to justify their colonial rule in Ireland. In fact, Serbian independence went beyond the national issue of the Eastern Question and even represented a potential test case for an independent Ireland.

At the national level, Serbia helped form or was read into existing ideas about foreign policy and imperialism in Britain. Serbian independence was one question in a larger group of foreign policy questions known as the Eastern Question in Britain. The Eastern Question to the British was the prevention of Russian expansion into Ottoman territory as the Ottomans pulled out of Europe. The outcome of this would have large implications with regards to the survival of British rule in India. However, Serbian independence also had implications with parts of the British Empire much closer to Britain. A similar call for independence was coming out of Ireland at this time in the form of the Fenian Rising, and the British even those who supported Serbian independence, feared Irish independence, with the exception of the Welsh liberals.

Serbian independence even found itself an important tool of debate at the local level in Britain. The Welsh liberals who had to be careful criticizing British rule over Wales could be vocal about their detestation of imperialism discussing Ottoman and Russian imperialism. Trade was another important local issue that Serbian independence

⁵ Eugenio F. Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 41.

touched on. In Northern England, who did most of their trade with Russia, the press did not demonize Russia as much as it did in other regions. Northern England was the only region where Russia did not play a major role in the Eastern Question or in British foreign policy in the Balkans. Thus, Serbian independence as reflected in the British press is a useful tool for understanding Britain rather than a reflection of actual events in Serbia.

Serbian Independence in 1867

Serbia had a gradual independence. After two insurrections in the early nineteenth century, Serbia created its first national government under Prince Miloš Obrenović. Thence, he negotiated with the Ottoman government for full autonomous status for the Serbian principality and succeeded in 1830. After that, the last evidence of subjugation to the Ottomans in Serbia was in the payment of an annual tribute and the occupation of six garrisons by the Ottoman army.⁶ Thirty years later, the goal of the Serbian government under Prince Mihailo Obrenović, who the English called Prince Michael, was to free the Serbian garrisons from the Ottoman army and transfer them to the newly created Serbian army. At the end of a series of negotiations which started in 1862, the Sultan and Prince Mihailo came to an agreement in 1867 that stipulated as long as the Great Powers (France, Russia, and Britain) recognized continued sovereignty of the Ottomans over Serbia, then the Ottomans would evacuate the fortresses.⁷ This gave Serbia de facto independence. To some in Great Britain, this was a great sign of progress, but to others, especially those who thought the Balkans were too backwards for self-sovereignty, this was the hallmark of chaos.

⁶ Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 238-41.

⁷ Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, 245-47.

The term Balkan ignites a series of images in the Western imagination. With few sources of information about the region, Britain filled in the gaps of what they did not know with their understanding of the social and political laws governing the world. The Balkans had been viewed by the West, especially in recent history, as governed by violent nationalism. However, the West viewed themselves as always striving for peace. The West was essentially blind to its own faults and only able to see the faults of the Balkans.⁸ Western Europe saw the Balkans as frozen in time. In part, this flawed view came from the flawed information the West was receiving about the Balkans.⁹ They had no reason to seek accurate information about the Balkans because they existed in the context of Britain's major foreign policy concerns as regarded the Ottoman and Russian empires. This allowed for Britain to keep recycling the same images of ignorant peasants ruled by Muslim overlords. Thus, the factual information on the events between Serbia and the Ottomans made up a small part of the newspaper articles.¹⁰ The majority was made up of predictions about the future of how the event would play out.

Serbian Independence, as reported in the British press, played on the hopes and fears of the British citizens. The British newspaper articles give more testament to the political ideologies of the British and the events in Britain, in particular the Fenian Rising, than to Serbia itself. The newspapers used Serbia as a means to discuss empire versus nation state, the role of progress and the balance of power, the role religion had in

⁸ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 4-7.

⁹ Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 7.

¹⁰ The actual knowledge one can attain from British newspapers on the events happening in Serbia can be explained in its entirety in three or four sentences. The Christian people have suffered a good deal due to "misgovernment" by the Ottomans. The Serbian Christians have demanded that the Ottoman forces be expelled from the fortresses in Serbia. The Porte agreed to evacuate as long as Serbia was still nominally under Ottoman rule, and Prince Michael of Serbia was headed down to Constantinople on Thursday to work out the details. As the details about the situation and the region were few, the British press used their own political and social beliefs to fill in the gaps.

forming the concept of race, and how Britain related to all of these. They also show what the press thought of Britain's relationship with the Russia and the Ottoman Empire. The newspapers further give testament to the regional diversity in Britain. Newspapers were not only divided on the issue based on their political orientation but also on their regional identity. The reasons the conservative press in London used to advocate for continued Ottoman sovereignty were different from the reasons used by the conservative press in the English midlands. Thus, Serbian independence in the British press is a better tool to try and understand Victorian Britain than to understand Serbia's relationship with the Ottoman Empire. It helps to show Victorian Britain's mental map of the world, which was different from the map of reality. Serbia was a test case to prove their political theories about empire and the Eastern Question.

The Eastern Question as the Foreground of Serbian Independence

The Eastern Question, as it existed for the British, was the prevention of Russian expansion. In the nineteenth century, the British government achieved this by supporting the Ottoman Empire. After the Crimean War, the Treaty of 1856 attempted to limit Russian dominance amongst the Balkan populations. Russia traditionally stood as the protector of all Orthodox people in the Ottoman Empire, and this treaty went to limit that. However, the Russian Empire continually sought to undo the treaty and expand their influence in the Balkans. Serbia as an Orthodox, Ottoman province stood in the middle of this greater foreign policy question. Even though, the Serbians had achieved so great a degree of autonomy that the only visual remnant of Ottoman rule was the presence of the Ottoman army, it was important that they nominally remained under the Ottoman Empire

for British policy makers until such a time when European powers could divide up the Ottomans amongst themselves.

The conservative leader at the time, Disraeli, did not care about nationalism unless it affected European powers; at the same time, he also did not care for the national sentiments of the Serbs. In fact, he cared more about their identity as Christians. Thus, the fact that the Serbians desired to have a nation had no effect on Disraeli who was more concerned with the balance of power in Europe. During the Crimean War, Disraeli considered dividing the Ottoman Empire into independent nation states; however, he feared that it would disturb the balance of power in Europe by giving Russia too much power.¹¹ One hallmark of Disraeli's foreign policy at this time was the protection of the Ottoman Empire from Russia.¹² In his view, Russia could only be stopped by the threat of force. That way a clear message would be sent to the Russians on Britain's stance during the conflict.¹³

However, a decade later when he refused to condemn the Ottomans for the "Bulgarian Atrocities," the radicals in England (especially the non-conformists) aligned with the Liberal party and Gladstone who changed his position towards the Ottomans in the 1870s.¹⁴ In 1867, Gladstone supported the Ottoman Empire, yet he changed his view, as more people would vote for him if he denounced them as barbarous. The racist views of the Liberal party at this time were firmly couched in the liberal notion of progress.

¹¹ Miloš Ković and Miloš Damjanović, *Disraeli and the Eastern Question* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 55.

¹² Peter Cain, "Radicalism, Gladstone, and the Liberal Critique," in *Victorian Visions of Global Order: Empire and International Relations in Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, ed. Duncan Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 216.

¹³ Ković, *Disraeli and the Eastern Question*, 55.

¹⁴ Cain, "Radicalism, Gladstone, and the Liberal Critique," 216.

The light of progress guided the British liberals. They used it to predict what *would* happen in the Ottoman Empire and also craft ideas of what *should* happen in the Ottoman Empire. According to Barbara Jelavich, British liberals often applied the standards of their Liberalism to the Ottomans and rarely found anything to approve of.¹⁵ This reflected the beliefs of some liberal newspapers, but some like those in the midlands believed the Balkans were not ready for independence and that they would progress better under Ottoman rule.

Orientalism in part applied to the Balkans. According to Maria Todorova, the Balkans, unlike the rest of the Ottoman Empire, had the potential to be European and part of the West, but first the Balkans had to be purged of all oriental or non-Western elements. The liberal party as a whole, however, understood little of the region, especially Gladstone who studied it sparingly and gave a very Orientalist critique. Gladstone used his ideas about religion and race to form his foreign policy in the area.¹⁶ The Tories, while still Orientalist, under the leadership of Disraeli, understood the region better, so Disraeli was more eager to study the Ottoman Empire and think more positively of it than the liberal party, but still recognized it as separate from the West and Britain.¹⁷ The liberal party used the issues in the Balkans as mirrors for issues in Britain, especially as regards to radicals who wanted to progress to a true democracy. This came out in their protests during the Bulgarian agitation.¹⁸ The Balkans were proof that Muslim rulers kept

¹⁵ Barbara Jelavich, *The Ottoman Empire, the Great Powers and the Straits Question, 1870–1887* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 7.

¹⁶ Cameron Whitehead, “Reading Beside the Lines: Marginalia, W.E. Gladstone, and the International History of the Bulgarian Horrors,” *The International History Review* 37, no. 4 (2015), 882-83, doi: 10.1080/07075332.2014.974652.

¹⁷ Ann P. Saab, *Reluctant Icon: Gladstone, Bulgaria and the Working Classes, 1856–1878* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 10.

¹⁸ Saab, *Reluctant Icon*, 11.

Christians from progressing. Thus, the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans were separated from reality and used to prove theories of British liberal ideas on race and civilization. However, all liberals believed that the Ottoman Empire would not be around much longer.

One belief cut across all political lines: the inevitable fall of the Ottoman Empire. The fall of empires greatly interested the British because through them they could make arguments about the British Empire, but they did not want to view an inevitable fall to their empire. Whether the Ottoman Empire was actually falling or not was not a matter of discussion for the British; it was given fact in their eyes. Thus, they sought to justify the inevitable decline of the Ottomans through the factors of race, religion, and industrialization. No matter were they conservative or liberal, wanted Serbian independence or continued Ottoman rule, all British believed the Ottoman Empire was falling.

All newspapers in Britain, whether or not they wanted the Ottoman Empire to remain standing or not, believed the Ottoman Empire was declining. The fall of the Ottomans was inevitable to the British. According to Jelavich, two of the aspects that fed to the belief that the Ottomans were in decline during the nineteenth century were that they were no longer conquering and that they were not developing an industrial economy.¹⁹ Yet the agrarian-versus-industrial-society argument was not the only reason British citizens thought the Ottoman Empire would fall. Some British periodicals placed the “inferior” race of the Muslims as another reason the Ottomans were falling behind. To these papers, one thing was clear: Muslims could not rule Christians. Gladstone

¹⁹ Barbara Jelavich, “The British Traveller in the Balkans: the Abuses of Ottoman Administration in the Slavonic Provinces,” *Slavonic and East European Review* 33, no. 81, June 1985, 400.

believed that no Slavonic Christian would ever willingly become Muslim nor would any Christian ever accept foreign rule.²⁰ *John Bull* considered the Ottoman Empire the “Sick man of Europe” and posed the question, if its death was inevitable, why stop it? *John Bull* also held racist attitudes towards Muslims believing they were oppressing the Christians and preventing the Christians from progressing like the rest of Europe.²¹ Still, some British newspapers greatly desired the preservation of the Ottoman Empire at all costs. For one thing, it allowed the British to control the Muslims in their colonial holding of India.

The Ottoman Sultan had great influence over Indian Muslims, and the British often used this to their advantage. During what the British viewed as the Mutiny of 1857, the Muslims in Northern India looked to the Porte for help in overthrowing the British. Not only did the Sultan advise the Indian Muslims not to fight the British, he allowed British troops to move across the Ottoman Empire to India. However, with no Muslim sovereign left in India, the Ottoman Sultan remained the natural leader for the Indian Muslims in the nineteenth century.²² Thus, the Ottoman Empire helped Britain maintain its control of the Indian subcontinent, but the fall of the Ottoman Empire awakened fears in the hearts of British imperialists. If the Ottomans fell, their control of India would be threatened because of the expansion of the Russian Empire in both Central Asia and the Eastern Mediterranean. This would effectively cut the British off from their precious India. Therefore the Orientalist approach to the Balkans—that saw them as just European enough to advance towards full civilization when purged of non-Western influences—

²⁰ Whitehead, “Reading Beside the Lines,” 871.

²¹ *John Bull*, March 30, 1867, 8.

²² Azmi Özcan, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain (1877–1924)* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 13-18.

clashed against a vital British foreign policy interest in maintaining the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans were important to British efforts to control the Mediterranean, as a way to further influence Indian Muslims, and a check on Russian imperial ambitions.

The British further used the Ottomans to maintain dominance in the Mediterranean. Conservatives, like Disraeli, viewed the Christians and Muslims of the Ottoman Empire as tools to be used by Britain and Russia to gain dominance in the sea.²³ Britain's goal during the Congress of Paris was to cut down Russian territories along the Black Sea and in the Caucasus. Britain wanted to limit Russian expansion.²⁴ This would allow Britain an unspoken dominance in the Eastern Mediterranean. The importance of maintaining control over the area actually laid further away than the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire formed two key routes to India, Britain's most important colonial possession. The Ottomans offered an overland route through the Balkans to India that would not require the British to go through Russia. The other was through the Suez. The Suez Canal was two years away from being completed and Britain watched over it like a hawk. The canal would save the British time from having to sail all the way around Africa to get to the Indian Ocean, yet the Russian Empire threatened to encroach on Ottoman territory, which threatened British interests.

In the British imagination, Russia was an empire of violent inhabitants ruled by a corrupt government whose greed drove them to try and swallow the Ottoman Empire. Palmerston used this belief of the radicals to his advantage during the Crimean War.²⁵

²³ Vesna Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania: The Imperialism of the Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 29.

²⁴ Trevor Royle, *Crimea: the Great Crimean War, 1854-1856* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 479-81.

²⁵ Paul Ward, *Red flag and Union Jack: Englishness, Patriotism and the British Left, 1881-1924* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2011), 17.

Russophobia was a powerful motivator in Britain. In the middle of the century, British travel writing in the Balkans reflected the trend of the British traveller in the Balkans portraying themselves as champions to fend off Russian imperialism.²⁶ According to the *Morning Advertiser*, “Romanoff” agents were using propaganda to persuade the Southern Slavs to join them. Russia’s obvious goal was Constantinople.²⁷ On March 8, another newspaper declared a Russian Duke gave a speech close to a declaration of war, with regards to the Eastern Question.²⁸ The British press, with the exception of periodicals in northern England, all believed Russian expansion played a major role in the politics of the Eastern Question.

The majority of historians, with few exceptions, agreed that the Ottomans and Russia had major impacts on British foreign and imperial policy. Ann P. Saab was in the minority when she wrote that Britain’s need of a stable Ottoman Empire was exaggerated. Britain never took the Russian threat in Central Asia as seriously in the nineteenth century as they did in the eighteenth century, but they did not reexamine or revisit their foreign policy with regards to the Eastern Mediterranean or Russia. Thus they continued to follow the old policies in place.²⁹ However, most historians concur that the Russian and Ottoman empires did play a large role in British foreign policy making.

In comparison with Saab’s argument, John Howes Gleason argued that increased knowledge of Russia in the nineteenth century did impact and change British foreign policy. Britain did recognize a Russian imperial threat and accordingly expanded their

²⁶ Jelavich, “British Travellers in the Balkans,” 396.

²⁷ *Morning Advertiser*, January 11, 1867, 4.

²⁸ *Liverpool Mercury*, March 8, 1867, 6.

²⁹ Saab, *Reluctant Icon*, 17-18.

navy.³⁰ Gleason's thesis was that Russophobia shaped Britain's imperial policies in the Near East and Central Asia.³¹ Russian diplomats tried to reassure Britain that Russia was no threat to India and deplored the public opinion that they were.³² Again contrary to Saab, Pandeimon Hiondis argued that the Ottoman Empire remained a crucial buffer from Russian expansion in the view of Britain but especially in the view of the Conservatives. Any insurrection within the Ottoman Empire was a Russian plot according to the Conservatives.³³ One piece of foreign policy that was informed with Russian expansion and the health of the Ottoman Empire in mind was the peace treaty formed at the end of the Crimean War.

The British pointed to the Treaty of 1856 as the foundation they should use to craft their foreign policy towards much of the Balkans. The treaty officially recognized the territory of the Ottoman Empire. Russia gave up dominance in the Black Sea for concessions in Bessarabia. Russia also gave up its claims to the Danubian provinces and the right to act as their protector.³⁴ The treaty essentially acted as an official map of Europe, which was drawn up without reference to the people who lived in the territories that were being redrawn. Due to the Treaty of 1856, the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* argued Serbia's demands for the evacuation of Ottoman troops from their territory remained unfounded.³⁵ Many newspapers worried that the treaty's version of the map would not be enough to guarantee the Great Powers recognition of continued Ottoman

³⁰ John Howes Gleason, *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain* (New York: Octagon, 1972), 225.

³¹ Gleason, *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain*.

³² Gleason, *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain*, 209-10.

³³ Pandeimon Hiondis, "Mid-Victorian Liberalism and Foreign Affairs: 'Cretan Atrocities' and Liberal Responses, 1866-69," *The Historian* 77, no. 4 (2015), 720: EBSCOhost (ICHA1010496).

³⁴ Royle, *Crimea*, 482.

³⁵ *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, February 15, 1867, 10.

sovereignty.³⁶ Without a proper document, further conflict between Serbia and the Ottomans could arise. Crimea left a large mark on the British government. It awakened fears of Britain's eventual decline if Russia kept growing and events like Serbian Independence erupted in the Ottoman Empire.

