

The Influence of the Permanent Officials of the Foreign  
Office and of His Majesty's Ambassadors Abroad  
on the Foreign Policy of Sir Edward Grey  
1906-14.

Submitted to the Committee on Post-Graduate Studies  
of the University of Manitoba in part fulfilment  
of their requirements for the M. A. Degree

by

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## Index of Persons Referred to in the Text.

- ARENTHAL ALOIS, BARON LEXA von (since 1909, Count), Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1899-1906; Minister for Foreign Affairs 1906-12.
- BENCKENDORFF, ALEXANDER, COUNT, Russian Ambassador at London, 1903-17.
- BERCHTOLD, LEOPOLD, COUNT von, Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1906-11; Minister for Foreign Affairs, February 19, 1912-5.
- BERTIE, SIR F. (since 1915, 1st. Baron; 1918, 1st. Viscount), British Ambassador at Rome, 1903-4; at Paris, 1905-18.
- BUCHANAN, SIR GEORGE W., British Agent and Consul-General in Bulgaria, 1903-9; Minister at The Hague, 1909-10; Ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1910-8; at Rome 1919-21.
- BUNSEN, MR. (later SIR) M. de, Secretary of British Embassy at Paris, 1902-5; British Minister at Lisbon, 1905-6; Ambassador at Madrid, 1906-13.
- GAMBON, M. PAUL, French Ambassador at London, 1898-1920.
- CAMPBELL, MR. (since 1906, SIR) F. A., British Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1902-11.
- CAMPBELL-BANNERMANN, SIR HENRY, British Prime Minister, 5 December, 1905-April 4, 1908.
- CARTWRIGHT, MR. (later SIR) FAIRFAX, British Councillor of Embassy at Madrid, 1905-6 (sometimes "Chargé d'Affaires"); Minister at Munich and Stuttgart, 1906-8; Ambassador at Vienna, 1908-13.
- CHURCHILL, MR. WINSTON L. A., British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Colonies, 1906-8; President of Board of Trade, 1908-10; Secretary of State for Home Affairs, 1910-1; First Lord of Admiralty, 1911-5.
- CROWE, MR. (later SIR) EYRE, Senior Clerk, British Foreign Office, 1906-12; Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1912-20; Permanent Under-Secretary, 1920-5.
- GOSCHEN, SIR W. E., British Ambassador at Vienna, 1905-8; at Berlin 1908-14.
- GREY, SIR EDWARD (since 1916, 1st. VISCOUNT GREY OF FALLODON), Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 11 December, 1905-11 December, 1916.

- HALDANE, MR. R. B.** (since 1911, 1st. VISCOUNT), British Secretary of State for War, 1905-12.
- HARDINGE, SIR CHARLES** (since 1910, 1st. BARON HARDINGE OF PENSHURST), Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1903-4; Ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1904-6; Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1906-10; Minister in Attendance on King Edward at Friedrichshof, August, 1906.
- HOLSTEIN, HERR FRIEDRICH von**, German Foreign Office, 1880-1906.
- ISVOLSKY, M. ALEXANDER**, Russian Minister at Copenhagen, 1903-6; Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1906-10; Ambassador at Paris, 1910-17.
- LAMSDORFF, COUNT**, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1901-6.
- LANGLEY, MR. W. L. F. G.**, Senior Clerk in British Foreign Office, 1902-7; Assistant Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1907-19.
- LANSDOWNE, THE 5th. MARQUESS OF**, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 12 November, 1900-11 December, 1905.
- LASCELLES, SIR F. C.**, British Ambassador at Berlin, 1895-1908.
- LOWTHER, MR. (later SIR) G. A.**, British Minister at Tangier, 1905-8; Ambassador at Constantinople, 1908-13.
- MALLET, MR. (later SIR), LOUIS**, Assistant Clerk, British Foreign Office, 1902-5; Private Secretary to Sir E. Grey, 1905-6; Senior Clerk, 1906-7; Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1907-13.
- METTERNICH, PAUL COUNT von WOLFF**, German Ambassador at London, 1901-12.
- McKENNA, RT. HON. R.**, British First Lord of the Admiralty, 1908-11; Secretary of State for Home Affairs, 1911-15.
- NICOLSON, SIR ARTHUR** (since 1916, 1st. BARON CARNOCK), British Ambassador at Madrid, 1905-6; at St. Petersburg, 1906-10; British Representative at Conference at Algeciras, 1906.
- PARKER, MR. ALWYN**, Junior Clerk in British Foreign Office, 1906-12; Assistant Clerk 1912-7; Librarian 1918-9.
- POINCARÉ, M. RAYMOND**, French Minister for Finance, 1906, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1912-3, 1922-4; President of the French Republic, 1913-20.