After the war, Britain spent its time building up its army in case the Ottoman Empire was threatened by Russia again. Palmerston's government after the Crimean War supported national movements everywhere but the Near East. He desired Britain to be the dominant influence over the Ottoman government. However, after his death in 1865, Britain's influence started to wane. Fearing its dominance in the world diminishing, the British government focused on building up its military.³⁷ Later, Gladstone would use imperialism and the military to gain domestic popularity.³⁸ This way it would not seem like Britain was falling behind France and Russia. Still, Britain assisting a Muslim Empire was not popular amongst the populace. The varied beliefs following the Treaty of 1856 led to the majority of British citizens feeling that the Treaty had been a mistake by 1870 and that independent Balkan nations did not necessarily mean Russian expansion into the area.³⁹ The removal of the Ottoman army from the garrisons touched on Britain's prejudice against both Muslims and Russians. There was yet still another prejudice that played out in the British press during the Serbian question. An Irish independence movement called the Fenian Rising also took place in 1867, and while there were some differences, the British noted some key similarities between the Fenians and the Serbs.

³⁶ *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, March 22, 1867, 3.

³⁷ Jelavich, *The Ottoman Empire, the Great Powers*, 6-7.

³⁸ Ward, *Red flag and Union Jack*, 18.

³⁹ Jelavich, *The Ottoman Empire, the Great Powers*, 9.

The Fenian Rising in the Context of Serbian Independence

A group called the Irish Republican Brotherhood started the Fenian Rising. They used guerilla warfare to try and overthrow British rule, unlike the Serbians who negotiated with the Ottomans for the removal of troops. However, the British military responded to a failed outbreak in February 1867 by occupying Ireland and eventually placing the island country under martial law.⁴⁰ The two biggest Fenian outrages occurred in September and December of 1867. These probably prompted Gladstone's Irish reform, which addressed Irish grievances only as a way to continue colonial rule with a "pacified Ireland."⁴¹ Another difference between this and Serbia was that the Fenians were not nationalists. Fenianism was anti-colonial, but it was not nationalist. Fenians did not seek to create an Irish state just for Irish. They desired to create a state in Ireland free from imperial rule.⁴² While the situations held these differences, their similarities were noted by the British. The Balkans represented a bunch of small national identities growing despite being part of a larger empire for more than a century, and demanding independence. Ireland could then look to the Serbs as justification for their independence, which scared the British.

According to Whitehead, Gladstone, like other Victorians, was obsessed with race and racial tensions. He saw similar problems between the Slavs (including Muslim Slavs) and the Turks that were also between the Irish and the British.⁴³ The British press then faced a complicated task of justifying the removal of imperial troops in one country, but

⁴⁰ Kevin Kenna, *All the Risings* (Currach Press: Dublin, 2016), 136-44.

⁴¹ Paul Adelman and Robert Desmond Pearce, *Great Britain and the Irish question 1800-1922* (Oxon: Hodder & Stoughton, 2001), 74-75.

⁴² Amy E. Martin, *Alter-nations: nationalisms, terror, and the state in nineteenth-century Britain and Ireland* (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 2012), 66.

⁴³ Whitehead, "Reading Beside the Lines," 870.

at the same time justify the occupation of their imperial troops in another. The London conservative newspapers, for example, placed articles on the Fenians right next to the ones on the Serbians. They used the preservation of peace as their reason to justify their different views on the situations. If the Ottomans evacuated, then Serbia would likely not rebel and the Ottoman Empire will be at peace. However, if the British did not suppress the criminal Fenians, then the people of Ireland would likely be victims of their violence. The British army had to preserve peace in the country. Similarly to the London conservatives, the other regions also made sure their arguments lined up in the two affairs, yet what arguments were used depended on the region and political affiliation of the newspaper.

The question of Serbian independence was not only an important battleground for the political ideologies in London, but also played out in the regional and local concerns of the British press outside of London. Northern England's trade with Russia made it so they downplayed the role of Russia in the Eastern Question. Welsh liberals saw the Ottomans and Russia as means to denounce British imperialism at a time when the British army had occupied Ireland and stopped any production of anti-British imperialism in Ireland's press. Thus, in Ireland, the newspapers largely reprinted articles written in England on Serbian independence; even articles on the Fenian Rising came from England. The way Serbian independence was reported amongst the various regions morphed to suit the regional ideologies and concerns

The London Press on Serbian Independence

The London press used Serbia to advance the different political ideologies. Conservatives and liberals each believed they had the proper understanding of the Eastern Question and within that Serbia, so the events in Serbia did not matter by themselves. The London press, both liberal and conservative, needed to put Serbian independence in the center of the debate between the ideologies and in relation to national issues.

London's Conservative Press in a Moral Dilemma

London's conservative press discussed little what was actually happening in Serbia. It was much more vocal when it came to what the other Great Powers, especially Russia, had to say about the situation and about defending Britain's own position and treaties with the Ottoman Empire. They and the other Christian nations in Europe struggled with defending Christian subjects from the abuses of Muslim Turkish rule on one hand and balancing power in Europe with the preservation of the Ottoman Empire in the other.

The first part of the moral dilemma the Conservatives concerned themselves with was Christian relief. How could they, as Christians, support a government who terrorized and abused their Christian subjects? Of course, the most constant source of irritation to the British was the taxation of non-Muslims.⁴⁴ Still, this fed the image of the abusive Turk. The first thing to be taken off the table was military support for the Ottomans, but they also could not support the Serbians if they wished to honor their treaties with the Ottomans. The *London Evening Standard* commented that the British had long seen the

⁴⁴ Jelavich, "British Travellers in the Balkans," 402.

oppression of the Christian people, and had advised the Ottomans to end the oppression of their Christian subjects. Britain could not stand idly when the “happiness of many millions of people” depended on the freedom of the Christian nations.⁴⁵ *John Bull*, far more critical of the government than the *Standard*, believed Britain could no longer support the Ottomans because of the Porte’s failure to control its regional governments who treated their Christian subjects cruelly.⁴⁶ *John Bull*, like the *Standard*, agreed that the Ottoman military should be removed from Serbian fortresses.⁴⁷ While the British government did not involve themselves directly in the conflict to the dismay of these papers, there were committees set up to give monetary support to the Christians. Yet similar committees set up to supply Greece with funding to fight of the Ottomans did not reflect a bias towards either party, as they were mostly made up by people who had familial connections to Greece.⁴⁸ Thus, the greatest support given to these areas from Britain came from those who had personal connections in the areas already. However, this did not mean that many conservatives were not sympathetic towards the notion of Christian freedom, at least in some places in the world.

In direct contrast with this notion of freedom for Christian nations, the English did not extend this to the Irish. While it was natural that the Serbian Christians should demand the expulsion of an imperial military, the Irish could make no such claim. *The Morning Post* argued that while letting loose the soldiers on the Fenian riots may seem

⁴⁵ *London Evening Standard*, Feb 16, 1867, 2. To assess the political orientation of each newspaper, I used William Thomas, *Universal Newspaper and Periodical List* (London: William Thomas, 1863), Google Books. I only used newspapers with clear orientations such as “Whig,” “Liberal,” and “Conservative.” I did not use ones labeled “Neutral” or “Liberal-Conservative,” like *The Times*. That way I could clearly delineate where the articles in the newspapers fell on the political spectrum.

⁴⁶ *John Bull*, Mar 16, 1867, 20.

⁴⁷ *John Bull*, Jan 5, 1867, 4.

⁴⁸ Hiondis, “Mid Victorian Liberalism and Foreign Affairs”, 725.

“unchristian” it was better to stop them from causing more harm in Irish cities.⁴⁹ *John Bull* agreed with *The Morning Post* and said the military was needed in Ireland to keep people safe from violent mobs of Irishmen. The great English military though did not fire on them even under “great provocation.”⁵⁰ The misgovernment of the Ottomans led to the abuses of the Serbians, but the English did not misgovern the Irish. Therefore, British military presence in Ireland was just. It kept the peace during the Fenian riots to protect the loyal people of Ireland.

While the British occupied Ireland with her military, the conservative press reported that Britain and the other Great Powers advised the Ottomans separately to give concessions to the Christian subjects. The powers should not address the Porte together in case it appeared as though Europe was ganging up on the Empire. They should also keep their treaties with the Porte. *John Bull* reported that all outside Powers, Russia included, made only recommendations to the Porte on behalf of Serbia and not placing any external pressure.⁵¹ *The Morning Post* decided that it was not proper that Britain should try and change the internal affairs of any power, even if they were uncivilized. Thus, they must maintain the position of neutrality. They could, however, encourage the Ottomans to behave morally and justly. Otherwise, the Porte would lose its power in Europe. The goal of advising the Sultan allowed Britain to avoid being neutral, which was morally wrong when women and children could die, but it also avoided getting involved in a conflict and risk making it worse or losing its friendship with the Porte. Thus, following treaties as

⁴⁹ *Morning Post*, Mar 7, 1867, 5.

⁵⁰ *John Bull*, Jan 5, 1867, 5.

⁵¹ *John Bull*, Mar 30, 1867, 4.

they stood and outwardly taking neither side was the best course of action.⁵² The conservative press justified Britain's actions further by arguing that keeping the peace in Europe was more important than the relief of the Christian people.

Still, the British needed to justify their position to continue to support the Ottoman Empire. The conservative press expand their argument from the Fenian Rising by arguing that the peace must be kept at all times. However, unlike in Ireland where the imperial army was necessary, the conservatives argued that if the Ottoman army stayed in Serbia more uprisings would occur. The *Morning Post* argued that the Ottoman Empire would fall apart and wars would break out if the Porte did not concede to Serbia's demands, and in a separate article, wrote that similar crises would arise if the Ottomans continued to abuse their Christian subjects.⁵³ *John Bull* printed a piece on March 30, 1867 that argued Serbia and the Porte should work things out peacefully because war was "irrational."⁵⁴ The *London Evening Standard* in agreement wrote that the gradual elevation of the eastern dependencies to self-government as the only peaceful solution to the Eastern Question. It was obvious to them that if the English helped the insurgence, it could lead to more bloodshed. If they did not help, the bloodshed would be minimal.⁵⁵ While Britain argued that the Ottoman's should give their Christians greater freedom and gradual self-government, it by no means wanted the Ottoman Empire to fall apart quickly. The balance of power in Europe would be lost if the Ottomans dissolved.

The conservative press in London took it as inevitable that the Christian subjects would eventually gain their freedom from the Ottomans based on the fact that they were

⁵² *Morning Post*, Feb 16, 1867, 3.

⁵³ *Morning Post*, Feb 16, 1867, 3; *Morning Post*, Feb 16, 1867, 5.

⁵⁴ *John Bull*, Mar 30, 1867, 4.

⁵⁵ *London Evening Standard*, Feb 16, 1867, 2.

Christian and therefore racially superior to Muslims and better able to govern themselves. *John Bull* equivocated Muslim rule with anarchy.⁵⁶ However, the conservative press also feared the end of the Ottoman Empire because it kept the balance of power in Europe.

Even though the conservative parties in London did not look favorably on Muslim rule, the balance of power was more important to them at the end of the day. The *London Evening Standard* printed a piece that explicitly argued that Britain had long witnessed the “misgovernment” of the Turks. Britain of course had repeatedly commanded the Porte to treat her Christian subjects fairly, but nothing was so important as “the preservation of this crumbling edifice.” It was essential to keep the balance of power in Europe.⁵⁷ Disraeli took an eager interest in foreign affairs, and during the 1850s and 1860s favored “peace and the maintenance of the *status quo*.”⁵⁸ He had a respect for the older powers in Europe that he wished to preserve including the Ottomans. He regarded with contempt the idea of race and the sentiments of nationalism. Disraeli believed that both of these ideas would divide Europe, break apart powers, and lead to series of conflicts for superiority.⁵⁹ With the Balkan countries developing national consciousness, the obvious conflict for superiority over the territory would be between Britain and Russia.

The greatest fear with the fall of the Ottoman Empire was that Russia would move into the territories the Ottomans lost. The *Morning Post* expressed fears that Russia would try and take Constantinople.⁶⁰ The paper later stated, “St. Petersburg continues busily occupied with the affairs of the East, with an object in view that is *needless to*

⁵⁶ *John Bull*, March 16, 1867, 20.

⁵⁷ *London Evening Standard*, Feb 16, 1867, 2.

⁵⁸ R.B. McDowell, *British Conservatism: 1832-1914* (London: Farber and Farber, 1959), 62.

⁵⁹ McDowell, *British Conservatism*, 63-4.

⁶⁰ *Morning Post*, Jan 1, 1867, 5.

specify” (emphasis added).⁶¹ A few pages later, the *Morning Post* complained that Britain did not have the same “poetic” claim to the situation that Russia does on behalf of the Christians, but the British were on the side of Turkey, so they did not have the moral high ground. Russia was not to be trusted, however, because their ultimate goal was Panslavism.⁶² The *Evening Standard* believed that Russia was trying to keep aggravations up in the Christian provinces and even promised military aid if the other Great Powers got involved on the side of the Turks.⁶³ *John Bull* criticized the British government for not getting involved in the region earlier. England should have been supporting the Christians when it did not, and now Russia had more control over the region than Britain did.⁶⁴ Russia clearly threatened war in the eyes of the conservative press.

The conservative press in London caught itself in a moral conundrum when it came to Serbian independence. The press had to show their own Christian identity by supporting the Christian populations, but at the same time not advocate for their independence from the Ottoman Empire. In this way, the traditional power structure in Europe could be preserved, and Russia could not try and move for more power. Peace had to be preserved at all costs, and in Ireland, this meant that Britain had to protect the Irish from independence, as the Fenians were harming and not helping the population. However, the liberal press in contrast to the conservative press in London made sure to keep the issue of the Fenians and the Serbian question separate from each other because their notion of progress, which the conservatives denied, advocated for the fall of the imperial rule of the Ottomans, yet progress needed to be morphed so that it justified the

⁶¹ *Morning Post*, Mar, 13, 1867, 4.

⁶² *Morning Post*, Mar, 13, 1867, 4.

⁶³ *London Evening Standard*, Feb 15, 1867, 6; *London Evening Standard*, Feb 15, 1867, 5.

⁶⁴ *John Bull*, Mar 16, 1867, 20.

continued imperial rule of Britain over Ireland. The Balkan crisis appeared in the London press as a way for conservatives and liberals to debate their political outlooks, and the liberals used it as a way to promote the existence of progress.

London's Liberal Press and the Confusing Nature of Progress

Liberals firmly couched their views on Serbian independence and Ottoman imperialism in their belief of progress. Progressing to a new state of civilization could only come at the right time to certain people. Despotism would eventually pass into self-governing nations, but not everyone was ready for that self-government, and usually, this was decided upon by the size of the nation. According to Peter Cain, liberalism referred to a large web of ideas that often contradicted each other.⁶⁵ The notion of Progress needed to be sufficiently vague in order to be useful to British liberals. It needed to be able to define what was civilized and constantly redefine what was not civilized so they could justify imperialism. Britain was, of course, the most advanced civilization in Europe to London liberals; they were perfectly capable of governing themselves and even ready for universal suffrage. However, the Irish were an inferior race not ready for self-government. Thus, it was morally wrong that the Fenians revolted. It was obvious to all liberals that the next step for Serbia was freedom from Ottoman rule and the next step for the Ottomans was the decline of their empire. However, the liberal press disagreed on whether or not the time had arrived for such steps to be taken.

The liberal press was convinced of the Ottoman Empire's decline and used this to justify their opinions on the Eastern Question. However, there was little agreement on how to answer the question peacefully. *The Globe* wrote, "We have no very great

⁶⁵ Cain, "Radicalism, Gladstone, and the Liberal Critique," 215.

confidence in the vitality of the Turkish Empire.”⁶⁶ *The Sun* wrote that Britain need not concern itself with the Eastern Question so much because the Ottoman Empire would fall naturally. The British Government should not have a hand in the process.⁶⁷ On the other hand some newspapers, such as the *Morning Advertiser*, thought that Britain was already too much involved in the Ottoman Empire for that to be the case. To the *Morning Advertiser*, Britain had to pick a side and they argued that it should be the side of the new nations. The *Advertiser* believed that Britain could not retract on their policy to protect the Ottomans from Russia so quickly, but it is inevitable that it will fall apart. Britain should be supporting the new nations forming.⁶⁸ It was often understood that industrial development in the Balkans was being crushed under the inefficiencies of the Ottoman government.⁶⁹ The Ottomans were forcing their decline on the already backwards Balkans! The British as Protestants were the most advanced with regards to religion. Serbians were below them as Orthodox, and below them were Muslims who were the least advanced in terms of religion. Thus to some of the liberal press, Serbia was ready to be free of Ottoman rule, but to others the process was happening too fast. Progress should be natural and peaceful, but it also needed to happen in key stages. A nation, especially a non-Protestant nation, could not have total self-sovereignty.

One of the hallmarks of liberalism in England was the importance on Protestantism and its role in progress. The most civilized nations to many in the liberal party were those who had Puritan beliefs. Popular movements in Britain would only take off if the leaders cited the Bible as the foundation for such a movement. Based on

⁶⁶ *The Globe*, March 13, 1867, 4.

⁶⁷ *The Sun*, March 9, 1867, 6.

⁶⁸ *The Morning Advertiser*, January 11, 1867, 4.

⁶⁹ Jelavich, “British Travellers in the Balkans,” 411.

Liberation Theology from the Puritans, freedom was not to be granted to a foolish people who could easily become enslaved again. Those with true wisdom from Protestantism allowed people to gain freedom and protect it.⁷⁰ Because Gladstone's nonconformist supporters saw their religious beliefs and political beliefs intertwined, they understood Gladstone as a champion of Christendom. His pamphlet *The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East* fed on the Anti-Turk/ Anti-Muslim attitudes of the non-conformist party. They must fight the Tory party who sought to hide these atrocities in their support of the sultanate. However, Gladstone never advocated for full independence of the Bulgarians. They should be politically independent but remain members of the empire.⁷¹ This draws back to the idea that unless a people were Protestant they could never truly be free. Furthermore, the liberal press found that Serbia was too small to have a nation of its own. It could too easily be manipulated by larger nations such as Russia. The liberal press rectified this with proposals of forming a larger nation in Southeastern Europe.

The liberal press did not believe that Serbia should become an individual nation because they were not progressed enough to have self-governance and then would lean on Russia for support giving too much power to Russia. To some British liberals, the world would be made up of great nations. Great nations had the ability to keep out other great nations. However, small nations would be absorbed by great nations. Keeping the Serbs a part of a great nation, whether that was the Ottoman Empire or a new Slavdom, would prevent Russia from taking over the area. While size was not considered part of the criteria to be a "great nation," it did help bring about all other aspects of "greatness,"

⁷⁰ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment, and Reform*, 35-41.

⁷¹ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment, and Reform*, 388-389.

such as a nation's political structure.⁷² For example, Gladstone claimed that Britain's goal in Egypt was to use Egypt as the building grounds of a large North African Empire. This large state was desired, so Britain could keep Russia out of Egypt, according to Gladstone.⁷³ Likewise, those who feared Russia invading the Balkans suggested the creation of South Slavdom. *The Globe* believed that having many small nations in Eastern Europe would give too much power to Russia. Russia was no doubt supporting individual countries coming out of the Ottoman Empire European territories because then a bunch of "petty princes" would be put on the thrones, and they would all turn to Russia for support.⁷⁴ *The London Daily News* wrote that the Prince of Serbia needed to be advised by the Great Powers before speaking to the Porte, for he could not naturally be peaceful.⁷⁵ Prince Michael was not seen as a capable leader of a nation. The best option was to wait for the Ottoman Empire to die and to create a larger South Slavdom, which the British could manipulate.

However, the liberal press still argued over what this Slavdom should look like. According to the *Morning Advertiser* the best way to solve the Eastern Question was to create a confederation of the Christian people. The debate about the Slavdom centered on Greece. Greece because it was the foundation of Western civilization in the ancient world could be considered a great nation in the modern world. Thus, should the Slavic nations be given to Greece or could they have their own entity without Greece. Most importantly, however, was that this new state would get the people away from the Ottomans (as was

⁷² Georgios Varouxakis, "'Great' versus 'small' nations," in *Victorian Visions of Global Order: Empire and International Relations in Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, ed. Duncan Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 145.

⁷³ Cain, "Radicalism, Gladstone, and the Liberal Critique," 227.

⁷⁴ *The Globe*, March 13, 1867, 4.

⁷⁵ *London Daily News*, March 6, 1867, 5.

going to happen anyway), and above all, it would also keep Russia out. Serbia seemed to be the best place to form the plans for this Confederation, even though they had a strong nationalistic sentiment. The region would have to put aside all nationalistic sentiments, which the *Advertiser* acknowledged would be hard, but it was for the best.⁷⁶ *The Globe* put forth a different version of this Slav state. The paper believed in an empire that was centered in Greece. To them, it would be a great day when the Greek Empire was established at Constantinople.⁷⁷ Both of these new proposed states were firmly couched in terms of liberalism's theory of progress and nationalism. The Southern Slavs were not ready for their own nations. They did not have the independent mindset needed to handle it. Some newspapers even believed that the Balkans were not yet ready for the great Slavdom.

There was no agreement amongst London's liberal press about how the new state should look, and there was also no agreement about when the state should come about. *The Globe* wrote that their Greek Empire should not be created immediately because the Christians were not ready for self-government. Remember progress had to be natural; it should not be forced to the British liberals. The rise and fall of empires were all subject to this progress of civilization. Peter Cain argued that Gladstone portrayed his version of imperialism as *natural*. There were bound to be the some clashes with the periphery as Britain *naturally* spread its sovereignty over the globe. This imperialism was different the forced imperialism of the Tories who were not interested in assimilating the native populations to progress.⁷⁸ However, with the continual interference of Russia, The natural

⁷⁶ *Morning Advertiser*, January 21, 1867, 4.

⁷⁷ *The Globe*, March 13, 1867, 4.

⁷⁸ Cain, "Radicalism, Gladstone, and the Liberal Critique," 228.

process of Ottoman decay was speeding up. The Ottoman Government could no longer enforce law and order. Therefore, instead of this change coming about peacefully it would come about through war in Europe which the liberals wanted to avoid at all cost.⁷⁹ On the other hand, according the liberals who truly despised the Ottoman Empire, the independence was coming at its proper time.

The *Morning Advertiser* wrote that their Confederation was ready to be created. They believed it to be a mistake that the government pursued a policy to preserve the Ottoman Empire when the “misgovernment” committed by them was so severe. As the charges made against the Ottomans all proved true, the Christian provinces deserved the right of “self-government.”⁸⁰ This showed that the right to self-government was not innate but something that nations earned. The people had to be individualistic enough and morally advanced enough to be able to support such a society. Britain had achieved this mindset. In fact, Britain was progressed enough to have near universal male suffrage, according to the liberal party.

Reform could only be achieved by people of a certain moral caliber according to the liberal press, yet “slow gestation of democracy” was one of the defining characteristics of the Victorians, according to Duncan Bell.⁸¹ In 1867, Disraeli and Derby’s reform bill enfranchised more men in Britain than the liberal reform bill proposed a year before. After the 1867 bill, three in five men could vote.⁸² Therefore, men in Britain believed they had advanced to the next step in civilization. The *Morning*

⁷⁹ *The Globe*, March 13, 1867, 4.

⁸⁰ *Morning Advertiser*, February 16, 1867, 2.

⁸¹ Duncan Bell, “Visions of Victorian Global Order,” in *Victorian Visions of Global Order: Empire and International Relations in Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, ed. Duncan Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 2.

⁸² Adelman, *Great Britain and the Irish question*, 73.

Advertiser wrote that only morally just men could carry out voter reform. Otherwise, it would fail.⁸³ According to *The Globe*, the conservatives had been blinded by the wealth and beauty of the aristocracy. They could not truly be democratic because they were driven to immorality by their greed. Thus, they would not support universal suffrage.⁸⁴ *The Sun* asserted that when voting on the Reform bill, the liberal choice was the only “manly” and “honourable” choice because they followed true common wisdom.⁸⁵ Even within Britain, the Liberal press believed that universal suffrage and true democracy could only be accomplished by liberals. Self-governance was also reserved for those capable, and the Serbians were not yet capable of this.

As progress was a moral argument to liberals (it was the good and perfection to be striven for at all times), other moral arguments had to be made about the state of affairs in Europe. Would this crisis in the East result in a war between the Great Powers? Was that justifiable when progress was on the line? To the liberal press in London, war did not justify progress. Progress should come about peacefully and naturally. However, this threat of war loomed very seriously over Europe to some of the liberal press, and if war did come it would undermine the slow gestation of progress. The Slavdom that came about after the war would not be stable. Still, to some this war seemed far off. There was no need to worry about just yet.

The liberal newspapers were divided as to if the peace of Europe was under serious threat. *The Sun* and *London Daily News* did not seem to think Europe was on the brink of war. As long as the Great Powers sided the same way on the Eastern question,

⁸³ *Morning Advertiser*, March 4, 1867, 5.

⁸⁴ *The Globe*, March 14, 1867, 2.

⁸⁵ *The Sun*, March 14, 1867, 2.

there could be no war in Europe.⁸⁶ This came from liberals in England speculating the spread of liberalism throughout the world. International liberalism, as both a political and economic tool, could be used to bring about an “international ‘morality’,” and all war would be at an end.⁸⁷ *The Sun* and *London Daily News*, while still believing that Russians were farther behind than Britain in terms of progress, did not believe that any of the Great Powers, Russia included were inferior to the Ottomans and the people in the Balkans. They conceded that Russia was on the side of Britain and France.⁸⁸ Due to this, they did not think that war would arise because all Great Powers wanted peace. However, while one line of historiography viewed the Mid Victorian Era as full of optimism and peace, this should be balanced with the rising fears that British power was waning.⁸⁹ Russia promised to be England’s biggest imperial competitor in Central Asia, which was right above India. The greatest fear of war came from Russia, and *The Globe* and the *Morning Advertiser* were starkly more anti-Russian than *The Sun* and the *London Daily News*.

The *Morning Advertiser* and *The Globe*, however, believed that conflict was inevitable. The *Morning Advertiser* reported that world peace was seriously threatened. Affairs in the East were getting worse. Western Europe designed to protect the Ottomans, but Russia, even though they spoke peace, was obviously lying, France had only the ability to focus on the events of that day without any long term planning, and Italy was not even organized. Britain, under the conservatives and who actually had important matters in the East, had not yet made anything but vague promises to defend the

⁸⁶ *London Daily News*, March 11, 1867, 5.

⁸⁷ Bell, “Visions of Victorian Global Order,” 9.

⁸⁸ *London Daily News*, March 11, 1867, 5; *The Sun*, March 14, 1867, 2.

⁸⁹ Bell, “Visions of Victorian Global Order,” 8.

Ottomans.⁹⁰ With the West in such disorder war could not be far behind. *The Globe* wrote “that a great War is impending is certain: it is only a question of time.”⁹¹ By March, both papers agreed that one of three areas would inflame Europe in war: the Southwest, Russia and Turkey over the Eastern question, and Russia in Poland.⁹² They combined this with their belief in the dying Ottoman Empire and argued that if the Turk would just “lie quiet, and let himself be dismembered [...] there might still be peace.”⁹³ This came from the same paper who feared the Ottomans were falling too quickly. The *Morning Advertiser* wrote, that the Serbians would not accept the Porte’s concessions and were flying in arms to the border. To the newspaper, history proved there was only a small chance that the situation could be worked out peacefully.⁹⁴ They were not concerned about the balance of power in Europe like the conservatives were. The reason they feared the war was because of the horrible nature of war. It was morally reprehensible. While the question as to whether or not war would erupt in Europe was divided amongst the liberal press, all agreed that no war could arise out of Britain even with the Fenian Rising. They were too morally advanced for such a thing happen in their country or empire. Thus, the Fenian Rising was not a serious event like that in Serbia, but rather a few criminals acting independently of the general population.

While the London conservatives were comfortable discussing the similarities between Serbia and Ireland, the London liberal press contemplated no similarities between the two. The conservatives easily justified their rule over Ireland because they

⁹⁰ *The Morning Advertiser*, February 5, 1867, 4.

⁹¹ *The Globe*, March 5, 1867, 4.

⁹² *The Globe*, March 5, 1867, 4; *The Morning Advertiser*, March 6, 1867, 5.

⁹³ *The Globe*, March 8, 1867, 2.

⁹⁴ *The Morning Advertiser*, March 13, 1867, 4.

were the traditional rulers of the Irish, just as the Ottomans were the traditional rulers of the Serbians. However, the liberals believed progress more important than tradition; they could not use the same argument. The Irish were weak to the liberals, and the liberals' proof for this was in the existence of the Empire. The Irish were incapable of governing themselves; they were a feeble race. However, if this same argument was extended to Serbia, then Serbia would have to be ruled by either Russia or the Ottomans because if they could not extract themselves from imperial rule, they are not ready to govern themselves. To some extent, this appears in the idea of the great Slavdom. Serbia unto itself was not ready to govern itself, but the liberals still advocated for the move to self-governance and this was not something they contemplated for the Irish. Thus, the London liberal press justified continued rule of Ireland by emphasizing how weak the Irish were, an argument couched in different terms from the Serbian question.

The Fenian rising in liberal newspapers appeared as an event of no concern because Britain was so far superior to Ireland. Colonial authorities knew that the Fenians were a well-organized and well-armed group, so they quickly established military law in 1865 targeting the leaders and the Fenian publications. What followed was a series of political cartoons and articles in the British press that the Fenians were such an infantile race that they never posed any threat, but that was never the case.⁹⁵ In the London liberal press, the Fenians, while not called Irish, were given the Irish stereotypes of disorganized, weak, and unmanly. With these characteristics, they could not compete against the British who were the exact opposite. *The Sun* reported that a Fenian leader “swooned” while being captured and remained in a dead faint for ten minutes. The most

⁹⁵ Martin, *Alter-Nations*, 53-54.

“manly” Fenians had to come from America.⁹⁶ *The Globe* connected this argument to the idea of race and called them “a feeble race.”⁹⁷ *The London Daily News* wrote that bad weather had killed more Fenians than the military presence in Ireland, which just recently doubled.⁹⁸ Even with the acknowledgement that there was a greater military presence in Ireland. The liberal press asserted that there was no reason to fear any conflict. These raids and riots could be put down by the police. The military was not necessary. In all instances of riot suppression mentioned in *The Globe*, it was the police who put them down.⁹⁹ Unlike the conservatives who had to justify the use of military on Christians, the liberals seemed unconcerned because the Fenians were so far beneath them.

Conclusion

Serbian independence went beyond a foreign policy question in the London press. The Balkan crisis presented itself as a test case to advance the competing political ideologies in Britain. The conservatives were looking to preserve the existing world order. This came at the price of not supporting Christian nations in a Muslim empire for them. The liberals on the other hand wanted to change to existing world order. Their notion of progress meant that the Ottoman would fall and give way to a new Slavdom. However, both desired that Russia remain out of the Balkans at all costs, and neither desired war. The question Serbian independence went even farther than these ideologies and played into national concerns as well. The conservatives saw the similarities between Serbia and Ireland and made sure to keep their argument consistent in both, but the liberals couched the issues in different terms to make them appear dissimilar. That way

⁹⁶ *The Sun*, March 9, 1867, 4.

⁹⁷ *The Globe*, March 9, 1867, 2.

⁹⁸ *London Daily News*, March 15, 1867, 5.

⁹⁹ *The Globe*, March 9, 1867, 2.

they could use progress to argue that one empire should disappear, namely the Ottomans, while at the same time use progress to justify their imperial possessions. Serbia for the London press was useful in so far as it provided another place for the conservatives and liberals to argue about their core disagreements. Outside of London Serbia still held this role of being a place for conservatives and liberals to argue about their ideologies, but the Balkan issue morphed due to regional concerns as well. In northern England, a place where trade and industry governed daily life and reform was the biggest discussion in politics, the question of Serbian independence became another place for them to discuss the importance of trade and the background to reform and self-governance in the region.

The Northern English Press in Comparison to London

Information on the Balkans remained very little but the northern English papers, like their London counterparts, dedicated long articles as to how the situation was to be solved based on their understanding of power in Europe and progress. However, unlike the London newspapers the regional concerns lent themselves to the papers' arguments about the fate of the Eastern Question and Serbia. The greatest difference found in the northern press compared to London was the lack of Russian involvement in the Eastern Question. This was due to the fact that the north participated in global trade and did much of its trade with Russia. The northern conservative press concerned themselves with the best way to bring about peace in the Ottoman Empire. War would disrupt the trade the regional economy depended on. Another regional concern dominated the liberal press, which was self-determination and reform in England. The northern liberals busied themselves with redrawing the map of South Eastern Europe and planning for the Balkan states to have a degree of self-determination. Likewise in England, the northern English press believed reform would allow them greater self-determination within Britain as a whole. Within the regional press itself, there was a debate about Britain's moral obligations to the Christians in the Balkans. While both the conservative and liberal press, desired that the Christians be left at peace, their mid and long term goals differed greatly. This debate was reflected in their articles discussing the foreign policy objectives of Gladstone and Lord Stanley, but also in their articles on the Fenian Rising.

The greatest difference to be found in the northern newspapers in comparison to the London papers was the role of Russia. Russia was hardly mentioned by more than a

few newspapers. In fact, only two liberal newspapers included Russia in their accounts of the Eastern Question. However, overall neither liberal nor conservative papers paid much attention to Russia. The inclusion of Russia correlated with a fear of war in Europe in the London liberal press. The same was found with the two northern liberal papers who mentioned Russia. The *Congleton & Macclesfield Mercury* and *Liverpool Mercury* both agreed that Russia was trying to create ties with the individual countries in the Ottoman Empire and Britain should be doing likewise. They feared Russia gaining too much power in Europe.¹⁰⁰ The *Liverpool Mercury* even feared that Russia was trying to overthrow Britain in India.¹⁰¹ A few other papers briefly mentioned Russia. The northern conservative press believed that Russia would benefit from the independence of Southeastern Europe.¹⁰² The *Blackburne Standard* believed that Russia would be able to undo some of the restrictions placed on it after the Crimean War if the Balkans received independence.¹⁰³ However, even in these newspapers Russia was not mentioned above one or two articles on the subject of the Eastern Question. Russia did not play a large role in the Eastern Question according to northern conservative newspapers and played no role according to the vast majority of the northern liberal newspapers. One way to understand why the northern papers did not fear Russia was because they were involved with a lot of trade with the Russians.