SAZONOV, M., Councillor of Russian Embassy at London (sometimes Charge d'Affaires), 1904-6; Agent to the Vatican, 1906-9; Subsequently (1910-6) Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

TRAUHMANSDORFF-WEINSBERG, KARL, COMTE ZU, Councillor of Austro-Hungarian Embassy at London, 1911-4.

TYRRELL, MR. (later SIR) W. G., British Foreign Office, Assistant Clerk, 1903-7; Senior Clerk, 1907-15; Private Secretary to Sir E. Grey, 1907-15 (later Permanent Under-Secretary).

WATSON, CAPT. H. D. R., British Naval "Attaché" at Berlin, 1910-3.

WHITEHEAD, MR. J. B., Secretary of British Legation at Berlin, Secretary and Councillor of Embassy at Berlin, 1903-6 (sometimes "Charge d'Affaires"); Minister at Belgrade, 1906-10.

List of abbreviations used in the text.

G. & P. III.	=	British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914 (edited by G. F. Gooch and Harold Temperley)
		Vol. III. The Testing of the Entente 1904-6 (London 1928).
G. & P. IV.	=	Ibid Vol. IV. The Anglo-Russian Reapprochement 1902-7 (London 1929).
G. & P. V.	=	Ibid Vol. V. The Near East - The Macedonian Problem and the Annexation of Bosnia 1902-9. (London 1928).
G. & P. VI.	=	Ibid Vol. VI. Anglo-German Tension -- Agreements and Negotiation, 1907-12. (London 1930).
G. & P. VII.	=	Ibid Vol. VII. The Agadir Crisis. (London 1932).
G. & P. IX.	=	Ibid Vol. IX. The Balkan Wars Part I. The Prelude; The Tripoli War (London 1933).
G. & P. XI.	=	Ibid Vol. XI. The Outbreak of War - June 28th - August 4th, 1914. (London 1926).
Grey	=	Viscount Grey of Palladin, Twenty-Five Years 1892-1916. (Toronto 1925).
Lutz	=	Hermann Lutz, Lord Grey and the World War. (London 1928).

## I

Historical research into the international policies of Germany in the years preceding the Great War has thrown an ever-increasing light upon the activities of Herr Friedrich von Holstein. As a result Holstein has emerged as the real, though obscure, dictator of German foreign policy between 1890-1906. The epithets of "His Grey Eminence" and the "Father Joseph of the Foreign Office", sufficiently indicate the nature of the influence which this German bureaucrat is believed to have exercised over his nominal superiors. Since 1924 the publication of the "British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914" has revealed to us as the author of innumerable minutes and memoranda, the figure of Sir Eyre Crowe, Senior Clerk, British Foreign Office, 1906-1912, and Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 1912-1920. Crowe's anti-German bias is only too apparent, and German writers have not been slow to see in him an English Holstein, indoctrinating both his permanent and his parliamentary chiefs with his own distrust of Germany.

An extreme view of Crowe's activities and influence is taken by the German publicist, Hermann Lutz. "We can ..... only conjecture", he wrote, "the extent of the influence exerted by Foreign Office officials over Sir Edward Grey. I have no doubt that it was considerable". Lutz describes Crowe as "one of the most poisonous enemies of Germany", an enemy who "played as influential and as little known a part as

Holstein at the Wilhelmstrasse". Together with Crowe he names Sir William Tyrrell, Grey's private secretary, Sir Charles Hardinge, the official companion of Edward VII on many continental visits, and Sir Arthur Nicolson, whom he singled out for his notorious pro-Russian sympathies, as having all played a major part in directing British foreign policy in the critical years prior to the Great War. (1)

A vital question follows: "Were foreign ministers then mere puppets in the hands of their subordinates?"