Due to increased interactions with Russians through trade, northern England demonstrated less Russophobia than the rest of England. The Northeast was mostly

¹⁰⁰ *Congleton & Macclesfield Mercury*, and *Cheshire and General Advertiser*, January 12, 1867, 2; *Liverpool Mercury*, March 4, 1867, 6.

¹⁰¹ *Liverpool Mercury*, March 23, 1867, 7.

¹⁰² *Blackburne Standard*, January 9, 1867, 2; *Preston Herald*, January 12, 1867, 9; *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, February 23, 1867, 6.

¹⁰³ *Blackburne Standard*, January 9, 1867, 2.

interested in trade and often interacted more with foreign trade partners than with the rest of Britain.¹⁰⁴ The region traded with countries on the northern European seas, and most trade was done with the Baltic coast. The North East brought in a lot of grain from the Black Sea region, and shipped out coal; much of which came from South Wales. St. Petersburg was big buyer of English coal in the late 19th century.¹⁰⁵ With much more contact with Russians than the rest of Britain, the Russians posed less of a threat to northern England. This could explain why there was such discrepancy between the northern English and London press. Like the London press however, the northern conservatives focused on peace in Europe, and the northern liberals believed the solution to the Eastern Question lay in redrawing the map of Europe.

The northern conservative press concerned themselves with peace in Europe. War always threatened to disrupt global trade, which the northern economy had grown to depend on. The northern conservative newspapers then emphasize the need for a peaceful solution because it would be the most beneficial for the region. They believed that Eastern Question should be solved by the Porte granting all concessions to Serbia. To them, this was the best way to achieve peace. The *Manchester Courier* believed the best solution, not only for the Ottomans but for the Great Powers as well, was for the Ottomans to evacuate the minor fortresses immediately. However, it may not be possible for the Ottomans to evacuate the citadel at Belgrade because it was important to protect the Muslims in the country and, in a more poetic argument, was to the Ottomans like “Gibraltar [was] to England—a monument of imperial conquest.”¹⁰⁶ However, as long as

¹⁰⁴ Graeme J. Milne, 2006. *North East England, 1850-1914: The Dynamics of a Maritime-Industrial Region* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press), 9.

¹⁰⁵ Milne, *North East England*, 12-29.

¹⁰⁶ *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, January 4, 1867, 3.

the Porte ruled Christian subjects there would be “mistrust and hostility.” If the Serbians declared war in 1867 instead of deferring it, then “the explosion” would have far worse consequences for Europe as a whole.¹⁰⁷ The *Newcastle Journal* echoed this by claiming that the Ottomans should yield to the Serbs.¹⁰⁸ In a later issue, the paper stated that they were glad the fortresses should remain up because they represented a glorious time in Ottoman history.¹⁰⁹ Even though the citadel was such an important imperial symbol, the conservative press believed peace on the European continent a greater priority than imperial prestige of the Ottomans, as a European war would disrupt global trade. The northern liberal press, on the other hand, did not care for the imperial prestige of the Ottomans and busied themselves with redrawing the map of the Eastern Mediterranean as if the Ottomans were no longer there.

The northern liberals, like some of their London counterparts, solved the Eastern Question by drawing new borders in the region. Just as with the Treaty of 1856, the liberals drew their maps without reference to what the people in the region wanted but rather what they saw as necessary. One of the prime unspoken foundations of Britain’s view of the Balkans and Greece was that these areas were innately European whether or not the people there always saw themselves clearly as European as Britain did.¹¹⁰ The *Liverpool Mercury* without stating what the map of Europe should look like, wrote that the Great Powers should hold a conference again to decide how the Eastern Mediterranean be divided amongst them.¹¹¹ The *Bury Times*, guided by the idea of

¹⁰⁷ *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, January 4, 1867, 3.

¹⁰⁸ *Newcastle Journal*, January 1, 1867, 3.

¹⁰⁹ *Newcastle Journal*, March 16, 1867, 3.

¹¹⁰ Federici, Silvia, ed. *Enduring Western Civilization: The Construction of the Concept of Western Civilization and Its “Others”* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995), xiii.

¹¹¹ *Liverpool Mercury*, January 12, 1867, 7.

progress, believed that nationalism in Europe was a sign of that progress and Serbia was a “a nation in itself.”¹¹² The liberals had no agreement amongst themselves as to how the region should look but there was consensus that the map should change. In comparison with the London liberals, the northern liberals concerned themselves with nationalism. To some of them, it showed signs of progress. Thus, Serbia could be a great nation without having to attach itself to another state. This debate as to whether or not nationalism showed signs of progress was distinct to the northern press and did not appear in the London papers. Another aspect the northern liberals do not share with the London liberals, in regards to the redrawing of the map, was that the northern papers actually included a structure of government for the new Balkan states where as the London liberals did not.

The *Newcastle Guardian*, along with dividing Austria-Hungary into several different federations, desired that Balkans have separate kingdoms of Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Macedonia. Each would have their own distinct political diet but subject to a central government in Constantinople. This way there would be no need to deal with the trouble of the Eastern Question anymore.¹¹³ Unlike the London liberal press, the northern press paid attention to the structure of the government to be set up in the Balkan states. Each Balkan state was to have its own political diet, a way for the Balkan states to have a degree of regional self-determination within a great nation as a whole. The northern press closely watched the debates in parliament over voter reform. This new reform bill, which would allow more workers to vote, would benefit the region and allow a greater degree of self-determination amongst the people, who more closely identified

¹¹² *Bury Times*, January 5, 1867, 7.

¹¹³ *Newcastle Guardian*, March 23, 1867, 6.

with their regional identity than their national identity. The idea of regional self-determination in the Balkans reflected their desire for regional self-determination in Britain.

Reform occupied a chief concern of the northern liberals as the key to progress in the country. The *Bury Times* argued England, while still being one of the foremost countries in Europe, must make sure not to lag behind the others. To do this they must make sure the working classes were no longer kept in ignorance. Reform was the only choice for the patriot because universal suffrage was progress. Without it there were still “huge remnants of feudalism.”¹¹⁴ The *Preston Chronicle* saw a flaw of the 1832 Reform Bill in the exclusion of the working classes. Finally in 1867, the flaw was being rectified.¹¹⁵ The *Ulverston Mirror*'s coverage of a liberal demonstration in Liverpool, members of the Liverpool Liberal association decided reform was necessary. They did not think that Disraeli's propositions of reform went far enough.¹¹⁶ The *Liverpool Mercury*, unlike all other papers, argued that the admission of widows or single women of property to the franchise would be desirable because these women held their own respectable place in society.¹¹⁷ Reform was the next step for Britain to take in maintaining its position at the head of the world. To the northern liberals, regional self-determination was one of the key steps in progress, and this did not only to Britain but had a universal scope. Thus, they also applied this idea of regional self-determination to the Balkan states.

¹¹⁴ *Bury Times*, January 5, 1867, 7.

¹¹⁵ *Preston Chronicle and Lancashire Advertiser*, March 16, 1867, 2.

¹¹⁶ *The Ulverston Mirror and Furness Reflector*, March 9, 1867, 2.

¹¹⁷ *Liverpool Mercury*, March 6, 1867, 5.

Unique Moral Debate in Northern England

Beyond these regional influences, the northern press also held a unique debate about Britain's moral obligation to the Ottoman Christians. Both political factions agreed that Britain did have a moral obligation towards the Christians, but their goals to help the Christians differed in the long term as revealed in the articles discussing the foreign policy of Gladstone and Lord Stanley. The policy decisions arising out of these moral prerogatives then extended to Ireland, where the northern press would use them to justify continued imperial rule.

Gladstone, to the northern liberal press, represented the ideal politician in his actions towards the Balkans. When Gladstone was elected in 1868, a year after the Ottomans evacuated the Serbian garrisons, one English historian commented at the time that England could now start repenting to the Christians under Ottoman rule. To the radical liberals, this was a moral crisis that Gladstone was prepared to solve.¹¹⁸ The *Manchester Times* wrote in a short account of the proceedings in parliament. One Mr. Griffith argued that the obvious choice for the Ottomans was to give up the fortresses, for they only cost the Porte money. The fortresses were useless and an irritation to the Serbs. Gladstone agreed with him and followed that Britain should advise the Porte to do such because Britain was morally bound to this course of action.¹¹⁹ *Preston Chronicle* discussing the same story removed Mr. Griffith altogether and only wrote in Gladstone's actions. The paper applauded Gladstone's understanding of the situation.¹²⁰ With regards to politicians and the Balkans, the *Liverpool Mercury* favored those who sympathized with the Serbians such as Gladstone and portrayed him as informed and intelligent; those

¹¹⁸ Cain, "Radicalism, Gladstone, and the Liberal Critique," 218-19.

¹¹⁹ *Manchester Times*, February 16, 1867, 4.

¹²⁰ *Preston Chronicle and Lancashire Advertiser*, February 16, 1867, 5.

such as a Mr. Laylard, who decried that they should even be discussing these affairs, was portrayed as uninformed and not worth listening to.¹²¹ As the decade progressed beyond 1867, Gladstone would stand more and more against the Ottomans because he could gain more voters if he supported the Christians. Gladstone, in the early 1870s, wrote that the Christian subjects under Muslim rule had nothing of value in life; they only had their Muslim master. They deserved to be vindicated.¹²² The northern English liberal press viewed Gladstone as the champion of universal suffrage and the champion of greater Christian autonomy in the Balkans. The northern conservative press, of course, could not praise Gladstone like the liberals but found a conservative champion in Lord Stanley.

Lord Stanley was the conservatives' Gladstone. To the northern conservative press, the foreign minister upheld the moral standard. Both the *Manchester Courier* and *Newcastle Journal* called him a man of great "humanity" as regarded his actions towards the "oppressed nations" of Greece, Italy, and Serbia.¹²³ The *Manchester Courier* in the same article wrote that Gladstone basically copied Lord Stanley when he discussed the Porte's moral obligation to its subjects.¹²⁴ Both the northern conservatives and liberals chose political heroes by which to form their views around. Lord Stanley favored continued Ottoman rule but desired that the Christians had greater freedom. The northern conservatives believed the Serbians saw the Ottoman government as corrupt; thus, peace would only arise if the Serbian had greater autonomy but still remain in the Ottoman Empire. The Serbians had cause for complaint. However, when people lived under a just ruler, like Britain, any actions against the government were seen as high treason.

¹²¹ *Liverpool Mercury*, February 16, 1867, 5.

¹²² Jelavich, "British Travellers in the Balkans," 413.

¹²³ *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, February 16, 1867, 5; *Newcastle Journal*, February 16, 1867, 3.

¹²⁴ *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, February 16, 1867, 5.

The conservatives concerned themselves with the legal actions of the Fenians. The Irish Republican Brotherhood and the Fenian Brotherhood were characterized as the “other” of democratic systems, thus, removing their political legitimacy.¹²⁵ The northern conservative press took care to document the attacks as high treason. They were not concerned with degrading the Fenians as inferior people like the liberals were. The *Preston Herald* considered the Fenian Insurrection as high treason and Fenian leaders admitted to as much, according to the paper. The leaders spread “treasonous” pamphlets headlined “Irish Republic.”¹²⁶ The Fenian Rising, as recorded by the *Manchester Courier*, was less to be understood as a rebellion against England and more as a rebellion against the government of Ireland.¹²⁷ Thus, it was dissimilar from the rising in Serbia because it was not portrayed as a fight for independence, but treason. In comparison, the liberal press believed that if a nation was capable of achieving independence, they had progressed enough to earn that independence. Serbia had progressed enough to deserve that independence, but Ireland did not have that same claim. The northern liberals viewed the Fenian Rising as a failure before it had ended.

The liberal papers degraded the Fenians militarily incompetent and a poorly organized group that posed no threat to Britain despite publishing numerous accounts of the attacks. This was also reflected in the London liberal press, which viewed the Fenians as an inferior race. Parliament discussed the Fenian Rising and agreed that it could be easily stopped according to *Shields Daily Gazette*. “All danger ended” because the Fenian troops were wandering about on foot and hungry. To the paper, “the movement [was]

¹²⁵ Martin, *Alter-Nations*, 55.

¹²⁶ *Preston Herald*, March 16, 1867, 2.

¹²⁷ *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, February 18, 1867, 3.

already a failure.”¹²⁸ The *Manchester Times*, in an account of an attack, wrote that Fenians tried to take over a castle. The newspaper could not fathom why they would attempt something so stupid because they would in no way succeed.¹²⁹ The *Liverpool Mercury* wrote, “from a military point of view there can be no doubt that the outbreak [was] insignificant.”¹³⁰ The *Preston Chronicle* believed the Fenians gave up the moment imperial troops landed in Ireland.¹³¹ The northern liberals, even while the Fenians were still fighting, decided that they could never win due to their inferiority. However, this was far from the truth. According to Amy E. Martin, the two reasons Fenianism failed was that the movement lacked popular support and that the British authorities were prepared for it.¹³² The liberal press, however, continued to understand the Irish as inferior. The Serbians were never portrayed as such. The northern liberals considered the Serbians capable of independence and the Irish not even capable of winning it. The northern conservatives did not degrade the Fenians as stupid and inferior and instead portrayed them as criminals.

The northern regional press wrote longer, more detailed articles on the Fenian Rising than the London papers. Both conservative and liberal papers detailed safety reports, individual attacks by the Fenians, and accusations against supposed Fenian leaders. The Fenian rising presented more of a challenge to the liberal than the conservative moral world-view. The same arguments that the conservatives made for safeguarding Serbian rights would not apply to the Fenians, who were, after all, part of a

¹²⁸ *Shield's Daily Gazette*, February 16, 1867, 3.

¹²⁹ *Manchester Times*, February 16, 1867, 4.

¹³⁰ *Liverpool Mercury*, February 16, 1867, 5.

¹³¹ *Preston Chronicle and Lancashire Advertiser*, February 16, 1867, 5.

¹³² Adelman, *Great Britain and the Irish question*, 74.

thriving empire. The conservatives focused on accusing the Fenians of high treason for their attacks. They did not view the Serbians as treasonous against the Ottoman Empire, in spite of their quest for independence -- the Serbians were Christians ruled by Muslims, after all. Therefore, their quest for safeguarding rights could not be the same as the Fenian effort to overthrow an Christian Empire. In contrast, for the liberals the Fenian Rising did not fit as neatly in their arguments about morality and the future. The radical liberals believed aiming for universal suffrage was paramount to a moral stance. Therefore, the liberals emphasized that the Fenians were simply unable to exercise suffrage, even if given to them. The liberals were highly dismissive of the Fenians' abilities and goals. Ultimately, the liberals simply did not believe that the Fenians were capable of achieving independence, or a meaningful political organization. In comparison to Serbia, the northern liberals believed the Serbians, with British guidance, would eventually be capable of independence where the Irish were not. This fit into to the British idea of race. The Irish were considered a lower race than the British.¹³³ Thus, the Irish would not be capable of winning independence from such as superior people, but the British also believed that Christians were racially superior to Muslims, so the Serbians had a chance for independence from the Ottomans where the Irish did not.

Conclusion

The northern English press stood out from London, as regional concerns drove their ideological stances. Northern England would hesitate before demonizing one of their biggest trade partners, Russia, unlike their London counterparts. The northern conservatives, like the London conservatives, believed that Serbia having greater

¹³³ Martin, *Alter-Nations*, 53-54.

autonomy while remaining under Ottoman sovereignty would be the best way to bring about peace. If war broke out in Europe, it threatened to disrupt trade, which the conservatives wanted to avoid at all costs. The northern liberals, like their London counterparts, decided that Serbia should be free of Ottoman control, yet they also included ideas of self-determination in the Balkans, which echoed ideas of reform and greater self-determination within England. Furthermore, the northern press also held a distinct moral debate reflected in the actions of Gladstone and Lord Stanley. This moral debate extended to the Fenians where the conservatives' moral stance transferred over better than the liberals who had to justify why self-determination would not apply to Ireland. While the northern English press followed the same policy as their ideological counterparts in London, even though their reasoning included regional interests, the midland press had a complete reversal of political orthodoxy. The conservatives advocated for total independence from the Ottomans while the liberals desired continued Ottoman rule.

The English Midlands and Polar Opposite Policies

The English midlands, unlike the northern press, were more inclined to trust centralized power and were more suspicious of independence movements. However, the midland press demonstrated polar opposite policies from the London party lines: the conservatives advocated for greater Serbian autonomy and the liberals for continued Ottoman rule in the Balkans. The conservative papers admired the reforms the Ottomans were making on behalf of their Christian subjects. They viewed the Sultan a good ruler who should give independence to his Christian subjects because they earned the right to govern themselves. Midland conservatives also believed Britain had the right to help the Ottoman Empire further in the reforms. The idea of just rulers reflected itself in the conservative's views of the Fenians. However, Britain was a just ruler over the Irish and should therefore continue ruling the colony. As regarded Serbian affairs, the liberal papers held the exact opposite view of the conservatives. They were in favor of the Ottomans keeping sovereignty over Serbia and the Balkan provinces because the Balkan people were not ready yet for self-government. Furthermore, the liberal press assigned the success of the settlement between Serbia and the Porte to the involvement and coordination of the Great Powers, but if the fear of Russian expansion was too great, then the paper assigned to the success of Britain and France alone. Thus, only advanced nations could help backwards nations progress. This argument extended to Ireland proved that the Irish needed Britain to progress and furthermore to protect them from the Fenians. To neither of the parties was the Serbian question a matter for the Serbs to

participate in. Conservatives left it to the Ottomans under British guidance, and to the liberals, it was a matter for the Great Powers to solve.

The midland conservatives believed that only just and legitimate rulers should govern people and that Britain was clearly a good and fair leader to the Irish. According to them, most of the Irish embraced the same views; though, foreign influence corrupted some of the population into believing otherwise. The *Yorkshire Post* called it the “Fenian Outbreak,” which evoked the idea that this was more of a disease than something that should have been suspected amongst a colonial population.¹³⁴ Many papers traced Fenianism to America. It was not to be seen as a movement native to Britain. The *Nottinghamshire Guardian* wrote that the Fenians were “misguided” by Americans who sought to tarnish the name and race of the Irish. The paper reported that the citizens of Dublin were firmly attached to Queen Victoria.¹³⁵ The *Leicester Journal* distinguished the Fenians and the population of Ireland as separate groups. The Fenians were a foreign invasion by American agents spurring up the population.¹³⁶ The readers of these papers would be firmly convinced that Ireland was loyal to Britain, but foreign influence corrupted some Irish into thinking Britain was oppressive. The Fenian Rising was the first Irish independence movement that sought aid from Irish immigrants in America instead of other Catholic countries like France and Spain.¹³⁷ The idea that Fenianism came from America was a frightening concept to conservatives because America stood for republicanism, which was what conservatives of the nineteenth century were working against. Conservatives were pro monarchy and anti- republicanism at their core. The

¹³⁴ *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, March 15, 1867, 3.

¹³⁵ *Nottinghamshire Guardian*, March 15, 1867, 7.

¹³⁶ *Leicester Journal*, February 22, 1867, 3.

¹³⁷ Kenna, *All the Risings*, 137.

midland press clearly understood that Britain had a moral duty in the leadership of its colony that all empires should have. In the case of the Ottoman Empire, however, in order for the Sultan to be a good ruler he should free the Christian provinces, and Britain was entitled to advise the Porte to such an end.

The conservative press in the midlands believed Britain had a moral duty to the Ottoman Empire and that Britain should advise the Ottomans to free their Christian subjects. Thus, even though they advocated for Serbian independence, they held the same conservative line of thought that respected traditional powers such as the Ottomans. Serbian independence was not a matter for the Serbians to be involved with. According to the *Aris Birmingham Gazette*, Gladstone argued that Britain was entitled to advise the Ottomans because it was the England's "moral obligation."¹³⁸ The Ottomans and Serbs were weak and susceptible to Russian influence; Britain should protect the Ottoman Empire from this influence and guide them, as was Britain's moral duty. The *Aris Birmingham Gazette* continued with England advising the Porte to concede to Serbian demands because the Christian populations of the Ottomans had won the sympathy of the Europeans and that the Ottoman state could no longer believe in the "illusion" that things were in a good state.¹³⁹ England had the moral obligation to tell the Porte that the Ottomans were no longer as powerful as they once were. The Christian provinces should then be let go. The *Yorkshire Post* agreed with the *Aris Birmingham Gazette*. The paper believed the Porte could no longer be unaware of the critical state their empire was in. It should give to its provinces as much autonomy as possible. Many of those provinces

¹³⁸ *Aris Birmingham Gazette*, February 16, 1867, 8.

¹³⁹ *Aris Birmingham Gazette*, February 16, 1867, 8.

were capable of a determining their own government. Britain advised them as such.¹⁴⁰

The conservatives did not believe the Ottomans were oppressive rulers, but rather they no longer needed to rule over their Christian subjects. This was not only because the Ottoman government was losing power, but because the Ottomans, in the eyes of the British, had excellent notions of reform and that the freedom of the Christian provinces was the next logical step in reform. The conservatives, of course, believed Britain had a right to advise the Ottomans in these reforms as well.

The conservatives believed the Ottomans were great reformers and very fair to their Christian populations. The conservatives were Orientalist, and these reforms were seen as the Ottomans transitioning from an Asiatic power to a European one. The Ottoman Empire and therefore the Balkans needed to be purged of their Asiatic traits in order for this to happen. This was one argument behind the conservatives believing the Ottomans should evacuate the fortresses because it was the next step in helping their Christian population who were more European therefore, more capable of independence. Russia, to the *Yorkshire Post*, would like to portray the Ottomans as stubborn and unwilling to reform despite how the reforms looked on paper. However, due to the Porte evacuating the Serbian fortresses, the *Yorkshire Post* believed that the Ottomans were more than capable of following through with their reforms.¹⁴¹ An analysis of a speech given by Gladstone in Parliament printed by the *Lincolnshire Chronicle* argued that the Ottomans were far from being oppressive rulers. Gladstone praised the Porte for its fairness to all religions with regards to the reforms.¹⁴² This was the exact opposite of

¹⁴⁰ *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, February 16, 1867, 5.

¹⁴¹ *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, March 16, 1867, 10.

¹⁴² *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, February 22, 1867, 7.

what Gladstone later thought and preached when he united the liberal party around the massacre of Christians by Muslims in Bulgaria a decade later. However, in 1867, this version of Gladstone looked to the Ottoman Empire as a fair ruler who reasonably gave concessions to its Christians. Similar to how the conservative press believed Britain had the right to advise the Ottomans in their reforms, the liberals viewed the Ottomans as backwards who were in need of Britain to keep them from disintegrating. In both cases, Britain's involvement was necessary in the Ottoman Empire. The liberal press in the midlands, however, did not believe that the reforms should go as far as independence. To them, the Balkans were not ready for independence.

The midland liberals believed in the idea of a slow progress, and the independence of the Balkan nations was coming too fast for them. The Balkan provinces would be free and the Ottomans would disintegrate, but the process should be slow and not exacerbated by Europe. If Western Europe did become involved, then it should be to slow down the process. The *Leeds Mercury* believed that the Great Powers were moving too fast with regards to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in Europe. Although the question of the Serbian garrisons was settled, the emerging countries were not yet ready for independence according to the paper.¹⁴³ The paper also feared Serbia and Montenegro combining into a large Serbian kingdom, which would then absorb the provinces of Bulgaria and Bosnia-Herzegovina. This could not happen according to the paper because Bosnia-Herzegovina either had to be an Austrian or an Ottoman province.¹⁴⁴ The British considered the inhabitants of the Balkans to be barbarians until Western civilization arrived. However, even after it did "arrive" the British still viewed the people as faking

¹⁴³ *Leeds Mercury*, March 19, 1867, 8.

¹⁴⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, March 22, 1867, 4.

Western habits.¹⁴⁵ Even if the people emulated Western culture perfectly and caught up to Britain in terms of progress, they would still be considered backwards because they held the stigma of barbaric peasants. The *Birmingham Journal* connected the idea of Serbian independence to the preservation of peace and the slow progression of civilization. The Ottoman Empire should fall, but quietly and in the distant future when no European power would fight over the Ottoman's inheritance. If subjects revolted against legitimate authority, then the peace of Europe would be at stake.¹⁴⁶ Unlike the conservatives, the liberals believed that the Ottomans were backwards, but the Serbs were still more backwards than the Ottomans. This view, while still rooted in progress, was different from the London liberals who believed that if a Slavdom were to arise, then the Balkan people would be capable of ruling themselves and progress to the next stages in civilization. To the midland liberals, however, Britain would help the Ottomans progress, and the Ottomans would then be able to help the Serbs progress with Britain's assistance. Therefore, when the Porte and Serbia reached a settlement, the liberal press not only attributed the peaceful outcome to the intervention of Europe but gave all the credit of the settlement to the Great Powers.

When the Porte agreed to evacuate the Serbian fortresses, this was not to be perceived as an agreement between Serbia and the Ottomans, but rather as an agreement between the Great Powers who then dictated how the question of the garrisons should be solved. The *Leeds Mercury* reported that Russia, France and Britain had formed an alliance and "demand[ed]" the Porte to concede to Serbia.¹⁴⁷ Unlike the majority of the

¹⁴⁵ Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania*, 116.

¹⁴⁶ *Birmingham Journal*, March 16, 1867, 5.

¹⁴⁷ *Leeds Mercury*, March 5, 1867, 5.

papers who reported that the Great Powers advised the Porte separately, so as to make sure the Sultan did not feel as though he was being bombarded, the *Leeds Mercury* portrayed it as an official alliance not to advise but to *demand* the Porte to act. The paper later reported the response of Ali Pasha, the Ottoman foreign minister, to the European demands. He was reported to have said that he could see he would receive no support from Europe with regards the Serbian fortresses and that was his deciding factor in consenting to Serbia.¹⁴⁸ It was as though Serbia and the Ottomans had no say in the matter. Forty years later this view persisted in the British press. H.H. Monro (Saki), a reporter for the *Morning Post* at the turn of the twentieth century, believed that the Macedonians and Albanians needed the Great Powers to gain freedom. In his eyes, even the elites of the society were primitive and peasant-like.¹⁴⁹ This trend continued through the rest of the liberal press with one key difference: the role of Russia. If papers feared the power of Russia, then the settlement would be contributed to just France and Britain working as a team.

The liberal press that disliked Russian involvement in the Balkans did not include Russia as part of the group that brought about the settlement. The disagreement and final resolution between the Porte and Serbia was a Western European matter only. The *Birmingham Journal* showed that the European alliances could be seen as a four person card game with two sets of partners: Russia and the Christian population against the West and the Ottoman Empire. Both alliances were equally strong, but while Russia made its case based on the belief that Christians should not be ruled by pagans, the West, and therefore England, made its case on their respect for sovereign rulers. The liberals

¹⁴⁸ *Leeds Mercury*, March 19, 1867, 6.

¹⁴⁹ Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania*, 118.

believed because Russia had such a strong influence on the Serbs, it was further proof that the Serbs were not yet capable of independence. According to the paper Britain and France had policy on their side. If subjects revolted against legitimate authority, then the peace of Europe would be at stake.¹⁵⁰ While liberals in other regions believed that Muslims could not rule Christians, the midland liberals saw that as a weak argument. The midland press was clearly more concerned with the settlement between the two. Similarly, the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* viewed Europe as likely work together to prevent war arising from both Greece and Serbia. However, if Russia intervened militarily, then Britain and France would also intervene.¹⁵¹ The paper would later admit that all the Western powers worked together to create the settlement between Serbia and the Porte.¹⁵² The matter was clearly not an Ottoman or Serbian concern but a Western European one. Here more advanced nations could help bring about progress those that were backwards. Similarly, Britain's rule over Ireland helped the population, but the Fenians activities, which were not for independence, disturbed the peace in Ireland demonstrating that the country was still backwards and in need of British guidance.

Midland liberals did not want Serbian independence and acknowledged that Serbians were not ready for independence, but when encountering the Fenian Rising, the liberal press did not acknowledge that it was an independence movement. Instead, the Fenians were a group separate from the population of Ireland who did not respect the authority of Britain and showed this through acts of vandalism. The *Bradford Observer*

¹⁵⁰ *Birmingham Journal*, March 16, 1867, 5.

¹⁵¹ *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, January 11, 1867, 4.

¹⁵² *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, March 22, 1867, 4.

claimed that the Fenians were “disturbers,” and in no way did the population of Ireland or the Catholic Church approve of the movement.¹⁵³ The population of Ireland not only was not ready for independence but did not even want or acknowledge it. The Fenian Rising was not a call for independence but a group of “disturbers.” In an article printed in the *Leeds Mercury*, the Fenians were described like vandals. They cut lines and attacked government and military stations for no purpose.¹⁵⁴ The idea that the Fenians wanted independence never occurred in this article. The Fenian acts were further proof that Ireland needed Britain’s guidance and protection. The midland liberals looked to central authority to bring about progress. The British’s authority over the Irish would elevate the backwards population, and with the West’s and primarily Britain’s assistance both the Ottomans and the Serbians would become less backwards.

Conclusion

While both the conservatives and the liberals had two different approaches to the Serbian question, both derived their ideas from their trust in centralized power to advance their different ideologies. To the conservatives, the Ottomans were on their way to becoming a European power and should grant the Serbs more autonomy so they could become more European as well. This was to happen under British guidance, of course. Similar to how the conservatives viewed the Ottomans as just rulers over the Serbs, they viewed the British as just rulers over the Irish, so the Irish could not call for independence. The liberals believed the Serbians to be backwards for independence. They needed the guidance of a central authority like the Ottomans under Western or British guidance. That way both the Ottomans and the Serbs would progress. Britain would also

¹⁵³ *Bradford Observer*, February 21, 1867, 3.

¹⁵⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, February 16, 1867, 5.

help the Irish progress. Thus, central authority was useful to both the liberal and conservative ideologies in the English midlands. While here Serbia presented a useful topic for discussions of regional issues, the southern English press reported little on foreign affairs because they did not ignite discussions of political ideology in the region.

Serbian Independence was of Little Interest to the Southern English Press

The southern newspapers showed a trend of valuing local affairs over foreign and colonial affairs. Not only were there far fewer and shorter articles on Serbia and the Continent, but also shorter articles on the Fenians. Thus, Serbia, unlike in the rest of England, was not an arena for the two political ideologies to debate. When reporting on national and foreign affairs, the southern papers tended to follow party lines in London with occasional policy over laps with northern England when reporting on the Fenians. The southern papers that did discuss Serbia and the Ottomans presented a blurring of political lines. Liberal papers thought along the same lines as the liberals in London and the north did by creating a Slavdom, but also included London conservative policy with regards to the central role of the balance of power. The southern conservatives, for the most part followed London party lines, but a few valued Christianity more than protecting the Ottomans which presented a traditionally liberal standpoint.

Many southern papers had low interest in foreign affairs. Foreign affairs articles were often only a few sentences in length and merely trying to report events without giving any meaning to them. Southern liberal papers, such as the *Bristol Daily Post*, only printed short, event-driven articles with regards to the Ottoman garrisons in Serbia. *Windsor and Eton Express* had four short articles on the events in Serbia and two articles on the Fenians in the same editions. *Hampshire Telegraph* had two articles on Serbian and Ottoman affairs. However, in a county whose main business was agriculture, the longer and more prevalent articles focused on local agriculture, as it was people's livelihood. Corn and produce markets were just as important as the growing number of

railways being built in the region.¹⁵⁵ Southern conservative papers likewise had low interest in the Ottoman Empire and Serbia. The *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal* reported three short articles on Serbian and Ottoman affairs. The *Herts Guardian* reported four. The *Bristol Times and Mirror* printed several articles on Serbia and the Ottomans, but they were not longer than two or three sentences, and articles were often reprinted two or three times in later issues. Even articles on the Fenians were shorter than in the other regions.

The majority of the Fenian articles that were printed, though, shared the same perspective as the London and northern newspapers. Southern conservatives reported what the Fenians were doing was illegal. The *Kentish Gazette* believed the Fenians had no cause for complaint because the Irish lived as good of lives as the British.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, the entire Fenian movement was illegal because the charges against Britain were false. This claim was similar to the argument made by the Liberal *Windsor and Eton Express* towards Serbian independence because it believed the Serbian's claims were unfounded.¹⁵⁷ This showed the conservative undertone of the liberal papers towards foreign affairs, as the *Windsor and Eton Express* desired a legal independence movement in the Balkans, which was an extension of northern conservative thought. However, to the *Windsor and Eton Express*, the Fenians were a group comprised of poor tinkers, tailors, and shop boys. They pose no threat against the "gallant" British and Scottish army.¹⁵⁸ Thus demonstrating a position similar to northern and London liberals who desired to belittle the Fenians caring little about whether or not their actions were illegal or not.

¹⁵⁵ *Bristol Daily Post*, April 25, 1867, 4.

¹⁵⁶ *Kentish Gazette*, March 19, 1867, 2.

¹⁵⁷ *Windsor and Eton Express*, February 15, 1867, 10.

¹⁵⁸ *Windsor and Eton Express*, March 16, 1867, 2.

Southern liberal newspapers that reported their stance on foreign affairs often demonstrated this blend of conservative and liberal thought, especially towards foreign policy.

The liberal papers reporting demonstrated a central role of the balance of power in determining their stance on Serbian independence. They demonstrated this conservative thought mixed with liberal outlooks. The *Norwich Mercury* was a good example of this. The *Norwich Mercury* believed the “enfeebled” Ottoman Empire would grow stronger if it cut itself off from its European provinces. However, the Slavic provinces must be united in order to keep Russia from gaining control of the region. In a unique blend of liberal and conservative thought, the paper wrote, “Until the formation of the Utopian Kingdom, the equilibrium of Europe demands that Servia shall still be nominally ruled from Constantinople.”¹⁵⁹ This passage contained the liberal notion of amalgamation of the Balkan provinces into one and the conservative notion of the essential balance of power in Europe. The independence of those provinces, however, they noted should be a future affair.¹⁶⁰ This idea of a future country reflected the liberal notion of progress. The countries were not ready for self-rule, but that was not why the Ottomans should still rule over them. The paper made it clear that the Ottomans should still rule for the preservation of the balance of power in Europe. This was the same argument used by the majority of the southern conservative press.