The object of this thesis is to attempt to answer this question insofar as it refers to Sir E. Grey; to determine, that is, to what extent in his conduct of foreign policy he was a "mere puppet" in the hands of permanent Foreign Office officials at home, or of professional diplomats abroad.

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(1) Lutz pp. 145-46.

## II

The material upon which this study is based is to be found in "British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914" (edited by G. P. Gooch and H. Temperley). The papers reproduced in this collection are: official and confidential despatches and telegrams which passed between the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and British representatives abroad; private letters exchanged between permanent officials in the Foreign Office and the same representatives; memoranda upon foreign affairs prepared by the permanent officials of the Foreign Office for the consideration either of their official superiors or of the Secretary of State; the annual reports sent by British official representatives abroad upon the political affairs of the respective countries to which they were accredited; parliamentary questions touching foreign policy and Sir E. Grey's replies thereto; and special reports made to the Foreign Office either by ministers entrusted with special "ad hoc" missions abroad, or by representatives of the Foreign Office delegated to accompany the Sovereign upon State visits of a quasi-diplomatic nature.

Frequent reference will be made in this thesis to minutes appended both by the permanent officials of the Foreign Office and by the Secretary of State himself, to any or all of the foregoing types of communications. After 1905 the Foreign Office adopted the practice of inviting its officials to "minute" their opinions upon such despatches, memoranda, etc., as passed through their hands. Too much importance must not be attached to these minutes. They were simply



expressions of opinion submitted for consideration by superiors, and implied no finality of judgment in the maker of the minute or of decision in those who received it. On the other hand the presence of these expressions of opinion by the permanent officials does enable us to reach very definite conclusions as to the direction of the influence of these officials, and rather more tentative conclusions as to the extent of that influence.

The whole question of these minutes, indeed, gives rise to interesting speculation. Obviously it was impossible for Sir Edward Grey to read all the communications which came to the Foreign Office. How then did he decide which to read? Did the decision lie with members of the permanent staff? Did they exercise a species of censorship in deciding which papers should be seen by the Secretary of State? If so, they were then in a favourable position in which to "play up" by means of their minutes those despatches which were in accordance with their own views, or to "play down" those not consonant with their opinions. Again, in the preparation of a "Confidential Print", or of summaries of special questions made by the permanent officials to facilitate decision by the Foreign Secretary or the Cabinet, was there not a possibility of biased selection? It may be noted that Grey's initials seldom appear on documents save those on which his subordinates had already minuted their opinions. Are we then to infer that he read only such papers? We are not yet in a position to answer these questions, but they will be kept in mind by those who see in Grey a Responsible Departmental Head unduly subjected to influence and direction from his

### III

At the outset we should perhaps be familiar with Grey's initial disposition towards France, Russia, and Germany, at the time of his taking office in December, 1905, in order that we may be in a position to enquire to what extent this original disposition came to be modified. A study of such modifications and the reasons for them would form a legitimate part of our enquiry.

Grey's attitude to France when he took office, can be briefly summarized by saying that he accepted to the full the policies initiated by his predecessor, and which had led to the conclusion of the Anglo-French Agreements of April, 1904. The tenor of these Agreements is sufficiently well known. In the first place they had effected the settlement of outstanding disputes. Secondly they had recognized the special position enjoyed by Great Britain in Egypt and by France in Morocco. Thirdly they had pledged each country to give its diplomatic support to the other for the execution of those clauses of the Agreement in which those special positions were defined, (i.e. especially Article IX).

This mutual pledge of British diplomatic support for France in Morocco and of French diplomatic support for Britain in Egypt, represented the full extent of the commitments of the two Powers under the Agreements. These last did not in any sense constitute a formal alliance between the two countries, and the British negotiators, at least, had been at pains to define and limit the extent of their commitments.