Unlike northern newspapers, a fear of Russian expansion was common in both southern liberal and conservative papers, as it threatened the balance of power in Europe. This reflected the London press’ stance towards Russia. The *Exeter and Plymouth*

¹⁵⁹ *Norwich Mercury*, January 19, 1867, 4.

¹⁶⁰ *Norwich Mercury*, January 19, 1867, 4.

Gazette wrote that Russia coveted the Ottoman territory for more than just the territory but also control of the holy sights and Constantinople.¹⁶¹ The *Norwich Mercury* also feared the Russians moving into the Danube provinces and destroying the Ottoman Empire, as the Russian Empire's only goal was expansion and to cut the British off from India. The Russian Empire was described as "overgrown" and a threat to British interests. The Serbian independence movement was the Trojan horse carrying the Russians into the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the paper threatened that if the Russians moved into the Balkans against the Ottomans, they would be "met by the whole power of the West."¹⁶² Both papers believed the primary threat to British colonial interests and Britain's spheres of influence in the Eastern Mediterranean was Russian expansion. Both also value the balance of power by keeping the Russian Empire in check. The *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* was also following the southern conservative belief that the Ottoman Empire needed to be preserved.

The majority of conservatives reporting desired the preservation of the Ottoman Empire. Like London conservatives, the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* printed that the Ottoman Empire should do what the Christians desired other wise it would increase the amount of rebellions in the Empire leading to a quicker demise.¹⁶³ The paper desired the preservation of the Ottoman Empire. The *Essex Standard* reported a similar story, but went further than the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* by connecting the preservation of the Ottomans with the balance of power in Europe. The *Essex Standard* declared that England would not breach the treaty of 1856 unlike Russia and France who wanted to cut

¹⁶¹ *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, March 15, 1867, 5.

¹⁶² *Norwich Mercury*, March 16, 1867, 5.

¹⁶³ *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, February 22, 1867, 10.

up the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶⁴ These southern Conservatives portrayed England as on the side of balance of power in Europe. However, there were two notable exceptions to this line of thinking.

There were still some southern conservatives who supported independence. The *Gloucester Journal* and the *Oxford Journal* formed their arguments around the idea that the Ottoman Empire was clearly abusing their Christian subjects and not around the balance of power in Europe. The *Gloucester Journal* presented the Ottoman officials as “oppressive” and wrote that the Christians should be free. The circumstances *required* the Sultan to make concessions to Serbia according to the paper.¹⁶⁵ Recounting a parliament session, the *Oxford Journal* said that Mr. Gregory in the House of Commons claimed the Ottomans were “tyrannical and corrupt” in their administration and reprimanded Lord Stanley for his policy of non-intervention.¹⁶⁶ This report demonstrated two things about the paper. First, the paper was on the side of Serbian independence based on Ottoman offenses. Second, the paper demonstrated that it did not hold a strict Conservative line. Otherwise, the paper would have sided with Lord Stanley and not Mr. Gregory.

Conclusion

The southern English press was dominated by local concerns for agriculture. Thus, Serbia was not a useful subject to discuss differences in political ideology as it was in the other regions, like northern England who used it to discuss greater regional participation in central governments or support for centralized government like it was in the midlands. Where foreign and national affairs were discussed, the southern English

¹⁶⁴ *Essex Standard*, March 15, 1867, 4.

¹⁶⁵ *Gloucester Journal*, February 23, 1867, 9.

¹⁶⁶ *Oxford Journal*, February 23, 1867, 6.

press tended to follow London party lines with occasional political blending between liberal and conservative orthodoxy. The liberals reported on a Slavdom but also on the essential nature of the balance of power. The majority of the conservatives followed London party lines except for a few who were more concerned with the treatment of Christians by the Ottomans. However, most of the articles were short and event driven, likely sourcing the material from the press in London. In comparison with the press in the countries outside of England, Serbia once again became an object for British subjects to discuss political ideologies and national issues. In Scotland, Serbia reflected the country's concerns about religion and race.

The Deterministic Scottish Press

The Scottish press agreed that Serbian independence should be the outcome of the Eastern Question. The Scottish conservatives supported independence not from sympathy to the Serbs or their cause, but because their orientalist perspective on the situation suggested it was a foregone conclusion. To the Scottish conservatives, the Fenian Uprising and the Serbian quest for independence were efforts of “idle races” who could only achieve victory or defeat if given to them by bigger world powers. Unlike the conservatives, the Scottish liberal press supported Serbian independence based on the Serbs’ Christianity, and the perception of the Islamic Ottoman Empires’ oppression of Christians. This represents a significant departure from Liberal positions at the time, as shared Christianity was more often mobilized by the conservative press elsewhere.

For both conservatives and liberals in Scotland, “levels of civilization could be assessed in relation to the socially dominant modes of theology, ascribed racial characteristics, technological superiority, political institutions, the structure of family life and gender relations, economic success, individual and intellectual moral capacity, or (as typically was the case) some combination of these.”¹⁶⁷ The conservatives showed little interest in elucidating their approach to levels of civilization, which appeared self-explanatory; for the liberals some references to religion were the extent of their explanation. Scottish orientalism was separate from English orientalism in that it did not have an imperial character. Scottish orientalists were interested in studying “oriental” cultures, but when they did not have enough evidence to base a theory on, some cultures

¹⁶⁷ Bell, “Visions of Victorian Global Order,” 10.

were placed within the universal frameworks the Scottish already used.¹⁶⁸ To the conservatives, the Serbs simply fit the mold created for the Irish—shiftless, weak peoples whose destiny would be decided by others. To the Liberals, the Serbs fit both their narrative of Oriental oppression, and their increasing interest in appealing to the rural population, who tended to feel strongly about religion. The religious inferiority of the Serbs was of lesser degree than that of the Islamic Ottomans. Religious hierarchies fit well into their view of civilization: the British (including the Scottish) were the superior of all races because they were Protestant, followed by Roman Catholics, other Christians, and eventually, other religions. The Scottish liberals' argument was that Muslims could not rule Christians because they were innately inferior to the Christians and cruel towards them. This argument was reflected in the Fenian Uprising, in which the liberals viewed the Catholic Fenians as inferior people with evil intentions. The conservative press was less interested in justifying their position on the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, but simply drew on the universal framework of imperial civilization to see it as doomed.

The Scottish conservative press took a near deterministic mindset towards Serbian freedom. They firmly believed that it was inevitable. The *Aberdeen Press and Journal* disliked the Serbians. The Serbians had no desire to get concessions from the Ottomans and freedom for themselves. According to the Scottish, the Serbians actually desired that other European countries apply to the Ottomans on their behalf and would be happy with whatever outcome. The paper interpreted this view from information they received which stated that the Porte only made concessions to Serbia because of Austrian intervention.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Michael Fry, “‘The Key to Their Hearts’: Scottish Orientalism.” in *Scotland and the Nineteenth Century World*, ed. Gerard Carruthers, David Goldie, and Alastair Renfrew (New York: Rodopi, 2012), 137-38.

¹⁶⁹ *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, February 16, 1867, 8. Only two conservative newspapers reported on Serbian independence unlike the dozens of liberal newspapers that did.

Scottish conservatives viewed that traditional European powers had power over undeveloped people like Serbians. Thus Serbians, in an orientalist view, depended on the Great Powers for freedom. It was because of this European intervention that the conservatives believed Serbian independence would come about. While the Russians should not be trusted, the paper reported that Britain, France, and Russia all came to an agreement that the Christians should be given “*quasi* independence.” The Sultan would likely not agree to these terms until the Ottomans faced further division of their empire, but the paper reported that event was not far off.¹⁷⁰ As the conservatives reported after the Great Powers involvement, they read back onto the events what had happened using their framework rather than using their framework to predict the future. Serbian independence would happen, even though the Scottish conservatives did not approve of the method through which Serbia got it. However, not all independence movements were given the same conclusion.

Scottish conservatives had little interest in who the Serbs were, or their historical context, but fit the narrative of Serbian independence in the framework of the Fenian struggle. This was part of the reason they felt little interest in explaining just why the Serbs were inferior people, as the comparison would have seemed self-explanatory, considering the religious rankings of cultures. The Scottish conservatives embraced a view prominent in the rest of Britain on the characteristics of the Irish: they were lazy and delusional, traits emblematic of the Roman Catholic faith.¹⁷¹ But Serbs would be inevitably successful because the powers were Christian, and the Serbs were under an even weaker, Islamic empire. Clearly, the context of the Fenian uprising was so different,

¹⁷⁰ *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, March 13, 1867, 8.

¹⁷¹ John Wolfe, *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland, 1843-1945* (London: Routledge, 1994), 95.

as to render it doomed. The *Montrose Standard* wrote, “Everyone knew when the Fenians rose they would be defeated.”¹⁷² Likewise the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* viewed the Fenians as “poor fellows” who had been duped into hoping where there was no hope. The paper further called the men “idle” and their actions “desperate.” The article had a tone of false sympathy for the Fenians, in which it viewed them as victims but victims of their own delusional hopes for rebellion not independence.¹⁷³ This view of lazy and delusional Irish was prominent in the rest of Britain, which viewed those traits the racial characteristics of Roman Catholics.¹⁷⁴ The Scottish conservatives, like the Welsh conservatives, did not support Irish independence. However, the Scottish conservatives also held the belief that both movements for independence had inevitable outcomes. The Irish and the Serbians were lazy, and victory or defeat could only be given to them by powerful countries. The liberal Scottish press did not hold this view. To them, the only thing that was inevitable in the Eastern Question was that if the Ottomans continued to rule the Christians, then the Christians would inevitably be oppressed.

To the liberal Scottish view of the hierarchy of civilization, clearly, a Muslim state could not be trusted to overcome their inherent despotism. The liberal Scottish press argued that Serbia should be free from Ottoman rule on the grounds that the Ottomans failed in bringing about the reforms they promised their Christian subjects and were constantly oppressing their Christian population. Both the Scottish and the English viewed Protestantism as the height of civilization and the religion of the most advanced

¹⁷² *Montrose Standard*, March 29, 1867, 2.

¹⁷³ *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, March 13, 1867, 8.

¹⁷⁴ Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain*, 95.

racism.¹⁷⁵ Muslims were lower than all Christians, and the Scottish liberal press used this view of race to translate into the failure of Ottoman reform. The defeat of Russia in the Crimean War by Britain, France, and the Ottomans firmly established the Ottomans as a European power. Liberals in Europe believed the reforms they advocated were a necessary part of the modern state, and as an official power, the Ottomans would have to carry them out.¹⁷⁶ The Scottish press believed the Ottomans failed in this regard. The *Dundee Advertiser* saw the Ottomans writing down new reforms but reported that just like all the other reforms the Ottomans had made in the past, these new ones would have no effect. The Ottomans would continue to oppress their Christian subjects.¹⁷⁷

The *John O’Groat Journal* believed the failures in reform stemmed from the Ottomans’ religion of Islam. No Christian people could be treated equal because the Quran forbid it, and the Ottomans lived by the law of the Quran, according to the paper.¹⁷⁸ Muslims relied on religious law just like Roman Catholics relied on worship of the pope rather than reason. Reason was a staple of Protestant religions to the Scottish. If the Ottomans could not use reason, they would keep the Serbians oppressed by backwards laws coming from religious law. The Serbians were under a form of despotism. The *John O’Groat Journal* furthered its argument for Serbian independence by reporting massacres of Christians within the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Government frustrated by its losses in territory now focused on the massacre “in cold blood of non-combatant Christians.” Serbia was “weary of the Turkish supremacy” and

¹⁷⁵ Wolfe, *God and Greater Britain*, 15.

¹⁷⁶ Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania*, 28.

¹⁷⁷ *Dundee Advertiser*, February 20, 1867, 3.

¹⁷⁸ *John O’Groat Journal*, March 14, 1867, 2.

desired reprieve from “Mahommedan bondage.”¹⁷⁹ The Liberal party in Britain, concerned about the progress of civilizations, viewed the oppression of the Christian, Slavic people by the barbaric, Muslim Turks as keeping the Slavs from progressing.¹⁸⁰ The Scottish liberals argument was less about who the Serbs were and more about their belief that an Islamic empire cannot be a European power. The Serbs just happened to be the “more European” of the two, but even the Serbs were not quite European.

Of course, the Scottish had next to no knowledge on Islam, but they also had skewed knowledge of the ethnic violence in the Balkans. One of the hardest things to gage was the amount of ethnic violence occurring in the Balkan provinces. There were some reports of extreme violence, but many times, reports were falsified. The courts of the Balkans, which were notoriously inefficient and corrupt, could not accurately reflect the violence committed in between the various ethnic groups.¹⁸¹ The West viewed the Balkans as a particularly violent region, perpetually engulfed in war.¹⁸² However, the Scottish liberals viewed this nature as distinctly Ottoman in character. The European Serbs, when removed from Ottoman influence, would be peaceful people. The liberals’ argument was based on a false conception of inherent cruelty in Muslim people and that their Islamic faith made them a more barbaric race. Therefore, they concluded Muslims could not rule Christians.

Serbian independence was approved of because the Serbians were a more advanced race than Muslims, from the point of view of Scottish liberals, but the Irish could not be independent because they were a less advanced race than the British. The

¹⁷⁹ *John O’Groat Journal*, March 14, 1867, 2.

¹⁸⁰ Whitehead, “Reading Beside the Lines,” 882-83.

¹⁸¹ Jelavich, “British Travellers in the Balkans,” 405.

¹⁸² Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 5.

Irish, just like the Serbs, were European just not advanced enough to be fully European. The Irish needed to achieve certain societal reforms before the British would perceive them as an advanced race. The British were the most advanced race in their hierarchy because they were Protestant. The Serbians as Orthodox Christians would be below the British but above the Ottomans. The Ottomans remained at the bottom because of their Islamic faith. Since the Serbians could not be ruled imperially, Orthodox Christianity was seen as higher than both Islam and Roman Catholicism. The Roman Catholics in Ireland made it necessary for British rule.

The Scottish press did not Irish independence on the grounds that the Fenians were racially inferior as they were Roman Catholic and not Protestant. The *Dundee Advertiser* called the Fenians “poor misguided ‘brothers’” clearly poking fun at the Fenians who called themselves a brotherhood.¹⁸³ It was a movement that could not be taken seriously because of the people involved in it. The *John O’Groat Journal* argued the Fenians should not even be dignified with the name of “insurgents” but should be considered “rioters.” They had committed crimes of robbery and murder beyond that of rebellion.¹⁸⁴ The *Glasgow Evening Citizen* reported several times of the “dreadful work” the Fenians were doing.¹⁸⁵ The Fenian Rising in the eyes of the *John O’Groat Journal* and *Glasgow Evening Citizen* could not even be considered an independence movement because the motives of the Fenians were so evil. To the Scottish liberal press, Fenians needed to be stopped from gaining control of Ireland or they would be an oppressive government just like the Ottomans.

¹⁸³ *Dundee Advertiser*, February 16, 1867, 2.

¹⁸⁴ *John O’Groat Journal*, February 21, 1867, 2.

¹⁸⁵ *Glasgow Evening Citizen*, February 18, 1867, 2.

Even though Scotland was ruled by Britain like Ireland, the Scottish press did not see a parallel. They shared a religious emphasis on Protestantism, which meant that the racial divergence did not appear to Scottish readers. Scottish nationalism had yet to develop, and in Scotland at this time, the people were in the process of Anglicization. Beginning in the mid 18th century, Scots were primarily concerned with becoming more English. They even redesigned their school system to be modeled after the English one. This was because they saw being English as a means of advancement in society and modernizing Scotland. There was a dose of patriotism running under this line of thought.¹⁸⁶ The origins of Scottish nationalism developed in response to the Anglicization, but would only begin to appear in the 1890s.¹⁸⁷ If there was Scottish nationalism, it existed in the religious sphere only. Still anti-Catholicism and participation in the Crimean War within British forces for religious reasons demonstrated that Scotland had religious forces that promoted unity rather than disunity with England.¹⁸⁸ This accounted for the Scottish press' approval of English rule over them and over Ireland.

Conclusion

Religion and race played a large role in the Scottish press' worldview. Both the conservative and liberal press used their orientalist frameworks to understand the situation in the Balkans. The conservatives approached the Balkans as backwards place that needed the European powers to grant it independence from the Ottomans. Race also contributed to the conservatives' view that the Irish Catholics were similarly backwards and in no way capable of gaining independence from Britain unless Britain granted it.

¹⁸⁶ H. J. Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 36-42.

¹⁸⁷ Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism*, 36-42.

¹⁸⁸ Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain*, 102-103.

The Scottish liberal press emphasized the role religion played in their concept of race. Protestants such as the Scottish and the English were the most advanced race in the world and therefore had the right to rule the lesser races such as the Irish Catholics. The belief that Anglicization would lead to social mobility and a shared anti-Catholicism with England promoted union between the Scottish and the British Empire rather than supporting nationalism. It also connects to the trend amongst liberals in the other regions to racially profile the Irish. Religion also gave the Scottish their argument that Serbia should be free from Ottoman rule. Serbians were Christians, and while not Protestants, were still higher up on Scotland's racial hierarchy than Muslims. The liberals thought that Muslims were an innately violent race because of their faith, and Muslims could not rule Christians. A lesser race could not rule a higher race. Similar to the orientalist outlook of the Scottish conservatives, Welsh conservatives also displayed a similar orientalism in their praise of empire. However, the Welsh liberals did not share similar sentiments about the "benefits" of empire.

Welsh Press and Imperialism

Both Welsh conservatives and Welsh liberals were concerned with peace and stability, but they had two different means of achieving it. The Welsh conservatives viewed imperialism as a force for good that pacified the periphery. This shows the conservatives had adopted the identity of part of the metropole in the British Empire. The people of the Balkans and the Irish needed to remain under the control of their respective empires. The liberals, however, preferred to emphasize their national identity, and while careful when discussing the British Empire, sympathized with the Fenians and criticized other empires, such as the Ottomans, as being violent towards their subjects. To them, imperialism did not bring peace. Nationalism brought peace. Still, the Welsh liberals did not place much hope in small nations prevailing over the strength of empires. Imperialism was an evil that they would have to exist under.

The Welsh conservatives had little interest in the removal of Ottoman troops from Serbia, but they showed a great interest in imperialism overall. Imperialism to them was able to establish peace and stability in the periphery. During the nineteenth century, while enjoying some success in nationalism with regards to their language, education, and literature, the Welsh began to adopt the view that they were in the metropole of the worldwide British Empire.¹⁸⁹ They too took part in Britain's civilizing mission. The conservatives pulled their articles from the press in London, as can be seen by the similar wording between Welsh and London newspapers. Sometimes the papers would reprint

¹⁸⁹ Aled Jones and Bill Jones, "The Welsh World and the British Empire, c. 1851-1939: An Exploration," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 31 no. 2, (2003) doi: 10.1080/03086530310001705606, 57.

entire articles.¹⁹⁰ The papers reflected support for their own imperial ruler like they supported imperialists in the rest of Europe. The *Monmouthshire Beacon* printed several articles relating to imperialism on the continent. The paper showed strong support for imperialism, including Russian imperialism. The paper believed the Russian occupation of the Caucasus led to the pacification along Europe's border. With regards to Ottoman imperialism, the *Monmouthshire Beacon* reported the independence movement of the Bulgarians to be false, as the propaganda for the movement was being spread from Bucharest.¹⁹¹ This showed the paper was in favor of Ottoman imperial rule as well. However, the conservatives had little interest in Serbian and Ottoman affairs.

With regards to Serbian affairs, the Welsh conservative press cared little about it. In fact, the *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* wrote, "There was no business of importance before the house. Lord Derby made a statement on the Servian [sic] question and said that a most satisfactory arrangement had been effected between Servia [sic] and the Porte."¹⁹² The paper called the matter unimportant. However, British imperialism had center stage for many of these articles as the Fenian Uprising was happening just across the sea from the Welsh coast.

The Welsh conservative press held that Britain's job in Ireland was to regain control from the Fenians. They believed the Fenians to be a serious threat unlike the English liberals who undermined the Fenians. The *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* called the Fenians "venomous." The newspaper said the British should have killed the movement earlier that year, and because the British failed to, the Fenians had come

¹⁹⁰ *Monmouthshire Beacon*, March 9, 1867, 7; *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*, March 8, 1867, 3. The Welsh press produced limited newspapers with the clear liberal-conservative line that were in English, so I was limited by the language aspect. Here I could only analyze four newspapers.

¹⁹¹ *Monmouthshire Beacon*, January 25, 1867, 7.

¹⁹² *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*, March 22, 1867, 8.

back.¹⁹³ The *Monmouthshire Beacon* supported the occupation of the British army in Ireland. The military naturally needed to be sent in to protect the police who were being massacred. The newspaper reported that the police stations in Ireland were being attacked by large Fenian groups. Up to six hundred Fenians at a time came against one station in Adair.¹⁹⁴ The Welsh conservatives clearly supported British imperialism in Ireland just like they supported the other imperialists in Europe. The Welsh liberals, on the other hand, did not support imperialism whether it was in Ireland or in the rest of Europe.

The Fenians received sympathy from the Welsh liberal press. Unlike the conservatives, imperialism was looked at as an evil in society in the liberal Welsh press, but they were careful when approaching British imperialism. The Welsh had a diversity of experiences with empire. Some were eager to take part in it like the conservatives, but others like the liberals and even some who went abroad like missionaries and soldiers, did not like the dominance of the British, and preferred to emphasize their Welsh identity over their British identity. Even as a part of the metropole, nationalism stood out in the Welsh press.¹⁹⁵ The newspapers liked what the Fenians were trying to do, but also believed the Fenians would fail because the British were too strong. Unlike the rest of Britain, the Welsh liberals believed the Fenians to be a truly democratic group. They had political legitimacy.¹⁹⁶ The *Wrexham Advertiser* admired the Fenians in Ireland. The paper, instead of referring to it as an insurrection, called it a “brotherhood.” Even with the fall of one of their leaders, the Fenians still had the courage to keep fighting as hope

¹⁹³ *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*, March 15, 1867, 5.

¹⁹⁴ *Monmouthshire Beacon*, March 9, 1867, 5.

¹⁹⁵ Jones, “The Welsh World and the British Empire,” 64.

¹⁹⁶ Martin, *Alter-Nations*, 55.

waned.¹⁹⁷ The movement was just too weak to stand up to England. The Welsh papers never printed anything pointing to their own desire for independence, but they looked upon the Fenian movement in Ireland as one that expressed their desire yet also expressed their belief that the British army was too strong to defeat. The British army would treat the Fenians cruelly, like a typical imperial army according to the papers.¹⁹⁸ The liberal press supported the start of national armies like the Fenians or the Serbian army, but also liked the idea of avoiding war where they could.

At the beginning of the year, the Welsh liberal press hoped for peaceful solutions to all matters. The *Monmouthshire Merlin* hoped for a peaceful year throughout all of Europe, especially as regarded the Eastern Question.¹⁹⁹ The *Wrexham Advertiser* would also print articles that argued for quick solutions on international matters that would bring about peace or avoid war.²⁰⁰ However, the *Wrexham Advertiser* would quickly pick up on the idea that Prince Michael was amassing an army to fight of the imperial Ottomans. Of course, not believing war to be the main purpose of the army quickly followed by printing a speech of the Serbian prince that claimed the army's primary use during peacetime would be to keep order.²⁰¹ The liberals saw nationalism as the harbinger of peace. After it was settled that the Great Powers would still recognize the sovereignty of the Ottomans over the Serbians, liberal's interest in the matter waned.²⁰² The liberals seemed to understand that the movement would not give total independence to the Serbians and could not be used as encouragement for their desire for independence.

¹⁹⁷ *Wrexham Advertiser*, January 26, 1867, 8.

¹⁹⁸ *Wrexham Advertiser*, January 26, 1867, 8.

¹⁹⁹ *Monmouthshire Merlin*, January 5, 1867, 10.

²⁰⁰ *Wrexham Advertiser*, January 5, 1867, 7.

²⁰¹ *Wrexham Advertiser*, February 16, 1867, 7.

²⁰² *Wrexham Advertiser*, February 23, 1867, 7; March 16, 1867, 4; March 23, 1867, 3.

Conclusion

The conservative Welsh press looked to imperialism as the bringer of stability and peace. In the nineteenth century, Wales came to be a part of the metropole rather than the periphery in the British Empire. Thus, the conservatives had a positive outlook on Russian, Ottoman, and British imperialism. The Welsh liberals did not share this view. Nationalism preserved peace better than imperialism, yet the liberals were careful to criticize the British Empire because the violence committed by the British against the Fenians could easily be turned towards them. The Welsh liberals were the only group in the British press that sympathized with the Fenians. While Scottish liberals did not want Ottoman imperialism over Christians, they did not have any distaste towards imperialism altogether as they approved of Britain's subjugation of Ireland. Even in Ireland, the press represented a positive outlook of British imperialism, yet the freedom of press was suspended in Ireland, so many of the articles were reprints of articles from English newspapers. The Irish press had to line up with the viewpoint of the press in England.

The Irish Press in Comparison to the English Press

The political divide between liberals and conservatives in Ireland was non-existent. Both the liberal and conservative newspapers pulled from English sources or other Irish newspapers. In 1865, when the British government first suspected the Fenians, they banned all Fenian newspapers.²⁰³ Editor of the Fenian newspaper, *Irish People*, was arrested in 1865 and exiled from Ireland.²⁰⁴ The freedom of press was suspended, so the Irish, even if they wanted to, had to refrain from publishing anything that the English would deem treasonous. Even when discussing the Fenian Uprising, papers pulled from English sources like the *Liverpool Mercury*, the *Daily Telegraph*, or the *Manchester Guardian*. With regards to Serbian independence, the Irish press feared that Serbia was amassing an army to ignite civil war between the Christians and Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. This civil war could then pull all of Europe into war. The Irish press interpreted the situation in Serbia differently from the rest of Britain in two ways. First, the conflict was breaking down along confessional lines. This reflected the Protestant-Roman Catholic divide between the English and Irish. Second, the Irish were far more concerned with armed conflict on the part of the Serbians, which could ignite war across Europe. Serbia was an apocalyptic comparison to the situation in Ireland. The Irish press praised imperialism as a means to keep peace over the mixed-race populations in both Europe and Ireland.

The Irish press often reprinted English accounts of Serbia growing its army to fight the Ottoman Empire. From this, the press jumped to the conclusion, that Europe

²⁰³ Martin, *Alter-Nations*, 53-54.

²⁰⁴ Kenna, *All the Risings*, 137.

would soon be embroiled in war. According to *Dublin Daily Express*, Serbia was “more warlike than ever.”²⁰⁵ Furthering this idea, pulling from an article in the *Times*, the *Cork Examiner* remarked that the entirety of the Serbian population was arming itself. Even the students were forming legions to fight the Ottomans.²⁰⁶ According to the *Northern Whig*, the Serbian government was negotiating for a loan to be used for war purposes.²⁰⁷ As Serbia was building up its army, the English press, and thus naturally the Irish press, believed Europe was on the brink of a deadly war. The *Cork Constitution* published an article from *The Globe*. The “Servian [sic] difficulty” was of course, escalating to beyond *The Globe*’s desire because the Porte and Serbia could not come to an agreement.²⁰⁸ The Irish press dedicated itself to showing the necessity of peace when they believed war was just around the corner.

In general, the Irish Press feared war was about to break out across all of Europe. Republishing an article from the *Times*, the *Cork Examiner* reported that a “great outbreak” was expected, but no European country was prepared to enter into war in case a civil war between Christians and Muslims in the Ottoman Empire did come about.²⁰⁹ The fear of conflict breaking out along confessional lines was reflected the tension between the Roman Catholic Irish and the Protestant English. This would warn the Irish not to ignite a civil war like the Serbs. Four days later the *Kilkenny Journal* would publish the same article from the *Times*.²¹⁰ This article reflected the fear of European war common in the London press. Elsewhere, the *Kilkenny Journal* reprinted an English

²⁰⁵ *Dublin Daily Express*, January 9, 1867, 3.

²⁰⁶ *Cork Examiner*, January 5, 1867, 3.

²⁰⁷ *Northern Whig*, January 5, 1867, 3.

²⁰⁸ *Cork Constitution*, March 9, 1867, 5.

²⁰⁹ *Cork Examiner*, January 5, 1867, 3.

²¹⁰ *Kilkenny Journal*, January 9, 1867, 4.

report of a speech made by the French emperor who feared the disturbances in the Ottoman Empire would drag Europe into war.²¹¹ The idea of European war became more certain as Britain was not the only country to recognize the danger. However, all these articles did not originate in Ireland, but came from English sources. The Irish press closely followed the English press with regards to the events happening in Serbia. Likewise, the Irish press depended on the English press to discuss the events happening in Ireland as well.

Irish newspapers portrayed the Fenians as criminals who should be separated from the general population of Ireland who was loyal to the Crown. Of course, the majority of the articles were reprints from English newspapers and occasionally from other Irish newspapers that were devoted to England. The *Cork Constitution* would print articles from the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Liverpool Mercury*, and the *Daily Telegraph* on the same page.²¹² Even when the *Cork Constitution* printed an original article, it desired British rule over Ireland. The paper declared that the British government should quickly declare martial law over Ireland to quickly rid the country of Fenians.²¹³ *The Irish Times* agreed and wrote that Fenians were insurgents and rioters. The soldiers were needed to pacify them.²¹⁴ The Irish press actually desired the British military to invade Ireland! Martial law was typically considered the suppression of law in Britain until an anti-colonial movement in Jamaica changed this view. Martial law had the potential to be the highest expression of the law when a Sovereign was challenged.²¹⁵ This allowed the

²¹¹ *Kilkenny Journal*, January 12, 1867, 2.

²¹² *Cork Constitution*, February 16, 1867, 3.

²¹³ *Cork Constitution*, March 9, 1867, 5.

²¹⁴ *The Irish Times*, February 16, 1867, 3.

²¹⁵ Martin, *Alter-Nations*, 54-55.

British press to form whatever argument they wanted about martial law without being seen as backwards. Colonialism forced martial law into the discourse of liberalism.

To the Irish press, even the Fenian sympathizers were dangerous. The *Northern Whig* declared that Fenian supporters ought to be put in “the madhouse”; they were not capable of thinking correctly.²¹⁶ Imperialism, thus, was not portrayed as an evil over Ireland, but was essential to keeping the peace amongst the general population.

Imperialism as a means to keep peace was a common theme amongst the Irish newspapers. The *King's County Chronicle* wrote that the difficulty in the Eastern Question lay in the fact that Turks lived in great numbers in several of Ottoman European provinces, so like Ireland, there could exist no national state as there was more than one race. Serbia was excluded from the places with Turks living there, so it could easily create a nation separate from Turkey. However, if the other mixed-race populations declared freedom, then civil war would ensue.²¹⁷ Here can be seen a direct comparison between Ireland and the Ottoman provinces. The *King's County Chronicle's* goal was to demonstrate the necessity of imperial rule in mixed race provinces to prevent civil war and slaughter. According to Julia Stapleton, British liberals believed that imperialism was necessary, but the militancy was not. Gladstone believed that Britain needed an empire, but that it should not expand militarily because that was the mark of the Tories.²¹⁸ Still, this argument fails to recognize the fact that when their empire was threatened, the British government, both liberal and conservative, had no qualms in declaring martial law and militarily occupying a region.

²¹⁶ *Northern Whig*, February 16, 1867, 3.

²¹⁷ *King's County Chronicle*, January 9, 1867, 3.

²¹⁸ Julia Stapleton, *Political intellectuals and public identities in Britain since 1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 28.

Conclusion

The Irish had their freedom of press taken away two years prior. The English did not tolerate the spread of ideas of independence amongst the Irish. The Irish used the English press to generate their ideas on both the Fenian Rising and Serbian independence. In both cases, imperialism was a means to keep peace. In Ireland, the British military was needed to protect the Irish subjects loyal to the Crown from the criminal Fenians. Serbia related to the situation of the Irish by representing a more extreme comparison of a small nation trying to gain independence from an empire. The Serbs were amassing an army for an insurrection, which would engulf the whole continent in war. The papers emphasized the fight was breaking down along confessional lines. This reflected the division between the Roman Catholic Irish and the Protestant English.

Conclusion

The question of Serbian independence was not of great concern to either conservatives or liberals in Great Britain. It did not fade into obscurity altogether either since it was tied to the British interest in the Eastern Question. Serbian independence, then, appeared in the press in interesting ways: sometimes in well-researched detail, as when discussing possible mobilization plans, but otherwise lacking important local context. For both the liberal and conservative press, the question of Serbian independence was a place to read into the ideologies of empire, as well as the fracture points seen in the British Empire itself.

The limited British knowledge of the Balkans in the nineteenth century came largely out of travel literature, which reinforced and created the stereotypes the British read onto them.²¹⁹ This included the discussion of Ottoman rule in Europe. During the late nineteenth century, Edward Smith King took a journey into the Balkans and afterwards published a book where he concluded “Ottoman rule in the Balkans was unfit for modern civilization.”²²⁰ Balkan travel literature also played into Russophobia, and some authors declared that the people of the Balkans were just as violent and greedy as Russians.²²¹ That the Balkan people were backward was agreed upon by the authors, but the issue of Muslim rule created two different groups. One believed that Muslims forced their backwardness on the Balkans. The other promoted the idea that the backwardness of the Balkans came from their Slavic identity. The British press played on both ideas in

²¹⁹ Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania*, ix.

²²⁰ Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 107.

²²¹ Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania*, 36.

1867, but the former played the largest role in determining their stance on Serbian independence.

The British press used the idea of Serbian independence to advance their own political and regional outlooks. Serbian independence advanced the discussion of what a legitimate empire was. Liberals believed a legitimate empire was tied to the development of colonies. Conservatives believed a legitimate empire as a stabilizing influence over the colonies. The British used these ideas to determine whether or not the Ottomans should rule Serbia. Articles on Serbian independence also revealed the British belief that they were the preeminent world power. This was reflected in British rule over Ireland. The British press held a religious racial hierarchy of which they made up the top followed by other Christians and then Muslims. The hierarchy justified British rule over Ireland, but divided the press as to whether Muslims could rule Christians. However, the press was united in the fact that they desired the Serbian question to have a peaceful outcome. What the British press rarely took into consideration was Serbia's right to self-determination as an individual nation.

Liberals and Conservatives had diverging views on what made a legitimate empire. Liberals wanted imperialism to be the expansion of commerce and the free market alongside the development of the civilizations they ruled. Liberals stood against militaristic empire in theory but in practice used it frequently. Militarism was part of the "brutal authoritarianism" used by the Tories. This was the main liberal critique against Disraeli when he supported the Ottoman imperial rule in the Balkans after the "Bulgarian

Atrocities.”²²² The British Liberals justified their empire on the notion of bringing Progress in a peaceful manner to the periphery.

Conservatives justified the British Empire by declaring that they rescued colonized people from tyranny of arbitrary command and brought them under stable rule of law.²²³ A legitimate ruler was someone who was just and good to its subjects and also a stabilizing force in the region. This was another area where theory did not match practice, as it only mattered that the British saw themselves as just rulers instead of what the people they subjugated thought. In terms of Ireland, the conservatives dismissed any Irishmen who called for independence and dismissed them as traitors because Britain was a just and therefore legitimate ruler of Ireland.

In terms of Russia and the Ottomans, Russia was always seen as a legitimate empire but always one hostile to the British Empire, and the Ottomans invoked varied opinions centered on the perceived treatment of their Christian subjects by the Porte. The Russian Empire while it was a legitimate empire in the eyes of both the liberals and the conservatives did not have a legitimate claim to all the territory in their empire. The British did not want the Russians to gain territory in Central Asia or the Ottoman Empire. To the conservatives, it threatened to upset the balance of power in Europe and destabilize the region. The liberals understood the Russians as violent and oppressive if they tried to expand. Thus, if Russia tried to expand it would no longer be a legitimate empire.

²²² Cain, “Radicalism, Gladstone, and the Liberal Critique,” 216-19.

²²³ Sandra den Otter, “‘A legislating empire’: Victorian political theorists, codes of law, and empire,” in *Victorian Visions of Global Order: Empire and International Relations in Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, ed. Duncan Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 89.

The Ottoman Empire was judged on its treatment of its Christian subjects. The conservative press understood that the Ottoman Empire kept the balance of power and the stability of Europe in check by preventing Russia from expanding into Ottoman territory. However, the Ottomans also had to be just rulers to the Christians in order to remain a legitimate empire in the eyes of the British conservatives. Therefore, the conservative press urged Britain to advise the Porte to give concessions to their Christian subjects. However, for some in the southern English conservative the Ottomans were so oppressive to their Christian subjects that they lost all claim to be a legitimate empire over the Balkans. The liberal press often emphasized that Muslims could not rule Christians because Muslims were inferior to Christians and kept the Christians from progressing. To them, the Ottomans were not a legitimate empire in the Balkans. The midland liberals presented a unique view in the British press by arguing that the Slavs were more backwards than the Ottomans and that the Ottomans assisted the Slavs in progress.

Serbian independence called into question not only Serbia's right to independence but the Ottoman's right to empire. The London and northern conservatives both believed the Ottomans should give Serbia concessions but not full independence. They thought concessions would help stabilize the Ottoman Empire. The midland and southern liberals and most southern conservatives supported the Ottoman rule because they believed Serbia was too backwards for self-rule. Of course, the midland liberals noted that the Ottomans were also backwards; they were just less backwards than the Serbs. Both the Irish press and the Welsh conservative press believed the Ottoman Empire guaranteed peace in Europe.

Other areas based their stance on Serbian independence taking into account that the Ottomans should be negotiated with because the Ottomans were a European power. The midland conservative press believed that the Ottomans were successful enough in their social reforms to be European. The midland conservatives thought with the right social reforms modeled after European practices advanced a society to a European status. In order to continue to be successful, the Ottomans' next step in reforms was to allow Serbia freedom. This way both Serbia and the Ottomans could continue to Europeanize, according to midland conservatives. Furthermore, the Welsh conservatives believed the Ottomans needed to be a European empire in order to pacify the Balkans. Similarly, the London conservative press thought it proper to not dictate Ottoman affairs but to advise them on how to act towards their Christian subjects. With the exception of northern liberals, Serbian independence in the British press was considered less in terms of what Serbia was and wanted but more in terms of the legitimacy of Ottoman rule. This line of thought not only applied to those who supported Ottoman rule, but also those who supported Serbian freedom from Ottoman rule.

Some of the British press believed the Ottoman Empire failed as European power, and on those grounds Serbia would be independent. All British believed the Ottoman Empire was in decline, but those supporting Ottoman rule desired its fall to be a long way off. Many British, however, believed that Muslims were oppressive to Christians. On these grounds alone southern conservative papers desired the immediate end to Ottoman rule in Serbia. Liberals connected this idea to their idea of Progress. London liberals argued that due to the inevitability of Progress, the Ottoman Empire would fall. They added to this their understanding that Islam was less civilized than Christianity. The

Scottish liberals held the same arguments the London liberals, but qualified their belief that Muslims were backwards with an incorrect belief that the Quran forced Muslims to be abusive to Christians. Muslims depended on the Quran instead of Reason, which hindered progress. Here Serbia should be independent because the Ottoman Empire was not a legitimate European power, which was tied to its Islamic tradition.

Serbia could either be free of Ottoman rule or within Ottoman rule. Russia was the only other empire that the British considered capable of gaining control of the Balkans, but the British feared Russian expansion more than anything else with regards to the Eastern Question. Russian control of Ottoman territory or the Eastern Mediterranean threatened British power in India. Russia could not gain control of the Balkans. The British believed in order to keep Russia out Serbia needed to be part of the Ottoman Empire or become a great Slavdom with other Balkan nations. According to Victorian ideas, only great nations had the ability to defend themselves from other great nations. The majority of the British press believed that Serbia by itself would be a weak nation easily manipulated by Russia. Of course, the greatest nation in the eyes of the British was Britain. The newspapers reflected the idea of the preeminent role of Britain in the world order.

British liberals portrayed England as the most advanced civilization in the world. While other places needed despotism in order to advance, the English were making steps towards universal male suffrage. Scotland at this time even saw Anglicization as a means of social advancement. The Scottish press did not draw parallels between the Irish and themselves because they recognized that their Protestantism made them equal with the English, while the Irish were Roman Catholic who needed despotic rule to keep them

from following the backwards tenets of the pope. Progress was the underlying ideology guiding these ideas of superiority in the British liberals. The conservative British understood British superiority in terms of Britain's ability to keep a large empire and preserve stability.

Britain's conservative press saw Britain as a respected traditional world power that deserved to keep their power and empire because of their ability to keep peace and stability throughout it. Thus, Britain was better than the Ottoman and Russian empires. The Ottomans could not control their provinces and their empire was in decline from the point of view of the British conservatives. To the London conservative press, if the Ottomans listened to Britain's advice and give concessions to the Serbs, the Ottoman Empire would have greater stability like Britain's. They also viewed the Russian Empire as bloated and overextended. St. Petersburg, they believed, would not be able to govern more territory. The Russians were also more violent than the British, so they would not be able to have a peaceful empire. However, the British feared that Russian expansion threatened their empire, so their Russophobia translated into Russian inferiority in the newspapers. The newspapers emphasized that the British Empire was peaceful, and its inhabitants desired British rule.

The British press portrayed it as though the Irish desired British rule and military occupation. The Irish press reflected this negative understanding of Irish independence. The conservatives believed that the British were good and just rulers to Ireland. The Fenians, on the other hand, acted treasonously by trying to upset a just government. The liberal press portrayed the Irish as an underdeveloped race. Due to this belief of racial inferiority, the liberals believed that the Irish were not capable of self-government or self-

determination. At the same time, the English liberals advocated for universal suffrage because the English “race” was capable of these things. Ireland was a matter of importance to all British, so their tendency when discussing a Serbian independence movement at the time was to think of the Fenians.

There was a clear parallel between the Fenian movement and Serbian independence and this was not lost on the British. Both the British and the Ottoman empires were multi-ethnic and multi-confessional. Their independence movements broke down along these ethnic and confessional lines. The British controlled Irish press played up images of bloody civil war erupting between Muslims and Christians in order to reflect an apocalyptic version of what could happen in Ireland if the Irish did not comply. Beyond the clear racial aspects of both cases there was the issue of justifying military occupation of European people. In the London press, the use of military against the Serbians was unjustified, but it was in Ireland. In the Welsh press, the conservatives praised imperialism both in Ireland and the Balkans while the liberals viewed imperialism as violent in both cases while nationalism was peaceful. The Welsh liberals were the exception as all other regions and political orientations believed Britain had a right to empire because of British supremacy.

Serbia was not as advanced as Britain in the view of the British press. To the majority of the British conservatives, Serbia needed to remain under Ottoman sovereignty to preserve stability in the region. According to liberals, even if it did gain total independence, with the exception of the Welsh liberals who saw nationalism as a sign of progress, Serbia was to suppress national tendencies and be part of a great Slavdom. Northern English liberals desired Serbia to have a degree of self-determination within a

Slavic confederation by having its own diet. This reflected the northern English desire for greater political participation in England. Most of the British press argued for greater autonomy in Serbia even if it was not full independence. In large part, the British press struggled with the idea of Muslims governing Christians.

Race and religion to some degree overlapped in the Victorian mindset. While skin color impacted the people of Africa and Asia, Europeans or people of lighter skin tones could still be perceived as a different race in Victorian Britain based on cultural and religious characteristics. The English perceived the Irish as a separate race due to the fact that the Irish largely confessed Roman Catholicism and the English Protestantism.²²⁴ Even the Scottish perceived the Irish as a separate race. Both portrayed the Irish as a mindless and idle race while both understood that their belief in Protestantism elevated their racial status.²²⁵ The liberal press emphasized the nature of religion and race in a hierarchy. With regards to the people involved in the Eastern Question, British Protestants were at the top, with other Christians like Roman Catholics and Orthodox were lower, and below them were the Ottoman Muslims. When referring the Serbians, the British press near always identified them as Christians. Their ethnic identity was Christian. When referring to the Ottomans, the British press went back and forth between Muslim and Turk. Their ethnicity and religion were interchangeable.

Protestants in the British Empire considered themselves the most advanced race because they were capable of using true wisdom and not blindly follow religious traditions or texts like Roman Catholics and Muslims.²²⁶ Few British newspapers

²²⁴ Wolfe, *God and Greater Britain*, 14.

²²⁵ Wolfe, *God and Greater Britain*, 95.

²²⁶ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment, and Reform*, 35-41.

discussed Roman Catholicism in regards to the Fenian Rising, and when they did, it was like the *Bradford Observer*, emphasizing that the Catholic Church did not approve of the Fenians.²²⁷ The British press was adamant to point out that the Fenians did not represent the Irish people or their interests. However, religion was one of the reasons the British used to justify their rule over the Irish people. This was not a theological argument but a racial one. To them, Roman Catholics blindly followed the pope. Unlike Protestants, they were not capable of self-determination because they had no ability to reason.²²⁸ Why then would some of the British press support Serbian independence if Serbians, like the Irish, were not Protestant?

For British newspapers who used religion and race to justify Serbian independence, it was because while Serbians were not Protestants all Christians were more civilized than Muslims who were *innately* inferior. The British believed the split between Western and Eastern churches led to different political, cultural and ethnic developments where the Eastern were inferior to the West, but created an unbridgeable boundary between Muslims and Christians.²²⁹ The liberal Scottish press focused heavily on the image of the mindlessly violent and oppressive Turk. The “Turk” was violent because he was Muslim. They were a backwards race because they were Muslim. The Scottish press believed that Muslims were incapable of reason; thus, they had to rely on religious law. Liberals were more likely to justify independence on the basis of Muslims inferiority to Christians. However, a few newspapers of the southern conservative press also believed that the Ottoman Muslims were brutally oppressing Christians. Even papers

²²⁷ *Bradford Observer*, February 21, 1867, 3.

²²⁸ Wolfe, *God and Greater Britain*, 17.

²²⁹ Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 18.

supporting Ottoman sovereignty, like the London and northern conservatives, believed Britain was obligated to assist the Christians in the Balkans in some way.

The midland press posed two unique views with regards to the use of race and religion in their stances on Serbian independence. The only press to not emphasize the confessional differences between subject and ruler was the liberal midland press. They did not want to receive backlash for calling the Balkan Christians more backwards than Muslims. The midland conservatives also posed a unique view. They were the only ones to argue that Muslims were good and just rulers over Christians. Of course, in order for the Ottomans to continue being just, they had to give Serbian Christians freedom. No matter how the situation played out the British press desired a peaceful solution to the question of Serbian independence.

The British press desired a peaceful solution to the Eastern Question. The British liberals believed that Progress should only come about through peaceful means. War should not be the harbinger of Progress. Thus, the Serbians should gain independence naturally. The British conservatives were not interested in Progress. They desired a peaceful solution so that way the balance of power in Europe would be maintained and the Ottoman Empire would be stable.

Many newspapers feared that Serbia would erupt into a violent insurrection and this would drag the whole of Europe into war. Russia had a central role in this because the British believed Russia would use its position as the defenders of the Balkan people and when coming to the aid of Serbia, would use it as an excuse to bring Constantinople into their empire. In the majority of newspapers, except the northern English papers, Russians were portrayed as innately deceitful and violent. Northern England did much of

their trade with Russia, so they did not express Russophobia like the rest of the British press. However, the northern English press still did emphasize the need for a peaceful solution in order to not disrupt international trade.

The British worried about a war encompassing the Eastern Mediterranean, which would threaten their interests in India. The Suez Canal was two years from completion giving the British naval and commercial ships quick passage to the colony. Any war in the region would destabilize Britain's route to India. Russian expansion also threatened to allow a hostile power control of British imperial interests. While the predicted war would greatly impact Britain, it would remain an external war. The British believed they had a stable empire and were innately peaceful people unlike the Russians or the Ottomans. Thus, the press only feared an external war not an internal one.

While the Fenian Rising should have demonstrated that the British Empire was not as stable as the British thought it was, the British press either, like most liberals, diminished the Fenians racially to show they were no threat to the British or, like most conservatives, portrayed the Fenians as a small group of treasonous criminals. In both liberal and conservative newspapers, even when the British army occupied the island, the word "war" was never associated with any of the encounters between the British and the Irish. The only press to believe the Fenians posed a threat was the conservative Welsh press, and even there, the newspapers did not believe the Fenians stood a chance against the British. In the British press, a Serbian insurrection threatened a full-scale war in Europe while an Irish one was portrayed as nothing more than a nuisance. The Irish had no right to self-determination, and most of the British press did not believe Serbia had the

right to determine its fate as a nation. Self-determination was a right the English had earned.

Self-determination was something that was given to a nation or an individual when they were civilized enough or capable of governing themselves. The liberals focused on this more than the conservatives. To the liberals, self-determination came when a people were progressed enough to reason how they should be governed. The British, in the liberals' mindset, had progressed enough to be able to have near universal suffrage as reflected in the Reform Bill of 1867. Areas like Ireland and elsewhere in the British Empire needed British guidance because these areas were not progressed enough. Serbia, to much of the British liberal press, could only progress outside of Muslim rule, but was not yet ready as a nation to determine how it should be governed.

Europe comprised of the most advanced nations in the British view. Great Britain shared their Great Power status with France and Russia but remained far more civilized than either because they did not have the degree of government participation that Britain had. The Irish were, of course, distinct because they were not progressed like the rest of Britain from the point of view of the rest of Britain. The British developed this view based on their ideas that the Irish were racially inferior. The Irish valued their national identity over their imperial one and believed they should be a separate nation state, which is what the Fenians were trying to accomplish.

Unlike the liberals, the conservatives did not grant self-determination on the basis of progress but on the balance of power in Europe. They believed that when the Ottoman Empire fell, its territory should be divided up amongst the various European powers, so one power did not hold too much power. The conservatives' main goal was to check the

power of Russia, so until the Ottoman Empire fell it formed a vital part of the balance of power in Europe. Therefore, to the majority of the conservative British press, Serbia had no right to self-determination; it was a necessary part of the Ottoman Empire and stability in Europe. Likewise, British rule of Ireland kept stability in the region of the British Isles. The Irish and the Serbs could not argue that their identities as separate nations from their empires should give them the right to self-determination, according to the British press.

The British press rarely used nationalism as a justification for their stance on Serbia. The liberals who wanted Serbia to be a part of a Slavdom argued that Serbia should suppress its national identity. The British and the Ottomans were multi-ethnic empires with various nations under their control. The identities of British or Ottoman were not national identities but imperial identities. Nationalism would not have been a useful argument in a place that was trying to subdue national identity with imperial. Thus, Serbians identity as a unique nation entitled to govern its own people was rarely used in the British press.

Serbia was a useful image to advance British notions of Europeaness and Orientalism because Serbia was part of Europe but also full of “oriental” traditions. The British press could then reveal its ideas of what “European” meant to them by prescribing what Serbia needed to do in order to become fully European. Todorova described orientalism towards the Balkans as unique in that the Balkans had the potential to become part of the West, but even as of today, Western Europe still approaches the Balkans as its “other.”²³⁰ Goldsworthy argued that during the nineteenth century, Western Europe would never have considered the Balkans Western European because even when the

²³⁰ Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 7-8.

people in the Balkans practiced “Western” culture, they were accused of faking it.²³¹ Western Europe gave the name Balkan to the region and then gave a set of pejorative characteristics to the term Balkan, so even as the region changed over time, the term Balkan never lost its original connotation of backwards, violent, etc.²³² Thus, British newspaper reports on Serbia give a better understanding to how Britain organized and categorized the world and Serbia’s place in it rather than reflecting the reality.

²³¹ Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania*, 116.

²³² Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 21-22.

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